

Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

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DEFEND ARAB REVOLUTION

by **CHRIS HARMAN**
just returned from Amman

JORDAN has seen one of the great national uprisings of modern times in the last week. The overwhelming majority of the population, led by the guerrilla organisations and the units of the popular militia, have fought to overthrow Hussein's reactionary government.

Even Western journalists report that the King's soldiers are complaining: 'The people helped the guerrillas when we came in'. The Royal Army has started to crush the popular movement in the only way it knows.

For the last week the full firing power of the artillery and tanks has been directed at the densely-packed, poorer sections of Amman where the guerrillas have the bulk of their support.

The shells have been tearing apart the corrugated iron huts, tents and crude concrete dwellings where the refugees somehow eke out an existence. Whole blocks of flats have been blown apart in order to 'flush out' a single sniper.

NO SCRUPLES

Estimates of those killed already approach 15,000 and the King's Army has no scruples about firing upon the Palestinian hospitals where some of the wounded could be tended.

Yet even in Amman, where Hussein's forces have been concentrated, the resistance seems far from crushed.

The Palestinians go on fighting because they feel they have little choice. For 20 years they have been herded into refugee camps, kept alive by a 7d a day hand-out from the United Nations and told to be quiet.

Now they see the chance to exercise control over their own future. They are not going to let that chance slip and rifle and sub-machine gun fire still blaze back in deadly defiance from the slums.

The British press has attempted to paint Hussein as a modern hero, surrounded on all sides, standing alone against all the odds.

ARTIFICIAL

This is only natural. It was a British government that carved an artificial kingdom on the east bank of the Jordan for Hussein's grandfather, Abdullah, 45 years ago. And it was British troops that propped up Hussein's throne in 1958.

When Western commentators fear that Hussein will fall they are really afraid that British and American big business interests

THE GUERRILLAS

EL FATAH or Palestine Liberation Movement. Leader Yasser Arafat. Main guerrilla organisation. Fights for right of Palestinians to return to democratic, non-racialist, non-sectarian Palestine but holds that the struggle for this goal is a separate 'stage' to the socialist revolution in the Middle East. Financed by Arab governments.

POPULAR FRONT for the Liberation of Palestine. Leader George Habbash. One of the two left-wing guerrilla groups. Concentrates on spectacular 'direct action' such as recent hijackings. Differs from Fatah on this point and openly claims to be a marxist-leninist organisation fighting for socialist Middle East.

POPULAR DEMOCRATIC FRONT Leader Naif Hawatmeh. Broke from the PF since, it claimed, PF's socialist commitment was mainly verbal. Involves itself in workers' and peasants' struggle and depends on them for money instead of Arab governments.

PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANISATION. Broad umbrella organisation of guerrilla groups. Dominated by Fatah but includes DF and PF.

PALESTINE LIBERATION ARMY Regular military units as opposed to guerrilla forces, organised by PLO and attached to Arab armies. PLO claims the tanks entering Jordan from Syria were PLA units.

will be weakened—particularly the oil monopolies who control most of the wealth of the Arab lands.

But it is not just Western governments that are backing Hussein. The Russians see in the revolutionary fervour of the Palestinians a threat to their own great power interests, such as the early re-opening of the Suez Canal. This explains Russian pressure on the Syrians to stay out of Jordan.

Meanwhile Nasser, for long the self-proclaimed 'leader of the Arab revolution', stands on the



Guerrillas fighting in the streets of Amman

sidelines, hoping that the King will win.

With the successes of the Palestinian forces in the north of Jordan, the Western press has raised the cry of 'foreign invasion', apparently from Syria. A 'crime' has been committed of sending tanks and jets supplied by the West which Hussein has used to pummel the local population.

GO TO AID

Stories of Syrian intervention cannot be checked. But there is no doubt that the population of Syria would be absolutely right to go to the aid of their brothers fighting Hussein's reactionary, despotic pro-Western regime and ignore the artificial boundary drawn up by the Western powers as part of the imperialist carve-up after the First World War.

The stories of Syrian intervention are a cover for something far more sinister. Both the Americans and Israel are planning to act if the Palestinians seem

close to success.

The United States is talking about preparations to 'safeguard its citizens'. When such talk has been used before, as in the Congo five years ago, it has been a smokescreen for the US to intervene and tip the balance decisively in the interests of its puppets.

On one side in the present conflict in Jordan stand all the old powers: oil monopolists and feudal sheikhs, Zionist politicians who practise anti-Arab racism and Arab monarchs who thrive on anti-Jewish threats, those who are waging a bitter war against the Vietnamese people and those who put down the workers of Budapest and Prague.

On the other side the Palestinians stand alone. Their only support are the masses in the other Arab countries as they fight for a land free from imperialist domination, where Moslem, Jew and Christian can live and work together.

A minority of the Palestinians see further than this. They reco-

gnise that such a democratic state is only possible in the context of a united socialist Middle East.

But in any case, there is no doubt on whose side every socialist and trade unionist should be in the present conflict.

**Victory
to the
Palestinians
Support
the guerrillas**

**THIS SATURDAY
26 September
Meet**

**Speakers' Corner,
Marble Arch 2pm**

Called by Palestine Solidarity
Campaign
Supported by International
Socialists

Dutschke march off

The demonstration called for this Sunday to protest at the planned expulsion of Rudi Dutschke has had to be cancelled. IS members should give priority to Saturday's Middle East solidarity march.

Will British troops go in?

INFORMATION received by Socialist Worker this week indicates that the British Army reserve has been put on stand-by duty.

Reservists have received documents telling them to prepare for call-out in the event of a

national broadcast. They will travel to army camps usually reserved for transporting troops overseas.

This information indicates that the government, in collusion with the United States, must be

seriously contemplating action in the Middle East.

As with Suez in 1956, such action could be under the guise of 'peace maker'. Or the flimsy excuse of rescuing British citizens in Jordan could be

given.

But the labour and trade union movement should be no doubt that British intervention will be on the side of Hussein and the oil monopolies and against the Arab masses.

FOR THE LAST six years President Eduardo Frei has been spearheading a Chilean 'Revolution in Liberty'. Elected in 1964 as leader of the Christian Democratic Party and hailed throughout the world as an example to politicians in other countries, his mandate was to ease class tensions in Chile by carrying out thoroughgoing reforms.

The failure of the Christian Democrats to carry out this mandate led to the 'ballot box revolution' which on Friday 4 September, in an 84 per cent poll, gave Dr Salvador Allende a lead of 40,000 votes over his nearest presidential opponent.

Allende's win was a narrow one with almost 1.1m votes in his favour, 36.3 per cent of the total.

Ranged against him were two candidates representing the extreme right and the centre. Jorge Alessandri Rodriguez, who was president from 1958 to 1964, was supported by the right wing National Party. His platform was the promise to enforce law and order and to smash the newly emerged guerrilla movement, and the rejection of any further nationalisation of copper mining.

The Centre candidate of Frei's Christian Democratic Party trailed third in the election with only 27.8 per cent of the votes.

Frei's presidency has led to the strengthening of both Right and Left on the Chilean political scene and to the undermining of his own support. For years Western commentators used Chile as a shining example of the 'democratic' road to industrial development.

Why did he fail?

Regimes in the economically backward countries face three main problems:

1. How to win national independence.
2. How to feed the people while also liberating the rural population from the old semi feudal land system.
3. How to raise the cash necessary to industrially develop the country.

Stop the flow

In Chile the Christian Democrats ran a country that had been given political independence by Spain in 1818. But like the other Latin American countries it had never achieved economic independence as well.

Since 1945 three big US copper companies have mined and sold the vast bulk of Chile's copper, which is the source of more than 75 per cent of all Chile's earnings from foreign trade.

Frei proposed to establish Chile's independence in economic affairs by the 'Chileanisation' of the industry. Something certainly needed doing to stop the flow of funds from the country into US coffers.

Between 1955 and 1966 just two of the big copper companies, Anaconda and Kennecott, had drawn \$390m out in profits, while total US investments in Chile today are only about \$500m.

But 'Chileanisation' was just a con-trick. Its terms — 51 per cent ownership by the government with management and the right to take profits out of the country left in US hands — were first proposed by Kennecott itself. Unwilling to fight

Allende:
a firm
'no' to
American
domination?



Harsh choice for Chile's new president

by Steve Jefferys

the US and his own wealthy Chilean ruling class, Frei backed down in the struggle for independence.

Many of the two million peasants (total Chilean population is nine million) have now escaped from virtual serfdom. But Chile still has to buy more than two-thirds of its foodstuff needs and without any massive capital investment in farm tools and machinery, the Chilean population continues to grow more rapidly than agricultural production.

The Christian Democrats could not solve the land problem because their middle class base wouldn't allow them to fight the interests of the old feudal families and the Roman Catholic Church. They could not mobilise the peasants behind a revolutionary programme without putting their entire government in jeopardy.

And they could not raise the cash necessary to develop industry in Chile, let alone agriculture.

Second course

Frei had the choice of either forcing the wealthy copper companies and ruling families to make funds available or of forcing the working class to provide the capital.

He chose this second course. In November 1967 he announced a compulsory savings programme in which workers would receive bonds for a new 'national capitalisation fund' instead of part of their wages.

The workers immediately gave notice that they were not just a pawn in his game. A 24-hour general

strike was called by the Chilean Trades Union Congress.

Demonstrators in Santiago were shot down by the police and Frei had to put the principal cities under military control and finally to withdraw his scheme before the tension eased.

Three groups

The present 'Popular Unity' coalition was put together at the beginning of the year by three principal groups on the 'Left': Allende's own Socialist Party, a non-aligned 'marxist' party whose left wing is close to the Movement of the Revolutionary Left, which has recently stepped up guerrilla activities and the Chilean Communist Party, which is strongly pro-Moscow. The CP has never wavered in its belief that the revolution in Chile would be brought about through the ballot box. A section of the Radical Party, a party of the lower middle class, was the third member of the coalition. If ruling class and US intrigues

don't succeed in persuading the army chiefs to take over direct power themselves, it is likely that Dr Allende will become the new president by majority vote of Congress on 24 October.

Will this event prove the correctness of the Chilean Communist Party's theory of 'revolution by the ballot box'? Will Dr Allende's 'marxism' solve Chile's problems?

Already he has shown his awareness of the fact that the US copper companies control not only the mines but also the refining sales and distribution networks. Only the major companies will be nationalised, the small and medium ones will be unaffected.

Retreat, compromise

Chile's ballot-box revolution therefore looks like going the same way as Frei's: retreat and compromise before the twin supports of Latin American underdevelopment — US capital and the privilege and army power in the hands of an aristocratic minority.

Allende can only overcome these obstacles by a revolutionary mobilisation of the workers and peasants. His parliamentary reformist politics make it unlikely that he would attempt this.

And even if he did, the dangers would still be great. The same army that has been used to shoot down strikers would not sit by and let the ruling class be voted out of existence.

As he will depend on a Christian Democrat majority in parliament, he has a readymade excuse for not delivering on his promises. The Christian Democrats insist on 'respect for the constitution and the armed forces' as a condition for their support, and Allende's spokesmen have accepted these terms.

But if American opposition does force Allende from compromise to total struggle and the setting up of a 100 per cent state-run economy (as it did in Cuba, 1959-61), even then Chile's problems would be no nearer solution.

The cash needed for development would still have to be wrung from the labour of the working class.

A regime based on the democratic mass organisations of the working people (unlike Allende's 'peaceful road' of using the existing cops and bureaucrats with a new team of leaders) would of course face the same problems.

But it would have another option open to it: to spread the revolution to workers of other countries, and especially the workers of America, Europe and Russia who can make available to the workers and peasants of countries like Chile the wealth looted from them in the past.

This is the task facing the Chilean workers. We can best help them to aid our common struggle by supporting all struggles against imperialist oppression.

And within those struggles, we must support especially the working class, which alone can make such struggles feed directly into the fight for international socialism.

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6 Cottons Gardens London E2 8DN

Tel: 01-739 1878 (editorial) 2639 (business)

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.

THE

by PAUL FOOT

IN A MOMENT of uncharacteristically religious fervour, Mr Anthony Wedgwood Benn called recently for 'a Moses' to lead the Labour Party to the promised land. As Labour delegates assemble next week in Blackpool for the first party conference since the general election rout last June, they will no doubt be gazing out to sea for an answer to Mr Benn's dream.

Judging from a spate of recent articles and speeches, however, Moses may well appear in the conference hall itself.

Mr Norman Atkinson, this year's candidate of the Left for the party treasurer, and Mr Eric Heffer have been seeking in articles and speeches to persuade British socialists to shelve their differences and join in yet another united effort to 'capture the Labour Party' and return a genuinely socialist Labour government committed to radical change.

Faint response

So far, these cries have met with faint response, if only because so many of us have heard it all before. Each parliamentary defeat of the Labour Party has been followed by similar demands from the Left.

Stafford Cripps' Socialist League in the 1930s and the looser 'Bevanite' group in the 1950s pleaded with conference delegates in the same language. The defeat of Labour in 1955 led to the most powerful, sustained and, on its own terms, successful effort of the kind ever launched.

In February, 1958, after a period of prolonged debate in the Labour Party following the publication of the party's 'revisionist' policy document Industry and Society, Stephen Swinger wrote an article in Tribune announcing the rejuvenation of a defunct 'ginger group' within the Labour Party called Victory for Socialism.

The purpose of the organisation wrote Mr Swinger, was 'to invigorate the whole body of the Labour Movement and sweep forward to a Victory for Socialism through the Labour Party'.

'We intend,' he announced, 'to recruit thousands of active Labour Party members, form branches, stimulate fresh discussion about the application of socialist principles and, above all, inspire renewed faith in the power of democratic action' (Tribune 21.2.1958).

Instant success

The new organisation, assisted by the expressed displeasure of Labour's National Executive, was an instant success. The founding meeting in Caxton Hall overflowed to two other halls.

The speakers adopted an evangelical tone: 'It is vital,' wrote Jo Richardson, the VFS secretary, after the meeting, 'to convert the mass of uncommitted people — to convert them to socialism and persuade them that the Labour Party is the vehicle. This cannot be done by leaving policy discussions to official committees or winning elections to the official machine' (Tribune 6.3.1958).

VFS branches were formed all over the country. In the big industrial cities the branch meetings were well attended by party enthusiasts.

Study groups were formed — on education (under Mrs Renee Short), on Planning and Incomes (under Bert Oram) on Industry (Ian Mikardo) and on Housing. Each group produced a pamphlet, and all the pamphlets were reprinted.

VFS took over the Rev Donald Soper's pitch at Hyde Park and

GINGER MEN'S LAST STAND

preached the gospel every Sunday. When America invaded Jordan in July 1958, VFS organised massive 'Law not War' meetings throughout the country.

In Tribune, which was going through the most successful and profitable period in its history, a regular column on VFS NEWS was written by Tom Paine (no less).

Mr Paine could write on 12 September: 'With active groups springing up all over the country, there's an impressive story to tell of the awakening of the rank and file of our movement. . . The road to socialism may be long and hard, but at least a start is being made'.

The remedies proposed by the VFS study groups were radical ones: Industry Your Servant, by Bert Oram, said the party's purpose should be 'not merely to run a mixed economy more efficiently than the capitalists, but to transform it into a socialist one'.

But above all VFS was loyal to the party. When Crossbencher reported in the Sunday Express that the VFS housing pamphlet had criticised Shadow Housing Minister Tony Greenwood, Tom Paine got very angry: 'The pamphlet,' he wrote, 'did not mention Tony Greenwood by name' (Tribune, 4.7.1958).

By the start of 1959, however, an election was in the offing, and VFS recognised its first loyalties. Tom Paine announced an 'into action campaign'.

'The return of a Labour government,' he wrote, 'is the first priority. . . VFS members, always the most active party workers, must take the lead in the 'gingering up' process' (Tribune 20.2.59).

New forces

While this process went on for the next eight months, VFS independent activity slowed to a halt. Study groups, pamphlets, independent public meetings were all forgotten in the campaign to elect a Labour government under Hugh Gaitskell.

When this campaign failed, in October 1959, VFS returned with a two-page Tribune manifesto to rally its troops once more.

By this time, however, new forces had arisen to absorb the enthusiasm of VFS members. One by one the big trade unions (the TGWU, the AEF, even - in 1959 - the NUGMWU) had passed motions in support of Britain's unilateral renunciation of the H-bomb.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament had grown into a mass movement and VFS members for the most part submerged themselves in it. The attempt by Right-wing MPs and Hugh Gaitskell to re-write the Party constitution on Clause 4 was beaten off.

Then, suddenly, at the 1960 conference the Labour Left achieved the aim to which they had been urging their followers for nearly 30 years. They captured the Labour Party through its conference.

Despite desperate gerrymandering by the AEU and other unions, the 'unilateralist' motion was passed.

There followed a period of rejoicing - and bewilderment. Nothing much seemed to change.

Gaitskell remained the party leader, supported by the overwhelm-



Should socialist principles be forgot, there's always the House of Lords...

The politics of the Labour Party and of the Parliamentary Road to Socialism are utterly irrelevant to the new militancy

ing majority of Labour MPs. Gradually, he won the big unions back into his fold. At the next Party conference—in October 1961—his own motion on defence and foreign affairs was passed by four to one.

After a brief, spirited counter-attack, the Labour Left started to trundle back into the fold. 'Unity' was achieved in an orgy of standing ovations at the 'anti-Common Market' 1962 conference.

Gaitskell's death, and his replacement by his former 'Left' opponent, Harold Wilson, set the seal on any further independent activity from the Left.

In 1963, three leading Left-Wing Labour MPs ostentatiously resigned from the executive of CND, and soon afterwards Mr Sidney Silverman publicly buried the corpse of Victory for Socialism.

Tribune contented itself with praising Harold Wilson or reprinting his speeches. 'Revisionism,' it explained later, 'was not on the agenda'.

In his last speech to a Labour Party conference, in 1959, Aneurin Bevan had warned his followers 'against such slack thinking: 'The argument, comrades,' he said, 'is about power in society. If we managed to get a majority in Britain by the clever exploitation of contemp-

orary psychology, and we did not get the commanding heights of the economy in our power, then we did not get the priorities right'.

In 1964 with the abject support of the Labour Left, Harold Wilson got a majority for Labour 'by the clever exploitation of contemporary psychology,' and, for six more wasted years, the commanding heights of the economy were occupied in greater strength by the ruling class.

As the Labour government, steered inevitably by the tides of international capital, stepped up its attack on strikers, low-paid workers, the old, the poor and the sick, the Left reeled helplessly from parliamentary compromise to parliamentary opposition.

No enthusiasm

In 1967 an attempt was made to revive the Tribune brains trusts of the early 1950s.

In 1968 Tribune announced a Socialist Charter whose purpose was to win the Labour Party for socialism.

The Charter attracted little support and no enthusiasm. And already the VFS campaigners of the later 1950s and early 1960s were



Gaitskell: the party went thataway...

flocking away from politics, probably never to return.

In 1964 more than 500,000 people voted in the elections for the constituency section members of Labour's Executive. In 1970 the figure had slumped to 350,000.

The losses were almost all from the Left, as the election results showed. Barbara Castle, the scourge of the trade unions, was returned top of the poll in 1969. Even Anthony Greenwood, whose housing policies had been the most startling and inexcusable of all Labour's home policy, failures, was re-elected to the executive.

During all those six years of right wing collapse, the Left made hardly a gain among the Labour rank and file.

Ironically, however, their previously stated aim—to win a majority over the Right at party conferences—had been achieved. From 1967 onwards, the party conference carried anti-leadership motions by huge majorities—on Vietnam, on Greece, most notably on incomes policies and wages freeze.

Each decision was greeted with a derisive sneer by the Labour government, and no one, not even the new 'Left' trade union leaders who were providing the votes, protested or cared.

Now even the last stimulant has been denied the disillusioned Labour Party workers. In spite of all the compromise, all the racialism, all the chauvinism, all the reaction, Wilson could not even win.

Ready to fight

The combination of political retreat and electoral defeat has left the party rank and file no option but to despair.

Yet for socialists outside the conference hall there is no cause for despair. The last two years have seen an unprecedented revival in militancy and in the willingness to fight back against the meanness and bureaucracy of modern capitalism. Workers everywhere, including low-paid workers who until now have been accustomed to accept 'their lot' without protest, have

shop-floor militancy.

In the universities a new generation of students have raised for the first time since the war the slogans and the theory of socialist revolution.

But one thing is certain. The politics of the Labour Party and of the Parliamentary Road to Socialism are utterly irrelevant to the new militancy. The striking workers and the striking students have had and will have nothing but contempt for the cautious, inconclusive arguments of the Labour Left.

For the most part, the Labour Left have failed to respond to the new developments. One by one, they have retired from the field of battle, many of them to the favourite pastures of able radicals—the House of Lords.

Nowhere to go

Rebels of yesteryear like Lords Brockway, Soper and Balogh have been joined since the election by Lord Harold Davies, former champion of anti-imperialism in South East Asia, Lord Greenwood, former champion of the municipalisation of rented property and Lady Jennie Lee, former champion of the abolition of the House of Lords.

'The House of Lords', wrote Jennie Lee in Tribune 13 years ago, 'belongs to the Tories and the past'. Now there is nowhere else for her to go.

Can it really be that the major task for socialists today is to start another 'into action' campaign to force the Labour Party into another round of debate, compromise, electoral victory and sell-out?

Will there be anything to show for 'a return to the Labour Party' but the slender possibility of the creation of Lord Heffer, Lord Atkinson and Lord Bidwell?

How much more relevant to build out of the deepening struggles of workers and students a new socialist organisation whose purpose and perspective is based not on dalliance and compromise but on the urgent necessity to take the power in society from the speculators and gangsters who now control it.

THREE MORE FOR THE HOUSE OF LORDS?



Atkinson



Heffer



Bidwell

Bosses 'solve' piecework

problem and provoke battle for parity

The Ford pay struggle: parity with the Midlands spurred on the workers



IN ORDER TO survive successfully in the cut-throat battles of international competition, it is necessary for the motor owners to accumulate substantially greater profits. They urgently require these profits in order to increase their investments in modern machinery.

With the depressed state of the home car market, however, these profits can only be obtained at the expense of the car workers' wages and working conditions.

Weaken

The long-term strategy of the employers is to weaken the workshop trade union organisation by the introduction of Measured Day Work, productivity deals, job evaluation and speed up. But this strategy, because it is long term, cannot resolve their immediate problems.

In Chrysler, for example, Measured Day Work was introduced in 1968 and 1969. With the abolition of piecework an hourly rate of 17s 5d was agreed.

The Chrysler owners obviously hope that this settlement will be beneficial to them in the long run, but it has caused tremendous upheavals in the rest of the motor industry.

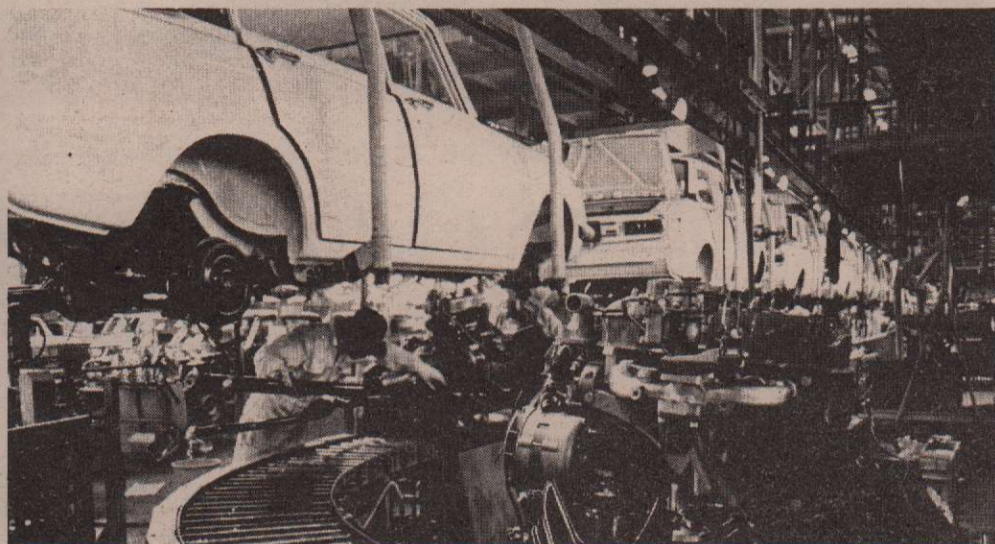
The Ford and Vauxhall struggles of last year were largely inspired by the demand of parity in pay with Chrysler workers at Coventry. This fight for parity is of crucial importance and is supported by thousands of motor workers.

In other words, by 'solving' the

CRISIS IN MOTORS:

3

A four-part series by JOHN SETTERS



problem of piecework wage drift another problem - 'parity' - was instantly created.

A militant AEF shop steward said recently: 'If you do nothing, you get nothing.'

The central task of the motor bosses is to stop workers 'doing' something. The success of the employers' long-term strategy depends on their ability to attack militancy and the right to strike.

The motor bosses are determined supporters of anti-trade union legislation. They have consistently supported the Tories' plans and have constantly called for 'action' against strikes.

They are particularly in favour of secret ballots, 'cooling off' periods and legally enforceable contracts of employment. The effect of the latter would be to make unofficial strikes illegal.

At the same time as they were enthusiastic supporters of anti-trade union legislation they also know that this alone cannot do the job.

When for instance, Mr A Nichol, Personnel Director of Joseph Lucas gave evidence to the 1966 Donovan Commission on Trade Unions he said:

'I am personally convinced anyway that legislation against strikes cannot be made to work. It is not a question of it being desirable or not. I do not think it can be made to work.'

Without underestimating the serious likelihood of anti-trade union legislation and the necessity of resisting it, it is clear that such laws will only be a part of the employers' tactics.

Stern

Just as important are the attempts of companies like Ford to introduce stern anti-strike penalty clauses and the 1969 Vauxhall proposals. These were:

'The unions will not cause or permit their members to cause, nor

will any member of the union take part in any unauthorised work stoppage, slow down or curtailment, restriction of or interfere with production in any Vauxhall plants.'

'The company reserves the right to discipline any employee taking part in any violation of this understanding and will expect the unions to review the conduct of any member in violation within union rules and constitution and to support such action as may be necessary and appropriate.'

The purpose of proposals like this are clear. The employers want to involve the trade unions in a joint attack on car workers' militancy.

In 1965 for example Ray Gunter, the then Minister of Labour, suggested that the motor industry should be declared a closed trade union shop.

Any unofficial striker could then

be expelled from his union and automatically lose his job. This suggestion was supported by a number of trade union leaders.

In August last year the Commission on Industrial Relations conducted an inquiry into the militancy at the Birmid Quilcast foundries at Smethwick. Arising out of this the company and full time union officials (Engineers, Transport and Sheet Metal Workers) have recently agreed that shop stewards who lead unofficial strikes should have their credentials withdrawn.

The Motor Industry Joint Council has been intervening in many recent disputes. This joint union/employers council played an important part in negotiating the recent Lucas settlement which, although giving a long overdue £4 a week increase, damaged the prospects of successful militant action in future. At GKN Sankey the council played an important part in selling out the strikers.

Refuse

The national trade union leaders have refused to fight the motor owners. When Lord Stokes attacked the British Leyland workers on 25 February this year all Jack Jones of the TGWU could say was that he wanted the company to become 'a showpiece of good industrial relations'.

Alongside all these efforts to involve the trade union leaders in opposing militancy, the motor bosses are also getting much tougher. Disputes in the industry are lasting much longer as a result of this policy.

For car workers faced with these threats a defensive struggle is not enough. The only way to fight the employers attacks is for the motor workers to themselves launch a counter offensive.

NEXT WEEK: How to win

BACON BOXES TO YOU, TOO...

How's this for rat-bagging? Denton Plastics of Old Trafford, Manchester, surely win a star prize.

A casual worker there recently managed a 'massive' wage of £18 3s for a 66 hour week.

When he got the job—turning out plastic bacon boxes for Tesco, warehouse work, deliveries, sweeping up, etc.—he was told that there was 'as much overtime as you want'.

GREAT! But when it came to pay day, the boss kindly told him that the overtime rates only applied to regular workers, so he didn't qualify for the time-and-three-quarters 'bonus'.

STANDARD

And it also came out that casual workers were paid at a rate of 5s 6d an hour instead of the usual rate for regulars of 6s 6d an hour.

This seemed to be pretty standard for the other casuals working there. One black worker worked for three full days on a moulding machine at 5s 6d an hour when blokes doing the same job were getting a shilling an hour extra plus the overtime and bonus schemes.

As if all this wasn't enough, the boss told the casual worker when

By a Manchester correspondent

he started that he didn't need his cards—so he hasn't got any stamps for the time he worked there either. Looking back at it, he wondered just what would have happened if he'd have had an accident while working there as he wouldn't have been insured.

He might have been able to sue the company for an accident but on £18 a week?

Eventually, he decided to pack it in. But before he left, the boss asked him if he'd like to work on the Sunday.

Suspicious, our friend asked if it was on time-and-three-quarters.

No, said the boss, just ordinary time, 5s 6d an hour. Because, he explained, 'Sunday starts a new week'.

Our friend told him where to stick his bacon boxes!

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In every major industry the question of productivity deals is of central importance. The recent dock strike over the fight for a basic wage of £20 per week was fundamentally connected to the employers' determination to introduce the Devlin productivity proposals. In strike after strike workers are struggling against productivity deals. At GKN Sankey, Ottermill and Dunlop the central issues of these disputes have been productivity. In the power industry and the mines the employers' attack has been through the threat of productivity dealing.

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MAGGOTS AND ABUSE-

THIS IS THE DUSTMAN'S LIFE



'We want five': dustmen on strike last year. Now another pay battle is looming.

MIKE CROKES works on the 'dust' with a 'shark' every weekday. He doesn't wear hobnail boots, or 'Cor blimey' trousers, but he does live in a council flat. Mike is 23. He is a dustman.

Mike is employed by Waltham Forest Council, which covers Leyton and Chingford in East London. He has a wife, Mary, and two children.

On a normal day he works from 7am to 2pm, straight through with no break for lunch. In this time he lifts roughly 350 dustbins, heavy and overflowing with rubbish, which he pours into the 'shark' - £7,500 worth of rubbish-eating machinery, which is supposed to hold 10 tons.

'The first few months I started, a year and a half ago, it was tough,' he said. 'I came home with a red-raw groove in my shoulder. Now I'm used to it.'

AMAZING

The work is filthy. 'Maggots are the worst part,' said Mike. 'When I was a novice, I'd lift the bins right up and get covered in maggots. Now I look, and if there are any, I knock on the door and ask the owner to remove the maggots before I remove the rubbish.'

'It's amazing, some of the women's reaction to this. One woman came out and she had an apron on, slippers, and was holding a wooden spoon in her hand. I told her about the maggots, and she stood back embarrassed and said, 'I don't live here.'

'Some of them blamed it on their neighbours, the people who lived upstairs, and even their children rather than themselves.'

What about the stigma of being a dustman I asked Mike?

'I don't mind personally,' he said, 'it's just that people conspire to make you feel humiliated.'

'Mary was ashamed at first. When we moved here, I was going to get the dustcart to move our furniture, but

GINNY WEST speaks to a municipal worker

she wouldn't have any of it. Now we are used to it.

'People really look down on you,' said Mary. 'When acquaintances ask me what my husband does, and I say he's a dustman, they smile, say Oh! and talk about something else.'

'Yes, it's as though I had some incurable disease,' said Mike. 'What about the children's reaction?'

'At the moment they are delighted,' said Mike. 'My little boy, who is 3½ years-old, says he wants to be a 'dustcart' when he grows up. He goes round telling everyone his daddy's a dustbin. Their favourite song is 'My old man's a dustman'.'

'When the strike was on last year,' said Mary, 'people came to the house saying, 'I know there's a strike on, but do you think you could just empty my dustbin?' They weren't sympathetic or anything. They thought Mike was earning £25 a week.'

AVERAGE

'They still think that,' said Mike, who earns a £17 basic a week. His average weekly take-home pay is £21. After £5 13s rent, heating, gas and electricity, HP for some of the furniture, food and clothes for the kiddies, there is nothing left.

Mike and Mary entertain rarely, they don't drink or smoke or go out often.

They don't possess a car and the

telephone standing in one corner of the room is just decoration, as it is cut off.

They have looked after their flat well. It is cosy and nicely decorated and they use the little money they have to the best advantage.

The conditions of the job are bad and certain people Mike meets on the beat don't help matters.

'There was this row of houses with drives a hundred yards long,' he said. 'You would be amazed where they keep their dustbins round there.'

'We were expected to walk up the long drive, go right round to the back of the house and pick up the bins. One wet day I had this cardboard box to collect, full of ashes. Of course when I picked it up, the bottom fell through because it had been left out in the rain.'

'I wasn't going to stand round all day shovelling up ashes, so off I went. Well, this lady and her daughter came out of the house. The woman pointed to me and said, 'Why don't you take that?' in a snooty voice. I told her I wasn't going to. Very friendly I was and I said I would collect it the following week after she had shovelled it up.'

'I pay my rates, you will damn well take that, you bastard!' she said.

'If I had a penny for every time someone said 'I pay my rates, take that, I'd be a millionaire by now,' said Mike.

'Old ladies round Walthamstow, living on £4-£5 a week treat you a

darn sight better than that. I've had pensioners come up to me and very politely ask me to take a little bag of rubbish, and give you a generous tip into the bargain.

'Well, you can't take money off them, can you? Yet people living in the wealthy area round Chingford, with Bentleys parked outside, never give a thought.'

I asked Mike about the provisions made for dustmen at work.

WEAPON

'On a wet day I'm supposed to dry my clothes on heaters which haven't been working since last winter. I pointed this out to the man in charge at the depot, but nothing has been done about it.'

'The shower is just a cold dripping tap, and that's about it. Gloves are difficult to get. My crew asked for some gloves and they said they hadn't got any. When we said we wouldn't work without them, they produced some in two minutes flat.'

'In the event of strike action by manual workers employed by the council, we will probably be the most effective strike weapon,' said Mike. 'I would like to reach a £20 basic agreement for dustmen, and similar higher wages for all the other manual workers such as those in sewerage, the gardeners, road sweepers and cleaners. These people are paid a shocking wage.'

Middle East

AS AN associate of the International Socialists and a reader of Socialist Worker for quite a period, I feel I must protest about the fanatical anti-Soviet tone of Stephen Marks' article on the conflict in Jordan (19 September).

Marks says that America, Russia and Israel support King Hussein in his war with the guerrillas. Maybe America, Israel and Britain support Hussein because of their ownership of the massive oil resources of the Middle East, but I am not aware of any Russian ownership of oil wells there.

I am aware of the fact that to men like Stephen Marks everything in the Soviet Union is not to his liking, but to equate the interests of capitalist America with that of the Soviet Union in the Middle East is the height of stupidity and can arouse nothing but confusion and disunity in the ranks of the left wing in this country. - J OGDEN (TGWU), Salford 6, Lancs.

WAS THE proposed expulsion of Dutschke from this country really the most important thing that happened in the world last week.

It strikes me as being quite incredible that all we had to say about the situation in the Middle East was a dull article by Stephen Marks on page 5 giving some background. I read in The Guardian last week that guerrillas in Irbid had proclaimed the first Arab Soviet. And I read that 200,000 people in the region were in the process of creating their own self-governing bodies.

How strange that I should have to rely on The Guardian for this news, of tremendous importance for the world revolutionary movement. - ALAN PURKISS, Epsom, Surrey.

EDITOR'S COMMENT:- Our coverage is often inadequate through shortage of staff and space. We also make mistakes from time to time about the relative importance of stories. But Alan Purkiss not only expects us to have the coverage of a large daily paper, he also wants us to publish items, such as the 'Arab Soviet', which have not broken when we go to press!

COTTONS COLUMN

AMAZING what twisted logic employers are capable of when they smell a good profit. Douglas Richards, president of the Society of Motor Manufacturers, has called for an increase in the maximum weights of lorries on the roads.

He wants the limit increased from the present 32 tons to 44 tons to allow for the haulage of even bigger containers. To crush any timid opposition that people might make to these monsters, Mr Richards is quick to point out that 'vehicles capable of grossing 44 tons look almost identical to current 32 tonners'.

No doubt feeling that he's on a winner here, the president goes on to show that, having more axles, the 44 tonners will in fact do less damage to roads and bridges than existing trucks. And just to clinch the argument, Mr Richards tells us that exports worth £144m a year are at stake.

Forward to 100 tonners, indistinguishable from mini vans, solving all our road problems and the balance of payments crisis to boot.

Body and soul

WORKERS threatened with redundancy at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders because it is 'unprofitable' will be glad to know that Mr Anthony McLaren, managing director of John Brown's shipyard - part of UCS - bought another 650 shares in his company two weeks ago. Presumably he's not too worried about profitability.

Meanwhile, his lady wife is considering moving house from their small, 10-room flat in London's Hampstead Lane. It cost a mere £22,000 and Mrs M has her eye on a £45,000 shack in 'a better class of area'.

The McLaren's son is doing well at £650 a year Highgate 'public' school where classes are small enough to allow him the personal attention needed by every child to develop.

Frequent visitors to the McLaren homestead, with £16 worth of caviar in the fridge, include the Shah of Persia's missus. She is on record as saying that revolution is likely in

the Middle East. We wouldn't rule out John Brown's shipyard either.

LETTER from the North British Steel Group of East Lothian, Scotland, to Pluto Press:

'Please send a copy of the book by Tony Pleff entitled: Employers' Offences - productivity deals and how to sell them.' Perhaps they'd like 'Russia - an analysis by Groucho Marx' while they're about it.

No ifs or butts

AFTER 15 years working with the same fruit farmer, Mr Arthur Smith has been sacked and must leave his tied cottage. Mr Smith's offence was that he did not empty a water butt.

The cottage where he lives, at Wick Road, Langham, near Colchester is owned by a Mr F E Williamson of Park Lane Farm, Langham. Mr Smith explained: 'Mr Williamson said I had to empty my water butt right away. I didn't and he didn't say any more about it until I was called to his office and given a month's notice for not emptying it.'

Mr Williamson's son Richard, acting as spokesman for the farm, said: 'Mr Smith was told to empty his water butt, he didn't and was sacked for disobedience.' He added, 'And I don't see it has anything to do with the newspapers.'

Fortunately, Mr Smith has obtained a court order to remain in the firm's cottage until October when he moves to a council flat. He'd better mind his p's and q's there, too.

Softly, softly

PETER JAY, the economics editor of The Times Business News, is an accurate observer of the ruling class scene. Last week he told his readers that it had been 'authoritatively established' in Whitehall that the government is quietly encouraging firms to raise prices.

Mr Jay added: 'The shortage of company liquidity is acknowledged and it is argued that the solution lies in raising prices where this is necessary for maintaining profits, investment and working capital.'

So what happened to the election promise to keep down prices? Exactly what always happens - the profiteers shriek and, quietly, the word goes out to allow prices to rise.

Meanwhile, back on the 'greedy workers' front...

TALKING of prices: Portland Cement is putting up prices by 12s a ton from 1 October. This is the third increase in 10 months. Last November Portland prices went up by 13s6d a ton, following a PIB report.

In March this year another 6s6d a ton was added. All three major cement manufacturers - Rugby, Portland and Tunnel - will adjust prices from the beginning of next month.

This is a total increase in the price of cement by 26 per cent in less than a year. There is no question of price competition - prices are fixed by the Cement Makers Federation.

'The best preventive of excessive prices is free competition' - Anthony Barber, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 12 August

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Please send further details of the meetings and activities of the International Socialists to:

Name _____

Address _____

Send to IS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

Socialist Worker

Rolls-Royce technicians locked out for 10 weeks in pay battle

A THOUSAND members of the Draughtsmen's and Allied Technicians Association at Rolls-Royce, Coventry, have been locked out for 10 weeks. When the company offered a 'final' 7 per cent increase worth £2 5s to £2 15s a week, in reply to a claim for a 'very substantial' rise, DATA members began an

by Peter Bain

overtime ban, work-to-rule and withdrew 25 key technicians. The 1000 members were locked out by the company. Rolls-Royce has also threatened to lock out 2200 members at Derby and 1500 at Bristol for refusing to handle work

from Coventry.

On Wednesday the company took DATA to a central conference, the final step in the engineering procedure agreement. It is unlikely that agreement will be reached at the conference and DATA expects the company to take further action against union members.

At present the locked-out men are receiving 80 per cent of their net wages in dispute benefit. A levy of 5s a month has been imposed on all members by the union executive, while the 6000 Rolls-Royce DATA members outside Coventry are paying £1 a week. And thousands of members are paying voluntary levies.

Resist demands

In May Rolls-Royce received £20 million from the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation. This was given on the condition that wage demands were resisted, especially those such as DATA's which rejected any productivity strings.

The dispute was discussed, if not planned, with the Engineering Employers' Federation. DATA will be meeting the EEF in January to discuss the union's claim for increases of between £5 15s and £8 5s on the minimum rates and the present dispute is vital to the outcome of the national claim.

In the past, DATA has been successful in picking off employers and forcing them to pay the new national rates before national settlement is reached. If the employers are successful in defeating the Rolls-Royce claim and in depleting the union's funds, then the chances of other members making progress are remote.

Encourage bosses

Leaflets issued by DATA appealing for support from other trade unionists point out that a 21-year old toolmaker in Coventry receives £10 to £12 a week more than a 21-year old technician. The leaflets say 'Good luck to the toolmaker'.

But they also point out that a defeat for DATA will encourage the employers to attack other workers by means of Measured Day work, job evaluation and work study. This is especially true of Rolls-Royce, where large-scale struggles seem imminent.

Manual workers in the Coventry factories may soon be laid off, although the management have taken unprecedented steps to avoid admitting that the lock-out has rebounded on them.

DATA is determined to meet the employers' challenge. The union has stated that the only thing that can beat us is lack of money.

Donations and messages of support should be sent to DATA, Onslow Hall, Little Green, Richmond, Surrey.

MINERS ANGRY OVER SIX WEEKS STRIKE BALLOT

SW Reporter

YORKSHIRE MINERS are determined to force a showdown with the Coal Board - that is the feeling throughout the coal fields. It was reflected in the unanimous decision by the regional union executive this week to recommend a vote for strike action in the ballot now being organised.

Militancy in Yorkshire is certain to be matched by most other areas of the country following last week's derisory pay offer by the Coal Board in reply to the union's claim.

REJECTED

The union is demanding weekly rates of £20 for 67,500 surface workers, £22 for 233,000 underground workers and £30 for 67,000 coalface workers.

The Coal Board replied with an offer of £2 10s for all men on the minimum rate, an extra £2 6s to those above the minimum and £1 17s 6d to coalface workers.

The National Union of Mineworkers' executive rejected the offer and decided to ballot the entire membership on strike action. A two-thirds majority will be needed to call the first national coal strike since 1926.

Militants in Yorkshire, who have been threatening unofficial action, are extremely critical of the union's handling of the ballot. It will take between five to six weeks to complete and many miners think this is a deliberate move to take the steam out of the situation and weaken the militants among the rank and file.

'RIGMAROLE'

One miner dismissed the executive's moves as 'rigmarole democracy'. He stressed that the leaders have the power to have called extraordinary meetings last Sunday to ballot on strike action. The result could have been declared on Monday.

A delegate to the Yorkshire area NUM expressed doubt on Tuesday that the ballot would get the necessary two-thirds majority. He said that working miners would vote for strike action - but retired miners and even some grades of under-officials can vote and are likely to form a substantial minority against the militants.

Furniture workers lobby union

FURNITURE TRADE workers lobbied their union negotiators on Tuesday in a bid to further a 17 per cent pay claim. The demand is for 1s 6d an hour for journeymen, 85 per cent equal pay for women and increases for younger workers.

A number of meetings throughout the country have shown a militant mood and some of the workers who joined Tuesday's lobby had taken strike action for the day. They promised further action if the employers adopt the usual policy of delay and evasion.

High bonuses and overtime hide the low basic pay - and more and more skilled workers are being reduced to the basic.

Productivity 'strings' are recognised as being against the long-term interests of workers and a demand for adult pay at 18 is likely to be achieved soon.

The struggle for a 17 per cent increase will become sharper as local struggles intensify. The credit squeeze has hit domestic demand for furniture and although the bigger companies are riding out the difficulties some factories are experiencing short-time working and



'Left' and right union leaders unite to break GKN strike

by John Setters

MAGNIFICENT but betrayed: that is the only possible verdict on the end of the GKN-Sankey strike at Wellington, Shropshire.

The workers were out for six weeks. They showed tremendous militancy and determination in spite of their lack of experience.

They fought for £8 10s a week all round to achieve parity with Midlands car rates. They also firmly opposed

productivity strings such as job evaluation, work method study, a new piecework system and bell-to-bell working.

They were abandoned by their union leaders who refused to make the strike official and waited until hardship drove the men back through the gates. They finally forced the men to accept £2 a week for most workers with more for some skilled grades.

The 'left' officials of the TGWU and AEF, Moss Evans and Bob

Wright, acted no differently to Ken Baker of the right-wing General and Municipal Workers. If the TGWU and AEF cannot put up a fight against a profitable combine like GKN, can workers be expected to accept their talk about 'fighting the Tories'?

The fight goes on at GKN. The workers face a tough battle against the productivity strings.

They have learnt vital lessons: about the determination of the bosses to thrust productivity deals down all workers' throats and of the urgent need for workers to rely on their own strength and not the empty promises of 'left' union officials.

NOTICES

LIVERPOOL IS public meeting: The end of the Labour government and the future of working class politics. Spkr Paul Foot. Tues 6 October, 8pm, Swan Hotel, London Road.

RANK AND FILE TEACHER: day school on 'restructuring and democracy' Spkrs Eric Porter and Bill Moroney. Sat 28 Sept, 10-5, Sarah Siddons school, North Wharf Rd, London W2-Edgware Tube, walk under flyover. Everyone welcome.

NORTH LONDON IS women's group: Sun 27 Sept 3pm, 380 City Rd N1 (opp Angel Tube). A union for night cleaners

SWANSEA IS: Trevor Jones, NUM South Wales organiser on the Triple Alliance, Elysium Bldgs, 7.30 Fri 25 Sept.

LAMBETH IS/YCL debate, Fri 25 Sept 8pm South Island Place Library, SW9 (near Oval). The role of the revolutionary organisation in industry.

IS SKEGNESS RALLY 2,3,4 Oct. Important notice to parents: there are fully-staffed and equipped facilities for children at the camp to enable parents to attend discussions. Still a few places left - contact IS secretary, 01-739 1878.

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Pilkington strikers call for big St Helens march

SW Reporter

General and Municipal Workers Union which has refused to help them and openly collaborates with Pilkingtons.

Widespread support has been shown for the 12 October demonstration. Otis Elevators and CAV-Lucas in Liverpool may vote to send deputations, and building sites throughout Merseyside may strike for the day.

Liverpool Trades Council will discuss support for the march at

ST HELENS:- The rank and file strike committee at the Pilkington's glass factories has called for a mass demonstration in the town on Monday 12 October to defend the right to strike.

250 sacked workers have been out for two months. They include nearly all the members of the rank and file committee that led the historic seven-week strike earlier this year.

The men were dismissed following a three-day token strike in support of union negotiating rights. They are fighting the management and the

Metal workers mount picket

SWANSEA:- 250 maintenance men at the Alcoa metal works are in the seventh week of their strike over management's refusal to honour an agreement to pay mates 80 per cent of craftsmen's rates.

A strong picket was mounted at the works on Monday. There was no trouble but strikers described the massive police turnout as 'looking like the riot squad'. The strike has been made official by the Engineering Union.

May Hobbs sacked

MAY HOBBS, recently featured in Socialist Worker through her efforts to organise cleaning workers, has been sacked yet again. She was told by a firm of cleaning contractors that there is no further work for her.

The sacking followed a warning to stop attempts to unionise workers. But the campaign to win women cleaners into the TGWU continues. Pickets outside contractors' offices and a meeting in central London are now being planned.

its next meeting. A St Helens' deputation to Scotland was promised support from factories in Govan, Scotstoun and John Brown's shipyard.

The Pilkington dispute is over the fundamental right to strike. All trade unionists should send full support to the rank and file committee and send deputations to the demonstration.

Financial aid is desperately needed. Donations to and march details from: Rank and File Committee, 10 Greenfield Rd, St Helens, Lancs. Tel: St Helens 25925.