

Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

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Private report says British Leyland will make £53m profit this year

'CAR ANARCHY' - WE NAIL LORD STOKES' LIES

Socialist Worker Reporters

WHEN LORD STOKES, chairman of the British Leyland Motor Corporation, launched his vicious attack on the combine's 190,000 workers at the shareholders' annual meeting on 25 February, he departed not just from his prepared speech but from the truth as well.

He announced that BLMC had made no profits in the first four months of its current financial year (1 October 69 - 30 September 70). And he blamed this state of affairs on the 'industrial anarchy' caused by strikes and stoppages.

But a private report prepared in January by a leading firm of stockbrokers had predicted a difficult period for British Leyland in the first half of the current financial year.

It placed the blame for this situation on the government's credit squeeze - which deters customers from buying new cars - and the declining advantages of the merger in 1968 between the British Motor Corporation and Leyland Motors.

The report, produced by Mitton, Butler, Priest and Co, with offices in London, Brussels and Zurich, had been circulated privately to BLMC's directors. Stokes knew its contents and his prepared and printed speech for the shareholders' meeting clearly followed its outline.

'The results for the first three months of the current year compare unfavourably with the corresponding period last year,' the speech read. 'This is due almost entirely to labour troubles and the credit squeeze which has drastically restricted domestic demand.'

Having made the required attack on the workers, Stokes' speech went on to lay the main emphasis on the company's difficulties on government policy:

'There is a danger of our being strangled on our own doorstep in the short term interest of the national economy in a way which may well dissipate long term efforts to provide prosperity for the nation.'

TIRADE

But when Stokes rose to speak, he departed from the prepared text to launch his tirade against the union rank and file.

He spoke of the spread of unofficial strikes as reaching 'alarming and chaotic proportions'. He referred to 'distortions of the truth and insidious coercion' by strike leaders.

And he threatened 'massive unemployment' if the company's labour problems were not solved.

Lord Stokes was clearly set out to make the workers the scapegoats for government policy and his own combine's shortcomings - such as 70 factories spread-eagled throughout the country and the lack of a medium-range car between the Mini and the Maxi.

He has distorted the facts and, in order to fan the flames of anti-trade unionism, he has hushed up the stockbrokers' glowing predictions of a highly profitable future for British Leyland when the first

difficult months of the current financial year are over.

The Mitton, Butler, Priest report had this to say of the combine's results for the first half of the previous financial year (68-69):

'BLMC's financial results for the first half of 1968/69 were very encouraging. Pre-tax profits were 31 per cent higher from an 8½ per cent increase in turnover.'

'This performance reflected cost savings from increased efficiency and post-merger rationalisations and in view of the slack domestic demand and the substantial profit improvements already made it was not surprising that Lord Stokes, in his interim statement said that there would inevitably be a slowing down in the rate of profit growth.'

So Stokes knew that there were comparatively tough times ahead - and that they would have little or nothing to do with strikes. All the calculations by the stockbrokers for 68/69 and 69/70 took into account strikes and stoppages - they had been allowed for in the combine's forward planning.

The pre-tax profits for 68/69 were £40.4 millions, compared with £37.9m for the previous year. The 68/69 figure includes a £1.8m windfall as the result of devaluation.

The report then goes to make a forecast for the current financial year:

'The following forecast range for 1969/70 takes into account... the possibility of some HP relaxation in April 1970. Postponement of purchases in January-March will, nevertheless, mean a very poor first half year for BLMC.'

'BOOM'

'However, the problem should largely be alleviated by producing for dealers' stock during the winter and some growth in export production can be expected. BLMC will be persuading dealers to build up stocks in anticipation of a spring boom...'

'The first half year (October 1969 to March 1970) is unlikely to produce profits higher than the £24.1m pre-interest profit made in the first half of 1968/69, but we estimate £53m pre-tax profit for the full year, assuming that labour disputes are



STOKES: hysterical rantings

no more than moderately bad.'

Here, in a few brief paragraphs, is the clearest refutation of Stokes' wild slanders against BLMC workers - a refutation not by 'subversive anarchists' or militant shop stewards but by a highly respectable firm of City brokers.

A bad first period was not only expected but actually welcomed - for the careful stockpiling of cars will meet the anticipated bonanza in the spring when the Chancellor of the Exchequer will probably relax hire purchase restrictions as part of Labour's bid to win back votes in time for the election.

The final result should be a still higher pre-tax profit than last year, allowing for 'moderately bad' strikes. Stokes' hysterical rantings about chaos and anarchy are shown to be sheer hypocrisy - for stoppages are accounted for in the combine's plans.

The report ends in rosy terms: 'Whereas we do not recommend the shares purely on the expected earnings for 1968/69, it is our view that BLMC has the resources to substantially increase its earnings in the 1970s, both by capturing a larger share of world markets and by increasing efficiency and reducing costs...'

'Whereas, in the long term, profits will fluctuate with demand, we believe that the Corporation's profits will find a new minimum level of around £75m pre-tax profit in the early 1970s but that, in years when labour disruptions are relatively light and when home and overseas markets are buoyant together, the group's potential is £100m...'

'We believe that the ordinary shares have been oversold and, in view of the probability of a good year in 1970, that they now offer an

excellent opportunity to buy.'

The report also recommends that one way to cut down on strikes and to gain tighter discipline over the work force is for BLMC to change from piece-rate earnings to hourly rates or weekly wages.

This is a clear move to drive down on the workers' earnings. In Ford and Vauxhall, wage rates paid on a time basis have risen much more slowly in the past 10 years than piece-rates in BLMC.

Here are the facts as outlined in the brokers' report. If they are known to Socialist Worker, which is not usually on the mailing list for 'confidential' employers' documents then they should have been available to the main unions in the car industry, the Transport Workers and the Amalgamated Engineering and Foundry Workers.

'PROBLEM'

But there was no fighting talk from Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon after Stokes' speech. Both admitted there was a 'problem' in the combine and hurriedly called a meeting of all BLMC shop stewards for 10 March in an attempt to sort out the problem - which can only mean smoothing the way for even bigger profits for Lord Stokes and his fellow shareholders.

Said Jack Jones: 'We want to make BLMC a showpiece'.

For what? Exploitation? Redundancies? Increased profits?

Said Hugh Scanlon: 'We admit there is a problem but there is not a conspiracy.'

Excuse us, Brother Scanlon, but there is a conspiracy - a conspiracy to smash piece-rates in order to hammer the power of the shop stewards and bring in Measured Day Work, an increased work load and massive sackings.

Stokes' speech and his concealment of the truth about the real situation at BLMC raises the whole question of control. Stokes said, 'I think I am quite entitled to tell my shareholders - who after all own the business - the reasons why we aren't making a profit.'

MASSIVE

Jones and Scanlon, star speakers at any 'workers' control conference, do not dispute the shareholders' right to 'own' the business. They do not point out that it is the shop workers and they alone who produce the massive profits for Britain's biggest car complex.

If BLMC are in 'difficulties' it is because of the chaos of the big business system and its lunatic drive to compete for bigger slices of the dwindling world market.

It is not the fault of the workers. It is a disgrace that so-called 'left' union leaders do not shout the truth from the roof tops instead of issuing grovelling remarks about 'problems'.

Socialist Worker recommends for discussion among BLMC stewards the following points for their 10 March conference:

A resolution condemning Stokes' witch-hunting speech and demanding a public retraction by him of his statement that strikes are to blame for the combine's problems.

The stewards should tell their union leaders to campaign for:

No redundancies - no Measured Day Work - defend mutuality - parity of wages throughout the group - and for the nationalisation under full workers' control of the British Leyland Motor Corporation.

The stewards must demand that copies of the Mitton, Butler, Priest report should be available at the conference and for shop floor distribution to all their members. If the union leaders cannot provide this service, Socialist Worker will.



BRITISH LEYLAND has 43 per cent of UK car production and 47 per cent of commercial vehicles.

Overseas sales account for 44 per cent of group turnover.

BLMC has 77 major UK factories, 30 of them in the Coventry and Birmingham area.

Before its merger with Leyland in 1968, the British Motor Corporation made a pre-tax loss of £3.27 m in its last year.

The new group's first published accounts for the year to 30 September 1968 showed pre-tax profits of £37.9m, compared to a combined profit/loss of £14.6m the previous year.

1969 pre-tax profit was £40.4m - increase (excluding £1.8m benefit from devaluation) of 12 per cent over previous year.

Stocks increased in 1969 from £233m to £276m 'largely due to accumulation of components and work in progress as a result of and as a buffer against the disruptive effect of industrial disputes' - company's annual report.

Value of the company's fixed assets at 30 September 1969 was £172,545m. Reserves were £104,760m.

The Labour government gave £25m to aid the BMC-LMC merger. BLMC received investment grants from the government of £33m in 1968 and £52m in 1969.

There are 11 directors of BLMC. Their salaries range from £2501 to £46,060 each per year.

Lord Stokes is paid £42,060. He and his family hold 30,000 shares in the company, plus a further 1000 in the South African subsidiary, President Sir William Lyons holds 466,384 shares, plus 8 per cent stock of £100,892.

In 1968/69, BLMC donated £256 to Aims of Industry and £1975 to the Economic League, both extreme right wing, anti-union organisations that provide dossiers on the activities of militants and left-wing organisations.

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Trawlermen's strike grows

HULL:- There are now well over 1000 trawlermen on strike here. The dispute, made official by the TGWU from the very start, is three weeks old.

The men are demanding:
1. A substantial increase in the basic rate of a deckhand from £14 5s to £20.
2. 100 per cent trade union membership of crews.

The St Andrew's Fish Dock is completely full. For the rare trawler that gets to sea, four more come in and the crews join the strike.

The bosses' attempts to break the morale of the trawlermen have failed dismally and a representative of the trawler owners has admitted that the strike is hurting.

Tug men and lorry drivers have come out on strike in support of the

trawlermen. And dockers plan action if the employers continue any entrances except those to the fish dock to bring through their blackleg crews.

Last Saturday more than 600 trawlermen were joined in a march through the town centre by their wives and by students from Hull and York.

Printing militants alarmed by threats to unity

by Mike Heym

MILITANTS in the printing industry are confused and alarmed at the growing split developing within the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades.

Formed in 1965 by the coming together of NATSOPA (operative printers) and the NUPBPW (paper workers), the union has consisted of two virtually autonomous divisions each seeming to pursue its own interests. Matters have been brought to a head by certain officials of Division A (paperworkers) taking out injunctions against branch officials and executive members of Division 1 in order to get them to implement the decisions of the 1968 Brighton Rules Revision Conference.

In response the Division 1 (NATSOPA) executive have issued a pamphlet to all members written by General Secretary Richard Briginshaw outlining their position. Claiming that the 1968 rules are unworkable, Briginshaw argues that the

constituent bodies of the new union have opposed and conflicting attitudes towards amalgamation.

He claims that NATSOPA saw in SOGAT a 'new' union going beyond its constituent parts whilst the NUPBPW saw it as an amalgamation between two unions in which they would have the upper hand by virtue of their greater numbers.

Briginshaw is not without praise for the other large print union, the National Graphical Association, which he claims 'raced SOGAT into a 20th century position'. He fails to mention however that it was the NGA leadership which swung the latest British Federation of Master Printers and Newspaper Societies deal on the membership, dragging SOGAT in their wake.

This deal, for a measly £1 per week, opens the door to 'job evaluation' and 'method study', which really means redundancy and cuts in manning. If this is trade unionism in the 20th century, the rank and file should have nothing to do with it.



BRIGINSHAW: 'The rules are unworkable'

All militant printing workers recognise the need for unity. Mergers such as the £225 million Reed/IPC giant open the door to mass rationalisation and redundancy in the industry from papermaking to distribution, a fact which certainly has not

escaped the IPC executives.

The advent of web-offset techniques is likely to be accelerated in the near future with the introduction of new presses in the Daily Record (Scottish Daily Mirror), forcing others to follow suit.

A situation such as this demands more than ever a single united workers' organisation and a militant rank and file. But the rank and file are left in the dark while the rival bureaucracies squabble over who is to have the best jobs and the most power and influence.

The leaders on both sides have been slow to promote unity at shop floor level where it really counts. Moves towards such unity by members in different divisions, such as at the Radio Times (Park Royal) chapels and rank and file demands for joint branches in the North West area have been resisted by officials on both sides. Clearly all the talk about unity at the top means nothing while the workers on the shop floor are kept apart.

SOGAT members must demand

that the leadership hold special branch and chapel meetings to explain their views and the progress on amalgamation. These should be joint meetings of both divisions.

If the leaders are serious, as they say, about amalgamation, let them outline how they see it solving the problems of the workers in the industry. An amalgamated union with programme and policy of betrayal (as we have seen with the NGA) cannot do this.

In fighting for united SOGAT chapels irrespective of divisions, militants must demand of the leadership what their programme is on 'productivity deals' and 'job evaluation' and how they intend to fight rationalisation and redundancy.

Are they prepared to defend all existing jobs within the industry?

Are they prepared to fight for lower-paid workers in the general print and the papermaking industry?

Only with a fighting policy on these points will the talk of unity and amalgamation be more than just so much hot air.

'Is it possible that a socialist would tell blacks not to organise?'

LETTERS

FOR SOME TIME the left in Britain has not only been white but sections have thought white, that is, fought the idea of the black community forming independent organisations.

Their formation was inevitable and now that these organisations are a reality and, in the case of the US Panthers, are waging armed resistance against the biggest and most successful capitalist power in history, that position is obviously untenable.

The left is learning that revolution breaks the regimentation of bourgeois society: all sections of the oppressed begin to discover the areas of their oppression, work out and themselves carry out new methods of dealing with it, thus discovering their own capacities and power.

The mass movement makes its own mistakes and learns its own lessons. In the process it educates itself and all of us for socialism.

This is what an independent working class movement will show itself to be, what the women's liberation movement, the Chicano movement (people of Mexican descent in the US), the student movement and the black movement have already shown themselves to be. Those who do not rejoice at this burst of creativity and organisation either do not understand the revolution or are hostile to it.

Your correspondence columns

give some examples of this. Mr Birchall (25 February) believes that in 1965, when they took 'the lead' 'it would have been madness to ask (blacks) to wait for white workers'. What about in 1964?

Is it possible that someone who considers himself a socialist would tell oppressed people not to organise? Worse. When they do, he sets an 11 plus to see if they the oppressed are worthy of joint action with him.

In Britain today black people, new to Britain but not new to British rule, are finding their voice and strength under great difficulties. They went through the period of whites telling them what to do in their organisations and socialists telling them to support the Labour government (International Socialism, Spring 1965) while admitting that the government was racist.

Some of us, white and black, are very tired of racial superiority especially out of the mouths of professed socialists.

Mr Birchall (February 12) believes black people organise, among other things, to 'raise the self-confidence and consciousness of black workers'. They also educate

and break the race-based self-confidence of whites.

Who else will? The British left, though it has opposed imperialism, has failed to go with any depth into its history. It has never traced from imperialism the roots of British racism, which oozes from every pore of our society, including the letters column of Socialist Worker these past weeks.

As a result, what is substituted for a genuine objective analysis of racism is at worst an arrogance in relation to black organisations ('a black organisation cannot be a substitute for a revolutionary organisation' - if the Panthers' armed struggle is not revolutionary, what is?) and at best subjective and indignant pronouncements of white members of the left that they are

not racist, they are against Powell- and they demonstrate to prove it.

Good, but far from good enough. Powell and Callaghan have not caused racism as Chris Harman implied last week; they are its spokesmen and its products. Neither gods nor devils make history, and such a subjective analysis is not useful and educates nobody.

The British left is no longer exclusively white. British society for the first time in its history is being looked at by the people who formerly were subjected to its imperial rule.

Before Mr Birchall insists on his 'right' and 'duty' to criticise black organisations, he had better find out what they are seeing and the objective result of their activity in

terms of the British revolution.

Messrs Sullivan and Birchall imply that integration in Britain is desirable. This shows that they think this society is worth integrating into - at least for blacks.

'Scratch a Bolshevik and you find a Russian chauvinist' Lenin is quoted as saying.

Blacks do not want to integrate into this society, they want to overthrow it. They do not want equal exploitation, they want to end exploitation.

The Panthers who 'disrupted' (to quote Mr Sullivan) the meeting on the US Panthers made this clear and it is for these revolutionaries to decide whether to have joint action with the integrationists in IS rather than the other way round. - SELMA JAMES, London NW2.



Selma James (left) speaking at the IS meeting in solidarity with the American Black Panthers.

Black Panther spokesman called for work with white organisations

IN HIS LETTER for the editorial board (19 February) Chris Harman states, referring to the Black Panther solidarity meeting: 'Some of those in the audience seemed to be almost frightened of any growth of "Black Power" groups in this country in case these were to lead to a division of the working class movement'.

After hearing a speaker from the Black Panther Party of the USA address a meeting of the Black Peoples' Alliance in Birmingham (at which West Indian, Indian and Pakistani workers' organisations were represented) may I say that it would seem that it is the Black Panthers themselves whose fears lie in this direction and that this view would appear to be based upon a much more sophisticated analysis of the situation.

From the outset, the speaker stressed that those black militants who wished to disassociate themselves from meetings with white militants were utterly incorrect in their perspective. She went on to develop this argument and to draw from it the logical conclusion that black militants can combat racism most effectively by working with and within organisations where they can come into contact with groups of white workers.

The basis of this argument is, of course, that the nature of the exploitation of the black worker is essentially the same as that of the exploitation of the white worker - ie that both are a product of capitalism and imperialism. I consider this hard 'class' line to be essentially correct. When counterposed against this, the argument of Chris Harman and the editorial board seems inadequate in terms of giving a lead to black militants.

What cde Harman is saying is that black militants should form their own organisations (where these do not exist already) to fight against the racism of (a) Enoch Powell, (b) James Callaghan, and (c) the skinheads. In doing so, he makes the mistake of putting each of these on a par with the others - as if to pretend, for example, that the racism of Powell is essentially the same as 'Pak hunting' by skinheads.

But, worse still, while mentioning racialism of this sort, he completely disregards the fact that black and white workers face exactly the same problems in terms of jobs and housing - and fails to draw the conclusion that the only way to face a common problem is by a common front - of black and white workers.

Letters must arrive first post Monday. The editor reserves the right to shorten letters.

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CAPITALISM has nothing to offer mankind but exploitation, crises and war. The ruling classes of the world - a tiny minority - subordinate the needs of the vast majority to the blind accumulation of capital in the interests of competitive survival.

Imperialism condemns two-thirds of mankind to famine and calls forth movements of national liberation which shake the system and expose its essential barbarism. The constant and mounting preparations for war and the development of weapons of mass destruction place the survival of humanity itself in the balance.

The increasing intensity of international competition between ever-larger units drives the ruling classes to new attacks on workers' living standards and conditions of work, to anti-trade union and anti-strike laws. All of these show capitalism in deepening crises from which it can only hope to escape at the cost of the working class and by the destruction of all its independent organisations.

The only alternative is workers' power - the democratic collective control of the working class over industry and society through a state of workers' councils and workers' control of

WHERE WE STAND

production.

Only thus can the transition be ensured to a communist society in which the unprecedented productive forces thrown up by capitalism can be used to assure an economy of abundance. Only the working class, itself the product of capitalism, has the ability to transform society in this way, and has shown its ability to do so in a series of revolutionary struggles unprecedented in the history of all previous exploited classes.

The working class gains the experience necessary to revolutionise society by constant

struggle against the ruling class through the mass organisations thrown up in the course of that struggle.

To overcome the unevenness with which this experience is gained, to draw and preserve the lessons of past struggles and transmit them for the future, to fight against the pressure of bourgeois ideas in the working class, and to bond the fragmentary struggles against capitalism into a conscious and coherent offensive, a revolutionary Marxist party of socialist militants is required, embracing the vanguard of the working class.

The struggle to build such a party is only part of the wider struggle to create a World Revolutionary Socialist International, independent of all oppressors and exploiters of the working class, whether bureaucratic or bourgeois. International Socialists therefore fight for:

Opposition to all ruling-class policies and organisations. Workers' control over production and a workers' state.

Opposition to imperialism and support for all movements of national liberation.

Uncompromising opposition to all forms of racialism and to all migration controls.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the paper.

AMERICA

1970: year of the big

strike as workers fight soaring prices

From IS, paper of the American International Socialists

EVER SINCE the Johnson administration's massive escalation of the war in Vietnam sent prices soaring, American workers have been fighting to keep wages ahead of consumer prices. Beginning in 1966, strike activity rose rapidly.

The number of strikes, workers involved and man hours lost rose through 1966 and 1967, until nearly three million workers were involved. This strike wave continued in 1968 with more strikes lasting a longer time.

In the first eight months of 1969, in spite of the fact that no major national contract expired, the number of strikes and strikers stayed ahead of the 1968 level, an almost unprecedented occurrence. Since the General Electric strike began in October, the level of strike activity probably rose well above that for 1968.

This four year strike wave is as large as that during the Korean War and has already surpassed it in length by one year.

Unlike the Korean War strike wave, which was also a response to inflation, the struggles of the past four years have failed to put wages ahead of prices. In fact, real wages have fallen during this four year period, and are now below the 1965 level.

Not have other issues been resolved or even alleviated in most industries. Overtime is up, health and safety hazards have reached an appalling level (more people killed in the workplace in the last eight years than in Vietnam, and the rate of disabling injuries up 20 per cent over the past 10 years), speed-up runs wild and working conditions continue to deteriorate.

Struggle

Against this background, 1970 promises to be a year of dramatically intensified struggle. In this coming year, contracts covering nearly four million workers expire—this is a million and a half more workers facing contract termination than in 1969.

National contracts covering auto, trucking, meat packing, clothing, machinery, and electrical workers, to mention only the largest contracts, expire in the next nine months, reopening a Pandora's box of unsettled grievances and oppressive conditions, as the strike wave enters its fifth year.

For socialists and militant workers, the possibility of victories in the coming year must be assessed in light of the development of this strike wave and the political context in which it is occurring.

The inflation and increased taxes that set millions of working people in motion were caused by the massive increase in military spending required to fight a major war in Vietnam and underpinned by the growing long-term arms budget. In fact, each year it has been more and more the long-term military projects, like the Anti-Ballistic Missiles, that absorb billions of tax dollars.

It must be remembered that while the appropriations for the Vietnam war itself have risen from about \$25 billion in 1966 to around \$30 billion in 1968, the arms budget as a whole has risen from \$56 billion in 1966 to over \$80 billion in 1969. Direct payments to private corporations through 'defence' contracts have risen from about \$25 billion in 1965 to approximately \$40 billion in 1969.

It is both the war specifically and the constant rise in arms production in general that keep prices rising and taxes high. In both cases, the reason for fallen real wages and declining conditions can be pinned to political causes, rather than mere cycles in the economy.

The war and the arms budget,



Policemen in Lynn, Mass., preventing pickets from blocking entrance to General Electric plant

after all, are matters of conscious political policy by the nation's rulers. Without an attack on these policies, labour is not likely to make any real gains in 1970.

In this context, it is significant that what may well be the greatest strike wave in over 20 years occurs as the nation enters a political crisis over the war in Vietnam and American foreign policy.

Every strike wave, from the CIO strikes of 1937-41 to the French general strikes of May 1968 and the Italian strike movement of November 1969, has its own dynamic. The longer it lasts, the more its character changes.

So it is with the strike wave of the past four years. What began as primarily 'simple' struggles for wage increases and improvements in working conditions, have increasingly taken on the character of open power struggles between the workers and management, and not infrequently between the workers and the union leadership.

Thwarted in their economic gains, growing numbers of workers expressed their disgust with the settlements their 'leaders' made by voting to reject these contracts.

By 1967, 14 per cent of all contracts were rejected by the ranks at least once — something that barely rated a statistic a few years ago. Wildcat strikes grew in frequency and intensity, and the tendency of strikes to spread grew.

Indeed, the high level of strike activity in 1969 was due to wildcats, ie strikes that began as wildcat movements but were given some sort of sanction — such as the statewide New York telephone strike, or out and out wildcats like the West Virginia Miners Black Lung strike last spring.

Even the official GE strike by 13 unions was preceded by two years of wildcats and 'interim' strikes following the inconclusive 1967 settlement.

The tone of these strikes is that of a struggle for power and dignity rather than just wages. Indeed, rarely have the major issues of the past year centred on wages.

The miners' strike was over the deadly black lung disease and was political in nature. The New York telephone strike, which involved 40,000 workers, many of whom were not even affected by the immediate

issues, was about compulsory overtime, ie the right of workers to refuse it.

The spirit and tone of this strike pointed toward a show of power. The Bell system showed its power by getting the government and the courts to intervene on its side. The GE strike has been quite openly termed a struggle to break the power of the company over the workers.

While declining living standards under the growing strike wave, it has become necessary to pose any and all issues in terms of a power contest throughout industry. Capital is holding on to what it has won during the war — huge profits — and will not easily give in as the second round of contract openings come up in 1970.

Whatever the form, this power equation finds the government and the bosses facing the workers in a united front to 'preserve the national interest' or some such nonsense. When appeals to the 'patriotism' of the workers fail — as they usually do — and injunctions are disregarded, the police and the national guard may be used to break strikes. Indeed the police have already been used to guarantee free access to scabs and white collar personnel at GE.

The working class, more than any other group in society, has the power to meet this coalition of business and government and win significant victories.

Inadequate

The past decade has seen the rise and fall of militant movements in other sectors of the population—the civil rights movement, black power, student and anti-war protests — movements which were often very aware in their political opposition to the policies of this nation's rulers, but which proved to have inadequate power, owing to their lack of roots in the working class.

In contrast, a strike movement that saw 3 to 4 million workers swing into action and brought many industries to a halt would in itself set this coalition of business and government back on its heels.

This political confrontation can take many forms; however, we feel that one crucial characteristic required to ensure its effectiveness is that it is independent of the two-party system presiding over the American set up.

All of the gains won on paper could and probably will be erased by continuing inflation, if workers fail to attack its causes — the war and arms production — and if the fight for power at the workplace does not develop into a confrontation against the government as well as against the employers.

Rank and file workers should break out of the political strait-jacket which the cosy alliance

between trade union bureaucrats and the Democratic Party has imposed on labour. This bankrupt alliance has seen trade union bureaucrats call on workers to support the very politicians responsible for the policies which created the war, its attendant high taxes and inflation and government support for business against workers' struggles.

The growth of the anti-war movement into a truly mass movement and the political crisis faced by the Nixon administration, offer working people the best opportunity to intervene effectively in their own political interest. Clearly, the intervention of millions of workers in this crisis could swing the balance in favour of the anti-war movement.

In an atmosphere of political crisis, in which politicians will seek to gain the allegiance of working people with vague promises and conservatives will use the 'law and order' issue and fear of black people as a club over the heads of workers, much of the political potential of the nationwide strike wave may be dissipated, if labour and other mass movements do not

speak with a political voice of their own, on behalf of their common interests.

Even if the chances prove to be low in the immediate future, political independence must become part of our perspective, and it's not too early to advance the idea.

The experience of both the GE and NY Telephone strikes points to the need for building rank and file organisations and unity. At GE, for example, councils of shop stewards, cutting across job and union lines, could have strengthened the power of the ranks and laid the basis for the on-going fight with GE over contract administration.

Similarly, councils of rank and file workers, based either on the stewards or on newly formed workers' shop committees could have given the rank and file the organised power to flout the court injunction and have strengthened the links between upstate and downstate telephone workers

Strengthen

Although the union bureaucrats and even many local leaders will resist such a development, it should be obvious to the majority of workers that rank and file organisation can only strengthen their hand in daily shop floor fights and in strikes.

Rank and file organisations, indeed the very process of building them, can also be the basis for organising political struggle against war, taxes and inflation. Independent campaigns are but one form of independent political action in which workers may engage.

The International Socialists feel that the ranks of labour must go even beyond this and work toward the formation of an independent workers' party. The power struggle that characterises industrial strike actions is ultimately only a reflection of the power relations of the capitalist system itself.

Because they literally own the economy, the capitalists as a social class 'own' the government as well, and increasingly control every aspect of our lives on and off the job. The fight for power in the work place must become the fight for political power.

We have no timetable or magic formula for getting from 'here to there' but we do know that it is a rare strike movement that fails to produce some changes in the consciousness of at least significant numbers of workers.

More often than not, large, long term strike waves bring forth new political ideas among the working people and often new forms of organisation.

We urge those workers who are already opposed to the war to begin now to organise and educate their brothers and sisters. The price for standing still is, after all, not only the further decline of our living standards but the continued slaughter of our youth.

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Nixon's crisis means workers can make a political intervention

How Stalin's lunatic policies destroyed the Minority Movement



The General Strike: police dispersing marchers at the Elephant and Castle, London

by Bernard Ross

Communism and the British Trade Unions 1924-1933: a study of the National Minority Movement by Roderick Martin. Oxford, 50s.

THE MINORITY MOVEMENT was set up by Communist Party industrial militants in August 1924.

Somewhat reluctantly, they had accepted the demands of 'international proletarian discipline' — the insistence by the Third International (Comintern) and the Red International of Labour Unions that communists in every country should pursue a united front strategy in the trade unions.

The Comintern had lost its first heady optimism. It now realised that there were far too few class-conscious revolutionaries in Western Europe for the immediate conquest of power to be on the agenda.

Revolutionaries had therefore to accept for the time being their minority position. Industrially they should work within the 'reformist' trade unions, fighting for militant and progressive policies and at the same time educating politically those who worked with them.

The MM was thus to act as a front organisation, involving progressive non-communists and coordinating industrial propaganda on a national scale.

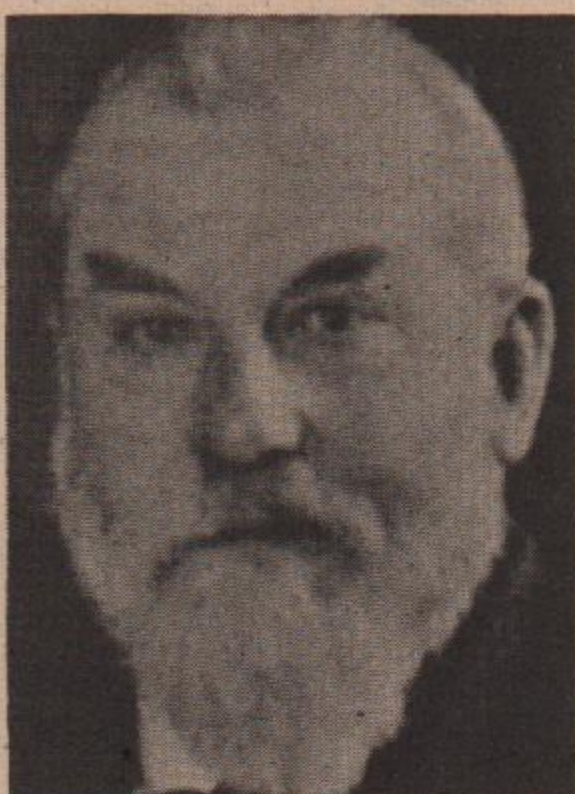
Modestly successful

At first, the new movement was modestly successful. After little more than a year it claimed over 500 affiliated organisations — local MM groups, union branches and district committees, and even five (admittedly small) national union executives.

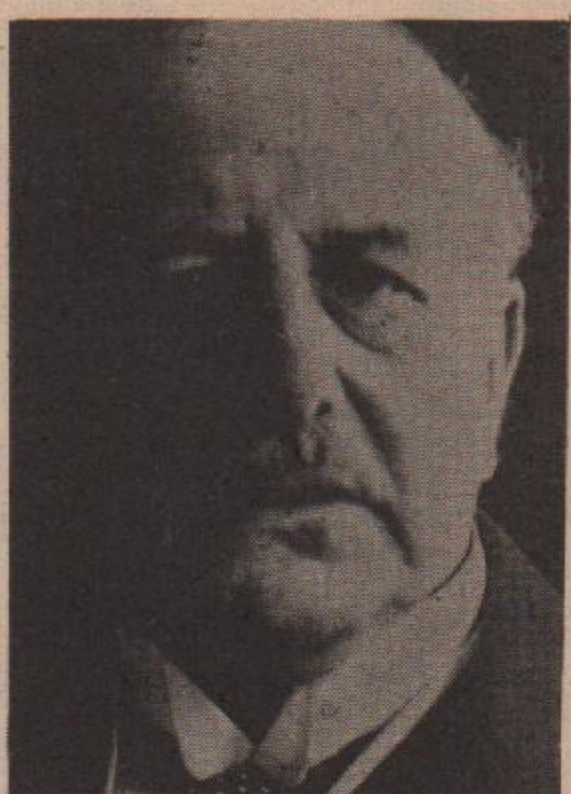
Support was strongest in mining and engineering, traditional centres of left-wing militancy and here there was evidence of moderate influence over official union policy. At the TUC the MM was instrumental in mobilising pro-Soviet sympathy to establish official links between British and Russian trade union centres.

But after this early growth and influence, the General Strike in 1926 marked a turning point. The MM was still too small and weak to influence events decisively (it was also disorganised by the arrest and imprisonment of many of its leaders).

But afterwards it led the bitter criticism of the TUC leaders' betrayal in calling off the strike and abandoning the miners. Its



After the defeat of the strike, Ben Turner (left) of the TUC and Sir Alfred Mond of ICI laid down the pattern of open class collaboration



disillusionment with the 'left' union leaders it had earlier supported was completed by the latter's endorsement of the new TUC policy of open class collaboration, signalled by the abortive Mond-Turner talks of 1928.

Soon the most vitriolic attacks were reserved for these 'pseudo lefts' and the original MM tactic to press the leadership to follow militant policies, now gave way to the slogan 'Change Your Leaders'.

The official union reaction was predictable. Previously, the MM had been generally tolerated.

Even Ben Turner of the Mond-Turner talks (he was leader of the Weavers' Union) had referred to MM members in 1925 as 'earnest, honest, self-sacrificing, determined, high-principled'. Now the MM was widely denounced as a mouthpiece of Moscow, a subversive and disloyal influence which endangered trade union integrity.

One by one, most main unions tried to prevent branches from affiliating to the MM and to exclude communists from official positions or delegations while the TUC gave a lead by withdrawing recognition from all Trades Councils which supported the movement.

These counter-attacks were effective in putting a stop to the movement's growth, but they did not destroy it. Indeed, with the end of hopes of an easy influence over official union leaderships, the MM was forced to concentrate on far more disciplined and organised work at shop floor level.

What finally destroyed the movement was the 'new line' of the Comintern, now dominated by Stalin, in 1928. The long attempt to transform social democracy from within was now abandoned.

The new analysis defined an accelerating world capitalist crisis which would inevitably generate an open war of 'class against class'. But the workers' present leaders —

political and industrial — were now irrevocably committed to serving the interests of the ruling class.

The urgent duty of revolutionaries was therefore to expose the 'Social Fascist' character of the reformist leaders and to give the masses an independent leadership.

For a year the MM leaders — notably Harry Pollitt and Jack Tanner — resisted the application of the new line to their trade union work. Though eventually forced to accept the correctness of the Comintern line, their fears were soon justified by events.

The new tactics involved the creation of breakaway unions, opportunistic attempts to exploit and foment unofficial strikes and efforts to build non-union factory committees which could form the basis for a new, revolutionary trade union movement.

The new policy was disastrous. Non-communist supporters had wanted to change their existing unions, not to destroy them — so few could stomach the new strategy.

Without exception, the militant

adventures which the MM pursued were fiascos. As the movement dwindled to a communist rump, all credibility and influence rapidly dissolved.

In 1930 the 'new line' was relaxed, but too late. Attempts to revive 'broad front' agitation failed miserably. Soon, rank and file movements were developing independently of the MM and by the end of 1932 the movement was all but dead.

Roderick Martin's history of the movement is a competent but uninspiring book (and, at the price, one that few workers will read except in the library). Books written from university theses usually make dry reading and this is no exception. Worse, bad editing confuses the reader unnecessarily (for example, the early pages give a lengthy list of British delegates to the Comintern; only in the next chapter are we told who these worthy gentlemen are).

Bewildering accounts

The author gives several rather bewildering accounts of communist industrial strategy in France and Germany, but simply does not discuss some of the most important problems which are central to his subject.

What was the non-communist left in the unions of the period (often mentioned in the book, but never explained)? How did its analysis and objectives relate to those of the MM?

Were the 'left' actions and attitudes of some union leaders before 1926 really due to MM influence and if so, what were the mechanics of this influence? Was their 'shift to the right' after the General Strike inevitable?

Was rank and file disillusionment and apathy an inevitable result of the strike's failure, or was

there a genuine possibility of exploiting the workers' experiences towards a revolutionary objective?

More generally, how much was the MM's failure due to its own ineptness and how much to the inevitable difficulties of a period of economic depression and trade union weakness? Would any different revolutionary organisation or strategy have been more successful?

Martin does not consider these questions nor does he give the information which might allow the reader to answer for himself.

But despite these inadequacies, the book is still worth reading by militants. It is a good guide to how not-to-do-it; the MM's opportunistic attitude to 'progressive' union leaders before 1926 and the fond delusion that a strong centralised TUC might act as a 'general staff' in the class war. The switch to violent personal attacks on the same leaders after 1926, totally ignoring the fund of rank and file loyalty on which all union leaders can draw. And the sterile sectarianism of the 'new line'.

Today, when all these errors are again widespread, the experience of the 1920s is of obvious educational value. More positively, the reader may draw some constructive lessons from the book.

Despite the special circumstances of the period, communists in the 1920s faced a timeless problem: how revolutionary socialists, by joining in the trade union struggle for economic improvements, may both stimulate the self-confidence and self-activity of the rank and file and also spread the political consciousness essential if the struggle within capitalism is to become a struggle against capitalism.

There is a lot which we can learn today from the experience of the MM in confronting this delicate task — both from its mistakes and from its genuine though temporary achievements.

Nazim Hikmet — fighter and poet

THE PUBLICATION in English of a little volume of *Selected Poems by Nazim Hikmet*, translated from the Turkish by Taner Baybars, 1967, (Cape Editions, paperback 7s 6d, hardback 18s) is his first work to be published here, where he is practically unknown, though on the Continent, says his translator, 'he is considered a major poet of his generation along with Neruda and Lorca.'

He is of interest both as a revolutionary socialist and as a poet — the two are, in fact, inseparable. He was born in Salonika, then Turkish, in 1902, and died in Moscow in 1963. He spent a good deal of his life in prison for his revolutionary activities.

There were periods of imprisonment between 1928 and 1933 and in 1938 he was sentenced by military courts to two sentences totalling 35 years 'for inciting army and navy cadets to spread communism'. The sentences were reduced to 28 years and four months.

AMNESTY

In 1949 there was an international campaign of intellectuals for his release and after a hunger strike in 1950 he was released during general amnesty in 1951, after which he escaped via Bulgaria and returned to Moscow, where 30 years earlier he had studied at the university.

There is unfortunately nothing about him in English, so that we cannot know what he made of the Soviet Union in the early fifties, after being there in the exciting revolutionary years of the twenties. But in 1951 he wrote a poem whose title Taner Baybars translates as *A Sad State of Freedom* and which would appear to have been written after his release from prison, but whether in Turkey or in Russia is not clear; it is any how an ironic reflection on the state of so-called freedom in various parts of the world today:

'You are free to slave for others — you are free to make the rich richer.'

Or
'You saunter about in your great freedom;
you're free
with the freedom of being unemployed.'

And of revolutionaries:

'You are free to be arrested,
imprisoned and even hanged.
There's neither an iron, wooden
nor a tulle curtain
in your life;
There's no need to choose freedom:
You are free. . .'

Certainly he was in prison when he wrote in 1949 of people dying of hunger in a world 'that's a branch bent with the weight of the fruit' —

'...and especially those in Asia,
Africa, Near East, Middle East,
Pacific Islands
and the people of my own
country,
I mean, seventy per cent of the
entire population -'

From Bursa Prison, on November 11, 1933, he wrote a poem to his wife, in which he thought of death 'as a dead man swinging at the end of a rope'. His heart, he declared, didn't accept that kind of death, but if the noose should be put round his neck —

'Well, those who're waiting to see
fear in my blue eyes
will look at Nazim in vain.'

In all these prison poems there is unflinching courage:

'I
in the twilight of my last morning
will see my real friends and you,
and only the bitterness
of an interrupted song
shall I take to my grave.'

There is also unflinching faith in the ultimate triumph of the workers of the world, since coward or brave,

literate or illiterate, they alone, numerous as the ants and fish and birds, are the makers and breakers, and only their deeds are of importance and worthy of record, and all the rest is 'simply idle talk'.

For 30 years after his first imprisonment, the work of Nazim Hikmet, the revolutionary, was banned in Turkey. Then after his death in 1963 his name began to appear in the press again, his translator — who was in Istanbul at the time — told me, and gradually all his works began to reappear.

It was a great volume of work and what emerged from it was a great poet, and one who revolutionised Turkish poetry, for he brought something quite new to it — free verse.

INTENSITY

Even from this handful of poems — a score or so — now available in English, it is impossible not to feel the intensity of the strong clear light of revolutionary idealism by which he lived and suffered and created.

It is interesting to speculate on where he would have stood today as a revolutionary socialist. It is hard to believe that he would not have seen through the shams that masquerade behind such flimsy masks — as socialism and communism today; when he cries, as he does, 'My people, oh my people,' it is abundantly clear that he is thinking in terms of the human race — Asia, Africa, the Near and Middle East, and 'my brothers in Europe and America'.

Even in prison he could sing of how wonderful and beautiful life was and dream of how much more beautiful it could be and was going to be, when the world was no longer a 'Merchants' Empire'.

Already, it seemed to him, in 1947, the day was brighter than it was, for people had already raised themselves 'half way up on their elbows. . .'

ETHEL MANNIN

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Picture: Jeff Pick

Lebus—the armchair millionaires sit back as 1000 are sacked

by Laurie Flynn

AS THE FIRST of the 1000 Lebus furniture workers in Tottenham, North London, leave their jobs for the last time, they go accompanied by explanations that 'fate struck them down'.

The Lebus family, the theory goes, called in people who were not their blood relatives in a desperate attempt to increase the profit to capital employed ratio.

Chief of the whizz-kids was a Leonard Grosbard. He started to 'rationalise' the factory, selling off the land to the Greater London Council for a cool £3 million, making 1500 workers redundant and bringing in new plant and machinery to mechanise the production process.

Some workers believe that the failure of this attempt was due solely to his evil genius and lack of knowledge of the furniture industry. Others have different tales to tell.

Higher work rates

Harris Lebus launched a new brand of furniture once they had sifted through the labour force, laid down the new machines and set the new and higher work rates. Workers in the main responded to the call to 'save the firm'.

The new range was produced by a new process. It was printed. Instead of using a natural or imitation veneer to surface the wood, pattern would be photographed and transferred something like a photographic transfer.

While this was a great technical advance in the number of cabinets that you could shift out the far door at the end of the assembly line, one or two little difficulties got in the way.

If, for instance, the surface of the finished cabinet got damaged in transit, it could not be repaired. The whole section had to be ripped off and replaced. Formerly a new piece of veneer could be let in.

No provision was made for repair

work to returned furniture. The story goes that large numbers of slightly marked cabinets were just burnt in the drive to get the stuff through the front gate.

There was disorganisation at other levels. The production line was never properly planned even in the classic capitalist sense of efficiency.

Secrets of the former Lebus success were abandoned. With the launching of the Europa range, the number of Lebus agents declined as quickly as the firm stopped loving up to them. What was worse, the Europa type furniture was pricey.

A new range was launched, Family Circle. This was designed with the credit squeeze in mind. It relied even more heavily on advertising.

A handsome sum was shelled out to a glossy advertising agency to bring to people's notice their desperate need for furniture — as if they needed telling.

Each Lebus salesman was kitted out with a brand new car. As a result, initial costs were so high that they would have had to re-furnish the whole of the British Isles to make a profit. And after all, isn't that the essential?

In spite of fantastic managerial incompetence, the firm might have survived if the environment had not been so hostile. For years the beloved Lebus family just rode along happy as Larry with profits rolling in.

They made no attempt to alter their production methods by strategic investment. Even today, with thousands out of a job, they're still millionaires.

Hoary old stories

But socialists cannot just leave themselves at the mercy of this crude capitalist logic. Although it is important to chip away at the hoary old stories about the golden age in the past under the fine family firm, it is also important to insist that this factory and yet another thousand men's livelihoods did not have to go to the wall.

It was here that the difficulty started for Tottenham IS branch. They had not been doing the regular work nor putting the regular ideas

at Lebus by which socialists win the right to be heard and listened to.

They had tailed along with the fatalistic attitude of even the best Lebus militants. But although the closure was announced two weeks ago, it had been an open secret for six months.

Now, when it is clear that militants and socialists have a clear duty to raise the demand for a government take-over to continue production and make badly-needed profit-free furniture, the demand is seen as coming too late.

Produce for need

It is still important that the demand be raised. Otherwise how else can we raise the possibility of a real fight against the next closure in Tottenham?

Lebus could have bentaken on in a fight to save the jobs of the many skilled workers. Their own broader abilities to organise production could have been harnessed to produce for need and not profit.

Here then are the twin arms of poverty 1970 style: a chaotic building industry with 120,000 unemployed and a furniture industry mismanaged and declining.

Meanwhile Lebus will continue its sidelines, assembling and upholstering at Reading and running a transport concern. Doubtless, even in such dire days, they will continue to shell out at least a repeat of this year's £73,897 in directors' fees.

The workers at Reading and the local IS branch had better learn from our mistakes.

BETWEEN March 1964 and March 1965, Britain's washing powder manufacturers put their prices up by 8 to 12½ per cent. In April 1965 still more price rises were announced.

In May these increases were referred to the new-born Prices and Incomes Board by the Labour government. At last after 13 years of Tory misrule, the new Britain was ready to get to grips with its massive wonda wash problem.

After due deliberation, the Board made its pronouncement. PIB report no 4 was of course impartial, the result of scientific research. It concluded that the 'increases in the price of soap products was justified by the sharp increases in costs.'

At last the poor could get on with their washing safe in the knowledge that the prices—though rising—were fair. All in all a winner for the soap industry: a PIB report, the latest in a continuing series of advertisements. And worth any number of special offer plastic daffodils manufactured in the sweat shops of Hong Kong.

Not as blatant as that? No conspiracy? Maybe not. But take a look at the introduction to the report where board members actually explain their briefing from the government:

... the government consider that it is in the national interest that the increases should be investigated by the National Board for Prices and Incomes in order to establish publicly the justification for them.

As Ray Spencer put it, writing on 2 February in the Financial Times,

'It seems that the government policy on references (to the PIB) will increasingly be towards looking both at pay and prices to demonstrate to the public the consequences of pay increases which are not necessarily associated with higher productivity and efficiency. This would be crucial to a policy of education and persuasion on pay and prices.'

We understand that some members of the government and the opposition were in favour of mass brain operations instead of such half-measures as the PIB. After all, why disguise it? To enslave you have to enslave the whole man.

WHILE BRITAIN was licking her wounds last week, counting the fearful toll of anarchy in the car industry, there were some few men and women left who rose above this.

They went last Thursday to that most exclusive of junk shops, Christie's in London. There the well-dressed sons and daughters of

a dying regime, attended by their well-spoken skivvies, gathered to do battle.

Slowly the tension mounted. Ladies' men forgot their ladies for a little while, sleek bankers forgot their worldly worries and for a moment laid aside the nation's export figures.

Last week, at Christie's, two bottles of French claret changed hands at £220 each, a new world record according to the papers.

A whole year's old age pension for a single man or woman amounts to £252.

Shadow boxing

THE SLOW and desperate torture that is unemployment is a matter of public concern for all semi-decent human beings in and out of work.

But in our midst, hunts a pack of careerists, crawlers and opportunists whose level of baseness is sometimes unbelievable. As this is a democracy, we have the right to elect them.

Here then are some extracts from one of their recent performances, given on Monday last in the Houses of Parliament, lower chamber, Commons. They stem from a debate on unemployment in the northern region where 5.2 per cent of the working population were out of work this January, where 67,900 people including 3,600 youngsters just left school were suffering.

Gordon Bagier, Labour MP for Sunderland South and sometime supporter of the Greek colonels, moved this motion: That this House take note of the grave threat to the interests of the northern development area arising from the Tory shadow cabinet's proposals at its Selsdon Park meeting; and congratulates the government for pursuing policies aimed at assisting the Northern development area to recover from the effects of the changing pattern of industry, and the years of neglect under the previous Tory governments.

Straightaway a Tory knight Sir Keith Joseph (who once jocularly remarked that he, too, had a housing problem — two houses) weighed in, to challenge his mortal enemy with the following: If the hon gentleman and his colleagues will refrain from quoting figures for February, 1963 — that was the most severe winter of the century — I and my hon. friends will undertake to refrain from quoting figures for 1947, the year of the fuel crisis.

The debate went on far into the night. At the end there were still 67,900 unemployed workers in the northern region, 3,600 of them straight from school.

Angry woodworkers occupy their union headquarters

by Paddy Faherty (ASW)

NEARLY 200 members of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, Carpenters and Painters working on the Sunley building site in Horseferry Road, London SW1, held a protest meeting on Wednesday 25 February at their union headquarters in Clapham.

They were protesting against the union executive's decision to end the dispute at the £15m St Thomas' Hospital site, SE1.

The dispute started when Laing, the main contractor, made 21 carpenters redundant and then took on a sub-contractor who hired workers on the 'lump' — non-union labour. A picket was set up and the dispute was subsequently made official by the union.

But the ASW executive was eager to end the strike on any terms and it failed to ask other unions on the site — Transport Workers and Building Trade Workers — to support their members.

An agreement was reached between Laing and the ASW that the lump workers would join the union and jobs, when available, would be found for the 21 carpenters on other sites. The men angrily denounced this sell-out and continued to picket the site.

During discussions before the Clapham demonstration, an IS member said that while he was not against demonstrating outside union head-

quarters he felt it would be more effective to occupy Laing's site and persuade TGWU and AUBTW members to leave their jobs and recognise the picket—official or unofficial.

This suggestion was withdrawn when the meeting was told that the members of the other unions were awaiting instructions from their executives. But an occupation was held — of the ASW offices.

Workers from Horseferry Road and the Barbican and Camden direct labour sites took over the union HQ when they became impatient at the delay in receiving a deputation.

When the police arrived and tried to persuade the men to leave they were angrily told, 'This is our building' and others held their union cards up.

A union spokesman said the executive members in the building were prepared to meet a delegation if the men left the building and elected one. The men rejected this but agreed to go to the main hall if the police withdrew.

The police left and a deputation of six was elected which met three executive members and the assistant general secretary for an hour. The men were given an assurance that their views would be put to the next executive meeting on 4 March.

But the workers decided to hold another demonstration at the headquarters on Wednesday to back their demand for the reinstatement of the 21 carpenters.

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Socialist Worker

'OPEN ALL FILES'

STUDENTS MUST DEMAND

by Martin Shaw

AS A NEW WAVE of militancy has swept Britain's universities in the wake of the disclosures of political spying at Warwick University, the authorities, nationally at least, appeared to retreat.

The Secretary of State for education, Mr Edward Short, has said that it would be 'quite wrong' for political records to be kept. And he added that he did not believe they were.

Similarly, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors has declared: 'The Universities are not interested in and should not keep files about political or religious opinions or affiliations or political activities within the law.'

And they have apparently agreed to students having access to individualised data (ID) files, although Monday's letter from Sir Derman Christopherson, the committee's chairman, seems to define a lot of material as 'not available for student inspection.'

Nevertheless, Mr Jack Straw of the National Union of Students believes that, 'There is considerable basis for further agreement.' He is worried only about the situation at Manchester, where four students have had injunctions slapped on them to stop them speaking at student union meetings.

But students cannot be satisfied by the Vice-Chancellors' statements, or by Mr Straw's separation of the injunctions from the 'files' issue.

LAUGHABLE

In the first place, the pious denials of keeping political records are quite laughable when set against the irrefutable evidence produced at Warwick (first published nationally in Socialist Worker on 19 February).

Secretary of State Short and the Vice-Chancellors gloss over the Warwick documents. But while these facts are covered up, what credibility can we give to their pledges?

Secondly, it is clear anyway that the files to which some access has been granted are not those likely to contain political information. In Warwick, it was in central files on 'university-student relations' that evidence of spying was found.

Those unions like LSE which have demanded the opening of all files to staff-student-trade union investigation have made a much more relevant demand, which exposes the inadequacy of Straw's attempted deal with the authorities.

And the files issue is not just a question of 'students' rights'. It is a question of political measures against socialists—Rootes Motors and Automotive Products Limited at Warwick were concerned about the effect of revolutionary propaganda at the factory gates as much as by student action on campus.

CONCERN

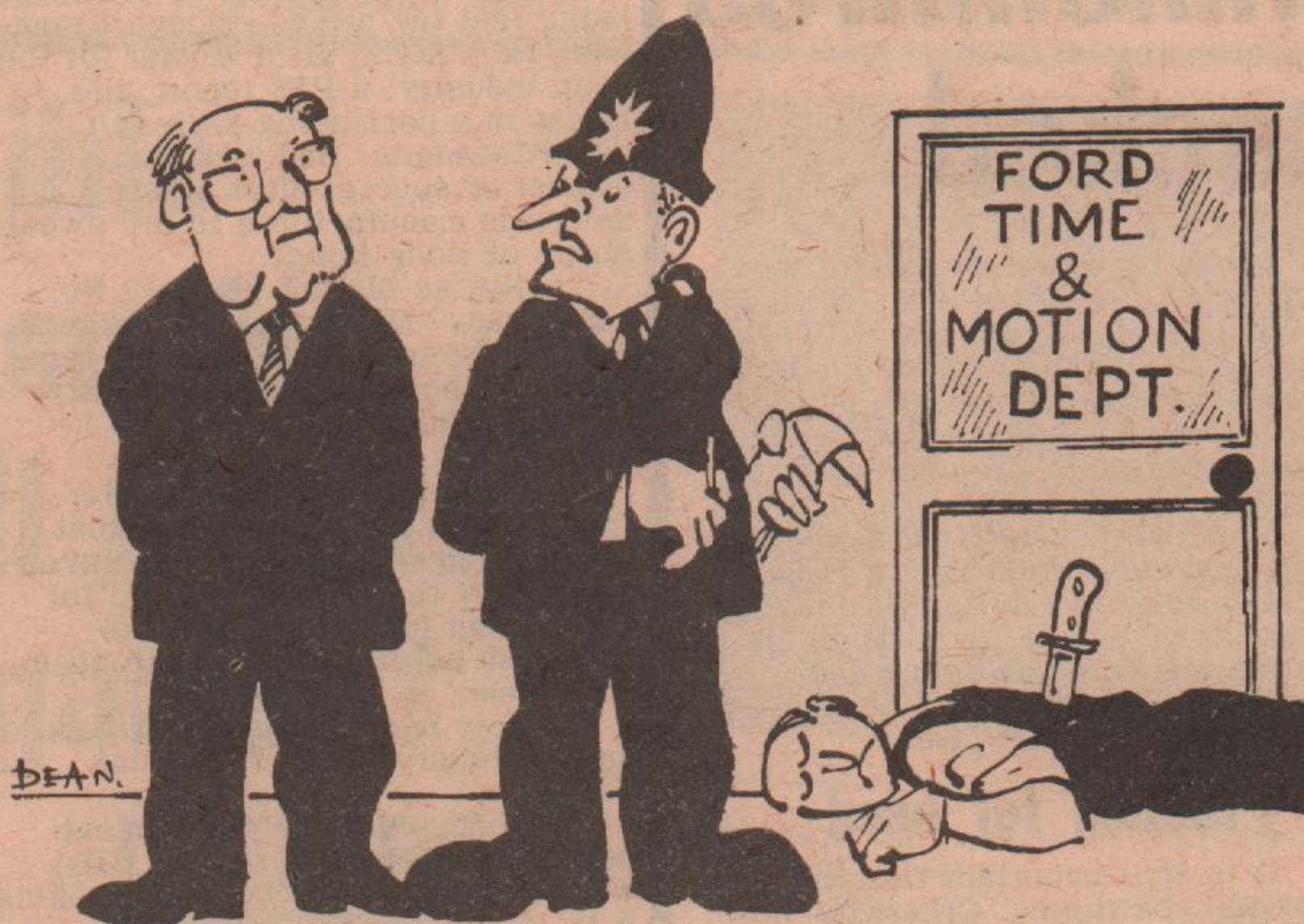
This is a general concern of big business, as an ICI internal document of 1968 makes clear. This asked: 'When can the elimination of this resistance (to the new MUPS productivity deal) be expected?'

And part of the answer was: 'There is evidence that "outside the company" influences have a bearing on this problem. (Tutorial staff at further education centres are formulating policy, etc and providing research for the more organised militant groups.)'

The attack on students' freedom of speech at Manchester is also a political attack. It was no accident that all four silenced are socialists, two of them IS members.

Trade unionists must be brought into the fight to investigate the universities' tabs on staff and students and to lift the injunctions. Students must continue the fight on a national scale and if necessary make Jack Straw's mutterings about a 'national strike' a reality.

In the long run, the only answer for students is to play their part in more activity of the kind which big business so detests—building a revolutionary movement of the working class.



'Did the dead man have any enemies?'

From Big Flame, a new Merseyside left-wing paper

Two year ban on Ron Beak by Post Office union

by Richard Kirkwood

RON BEAK, secretary of the London Head Office branch of the Overseas Telegraph Officers, has been banned by the Union of Post Office Workers from holding office for two years.

The union's action was in addition to disciplinary procedures by the management. Mr Beak's 'offence' was that he circulated a report on the Post Office by the Department of Employment and Productivity to his members.

The report had already been given to members of the management staff association, but was 'confidential' to the workers.

Mr Beak's action was taken with the full support of the entire union branch committee, which has declared that it takes responsibility for all his actions. The branch committee has now resigned and is working as an unofficial liaison committee.

Union members showed their support for Mr Beak when 1500 demonstrated last week outside the head office of the UPW in Clapham. They sent their membership cards into the office in a coffin.

This joint union-management attack on the militant OTO branch follows their strike last year and the consistent efforts to defend their members. This was too much for the union and the Post Office, which is anxious to complete its 'rationalisation'.

Both were anxious to stop militants seeing the DEP report on the

NOTICES

MERTON IS lecture series, Sun 8 March 8pm William Morris Hall, Wimbledon Broadway. Spkr John Palmer on The Permanent Arms Economy.

JOIN the International Socialists picket, at the Italian Embassy this Friday night, to demand release of Francesco Tolin and other militants. Three Kings Yard, W1 from 6.30 pm.

DISCUSSION on crisis in Further Education. Spkr Richard Kirkwood (NW Poly) Sat 14 March, 2pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq WC1. Enquiries: Nigel Wade (Borough Poly) 888 4165.

MANCHESTER VSC: 'comic strip' giving outline history of Vietnam war and case for NLF. 6d each, bulk orders 4s for 10, 102 Carter St, M/c 15.

MERSEYSIDE: Big Flame, new rank and file paper. Public mtg Sun 15 March 7.30pm Swan Hotel, London Road, L'pool. Come and help run the paper. All trade unionists, tenants, students, welcome.

LIVERPOOL SW public mtg: Should we go into the Common Market? Sun 8 Mar 7.30pm Wedding House pub, Highfield St (off Tithesham St) nr Exchange Stn. All welcome.

Post Office, which made some criticisms of both sides. The OTO branch believes that members have a right to see this report.

The members are determined to keep up the fight for democracy in the UPW. Other sections in the Post Office must rally to defend Ron Beak and the branch committee and to build a militant and democratic union.

Panthers are jailed

FIVE demonstrators were jailed for a week at Marlborough Street Court on Tuesday following a 150-strong demonstration outside the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square the previous day in solidarity with American Black Panther leader Bobby Seale. Seale faces a charge of conspiracy to murder.

The demonstrators were viciously attacked and beaten by the police, both in the streets and in West End Central police station. In court the police did not object to bail but the magistrate, St John Harmsworth, overruled them and sent the five to jail until their next hearing.

Four of the five were black. But at Bow Street Court, only one out of six arrested demonstrators was black. All were allowed bail until 2 April.

There will be a demonstration at Marlborough St Court on 10 March.

Stewards call off Leeds strike—but no firm pay offer

by Vince Hall

LEEDS:—25,000 clothing workers returned to work this week after their three-week strike for a shilling an hour on the basic rate plus a shilling for those on the minimum rate. Many of them were bewildered when they returned to their machines on Monday.

Their shop stewards had narrowly voted on 24 February in favour of a return to work with the full demands to be considered immediately by the management. Many of the stewards had not struck at first but had been laid off when the women had come out.

The militant women were let down by the labour elite of tailoring—the skilled male cutters who were not prepared to support the lower paid women workers.

At Montague Burton, where 6000 are employed, many of the cutters had been told to go and sign on the dole. These men are comparatively highly paid compared to the average female pay of £11 a week.

In spite of their shop stewards' decision, however, the rank and file voted overwhelmingly on 25 February to stay out until their full demands were met.

But by last Thursday (26 February) the unofficial strike liaison committee had cracked and voted unanimously to return to work. They gave the feeble and unconvincing excuse that they were damaging prospects for the forthcoming Menswear exhibition in London.

Pressure from bosses

The real reason for their return can be found in the pressure from the bosses, the local press and their own union including their shop stewards.

The workers were promised a recall conference of the National Union of Tailors and Garment workers.

However, the key factor was the organisation of factory meetings by the right-wing shop stewards—the first of which was at Montague Burton—to try and get the various shops back one at a time.

In addition to this, the employers helped by sending out ballot papers for a secret vote in one combine. Mr Frank Howells, the deposed militant spokesman of the strike liaison committee, told the workers to burn these papers but more conservative men decided otherwise.

When the weakening occurred, the liaison committee decided last Thursday 'to return to work on Monday 2 March on the understanding that negotiations commence within 48 hours.'

Industry shaken

The strike committee is staying as an unofficial standing body but it will not be able to call another strike immediately if its demands are not met.

The militancy of this biggest strike outbreak in 40 years has been dispersed for the moment but there are a lot of old scores to be settled in the meantime. Next time the liaison committee must be strengthened with militant workers.

But the militancy has not been in vain, for it has brought the union out of hibernation and shaken up the industry after years in the doldrums. A substantial increase seems likely and the workers may settle for 10d an hour.

Perhaps the women's struggle for equal pay—they have an £8 differential to make up—will give the workers sufficient strength for the next round, when they should keep the following points in mind:

1. Make sure the offer is referred back.
2. If you don't get the full 1s, throw the deal out.
3. Make sure there are no further productivity strings attached—workers should try to throw out the last set of productivity strings.
4. Make sure you have a shop steward who will fight for you.
5. Work in the union branches to kick out the backward union officials.
6. No victimisation of any militants.

Teachers win £120—but pay fight must go on

THE TEACHERS have shown once again that militant action pays. They have won an all-round increase of £120 a year.

This was the offer accepted by the leaders of the National Union of Teachers on Tuesday night after nine hours' haggling between local authority representatives, the unions and the Secretary of State for Education, Mr Edward Short.

After the settlement, Mr Short smoothly expressed his pleasure, said the teachers deserved more money but regretted their strike action.

But without the strikes, it is clear that the teachers would have won nothing at all. Militant action is the only way to break the government's incomes policy.

The tremendous response from rank and file teachers, who repeatedly demanded tougher action and more widespread strikes, forced the conservative and headmaster-dominated NUT executive to fight.

Not impressed

Now the union leaders are jubilant, but some of the rank and file who lobbied MPs at Westminster on Tuesday were not so impressed.

When they heard the terms of the settlement, there were boos, shouts of 'shame' and 'not enough'. The full claim of £135 was the only satisfactory answer as far as the rank and file were concerned.

And it is clear that if the executive had called out more teachers clamouring for action on indefinite strikes, then the full demand could have been won.

Great pressure was being put on the government by employers for a settlement. They were disturbed by the latest NUT move to put a ban on administering examinations this summer which would have disrupted industry and commerce's annual sorting out of future managers and workers.

If the settlement is accepted by local teachers' associations and the Easter union conferences, the £10 a month interim award will come into effect from April.

But the battle must go on. Teachers' salaries are still a disgrace.

It is a glaring indication of big business's priorities that the police and armed forces are given 8½ per cent and more (and good luck to them) while tens of thousands of teachers will still have to struggle on less than £20 a week.

The campaign must be for a massive increase when talks reopen and outright opposition to any form of 'restructuring' of salary scales which both union leaders and management favour.

This is a move to bring a form of 'productivity dealing' into teaching and will widen pay differentials. Such dangerous moves must be fought all the way.

Militant women hammer out campaign of action

500 representatives of the new wave of militancy among women met in Oxford last weekend to exchange views.

A mixture of old and young, housewives, workers and students, they came as individuals fighting for emancipation. There were members of Women's Liberation Workshops, trade unions, radical single-issue pressure groups and from many left tendencies, including more than 50 from IS.

Topics included the family, women delinquents, the history of women in capitalist society and their role in

radical and revolutionary movements. Lively discussions sometimes led to the extreme dissension to be expected from such a diverse gathering.

Friction arose between 'political' and 'non-political' women and it was unfortunate that many so-called marxists tended to argue in a stale and sectarian way.

The conference agreed to maintain contacts and co-ordinate activities by setting up a federation of women's groups. This would also have study groups on such subjects as communal alternatives to the

existing family.

But, whatever their disagreements, many agreed on one vital point—that full emancipation of women and the elimination of their oppression could only be achieved by a revolutionary change in society which would give both women and men real freedom.