

Socialist Worker

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Support grows for big anti-Tory turnout on 8 December

STRIKE LAWS FIGHT HOTS UP

SUPPORT is growing for a one-day national strike on 8 December against the Tory government's anti-strike laws.

In the last week key groups of car workers, engineers and printworkers have declared their support for the strike, called by the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions.

Division A of the giant general printing union SOGAT will stop work officially on 8 December. As a result, the national press is unlikely to appear on that day.

SOGAT will be backed by the London Region of the National Graphical Association, the craftsmen's printing union.

The executive of the British Leyland Motor Corporation combine committee has called a conference of its 4000 shop stewards in Birmingham on 29 November to discuss action on 8 December.

Action Committee

Car workers at the Chrysler plant at Linwood in Scotland have voted to strike. They will be joined by Edinburgh Boilermakers, Stockport engineering stewards, workers at the Ambrose-Shardlow engineering factory in Sheffield, and TGWU lorry drivers in Liverpool.

And Liverpool Trades Council have set up an Action Committee to work for a widespread stoppage of work on Merseyside on 8 December.

The need for militant action to defeat the government's plans becomes more pressing with every passing day.

As private industry notches up record profits for the first six months of the year, government spokesmen declare that they have only started on their campaign to weaken welfare services, increase rents and radically adjust the tax structure.

They have made it brutally clear that ordinary working people — not the rich, not the affluent, not the privileged — will have to pay to boost still further profits and dividends.

The anti-union proposals are part and parcel of this strategy. Legal restrictions on the right to organise and strike are vital to stop workers fighting for better wages and conditions.

Rouse workers

8 December must be a massive show of strength by organised labour, a fighting declaration that trade unionists will oppose the government all the way.

There must be no complacency. Trade unionists and socialists must redouble their efforts in the coming weeks to rouse their workmates to the dangers of the Tory plans and the need for a great turnout on 8 December.

Mass meetings should be called in every workplace. Councils of Action should be set up in every area to link and broaden the campaign.

Meetings and demonstrations should be organised in every major centre on the day of the strike.

8 December should mark the day when millions of working people stood up and declared in unison: **HANDS OFF THE UNIONS!**

Next week's Socialist Worker will have a full report of this Saturday's conference of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions.



Yorkshire Evening Post picture

100,000 miners out

YORKSHIRE MINERS pictured outside union headquarters on Monday while the executive voted on strike action. In the centre, with hand raised, is Arthur Scargill, delegate from Woolley Colliery.

The lead of the Yorkshire miners has been followed by pits in Scotland, South Wales and Kent. 100,000 men from 123 pits have joined the battle for a £5 a week pay increase.

The fighting determination of the miners has sparked

off a vicious attack from Coal Board boss Lord Robens. First he accused 'reds' of leading the strike, then he said that pickets were using 'violence and intimidation' to pull out other miners. He described unofficial strike leaders as 'dictators'.

The only dictator in the coal industry is bully-boy Robens who denies his workers a decent wage. Violence is completely alien to the miners.

FULL REPORT BACK PAGE.

TUC to back wage freeze?

TUC LEADERS are considering a deal with the Tory government that would offer Heath and co a year's 'voluntary' wage freeze in return for a postponement or watering down of the government's anti-union legislation.

The story was published in The Guardian on Wednesday by Peter Jenkins, a journalist who has close links with top trade union leaders.

If true, the story should serve as a grim warning to all rank and file trade unionists.

The TUC leaders have always been ready to reach shoddy compromises with the government of the day. But bargaining away their members' wages would mark a new low for even these merchants of sell-out and defeat.

The Tories are unlikely to accept the offer. Once they see the TUC leaders on the run they will step up their campaign against the unions.

And there can be no compromise on the part of trade unionists, either. Wages and conditions are not up for auction.

The TUC leaders do not speak for the rank and file. The anti-union laws must be smashed, not dressed up to place a velvet glove over the bosses' knuckleduster.

IS to hold conference on union laws

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS have called an industrial conference on 5 December in Birmingham to hammer out a militant policy for rank and file trade unionists.

The two key debates at the conference will be on the struggle against anti-union laws and the campaign for democracy in the trade unions.

A spokesman for the IS industrial committee said this week: 'As the Tory-employer offensive intensifies, it is vital for militants to discuss their tactics. And democratic control of the unions is an inseparable part of the fight against the Tories.'

The conference is open to all industrial workers in IS and to close sympathisers in industry.

Write now for credentials to The Secretary, IS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8 DN.

Printing union expels militant

JOHN LAWRENCE, a leading militant Fleet Street printworker, has been expelled by the executive of Division 1 of SOGAT. Mr Lawrence is Father of the Chapel (shop steward) at the Press Association.

On Tuesday, a High Court judge granted him an order that restrained the Division 1 executive from putting the expulsion into operation. The order lasts until next Tuesday.

Mr Lawrence had refused to support the split in the union. Division 1 leaders now call themselves by their old title of NATSOPA and summonsed Mr Lawrence to a disciplinary meeting. He refused to attend on the grounds that he was a member of SOGAT, not NATSOPA.

The High Court judge said he was not clear from which union Mr Lawrence had been expelled.

Opposition grows to union split: see back page.

Strike victory for women cleaners

THE CAMPAIGN to organise cleaning workers in London notched up an important victory on Tuesday when two sacked shop stewards at the Board of Trade were reinstated.

Cleaners in the building — employed by Strand Cleaning Co — came out on strike last week when the stewards were sacked. All the women recently joined the TGWU.

Pickets were held every night and cleaners from other London offices gave their support.

Background report: page 2

The paper that fights anti-union laws

Council workers show the way

WORKERS CAN DEFEAT the government. That is the message of last week's settlement of the council strike.

The Tories regarded the strike as a test case. The main aim of their economic policy is to keep wages down while prices rise. They want to achieve this by defeating a key section of workers in an attempt to prove to other workers that militancy does not pay.

The council workers in the past have not been militant or well organised. Until their unofficial strikes last year, employers, government and, regrettably, many union leaders, thought they were incapable of taking action to improve their miserable wages and appalling conditions.

But in spite of press attacks and the government's threat of troops, the dustmen, the sewer men, the grave diggers, the school caretakers and the dinner ladies have won a magnificent victory.

The 50s increase was not due to the kindheartedness of the employers or because of the impartiality of Sir Jack Scamp who led the 'independent' inquiry. Scamp is a veteran servant of the employing class, first as chief hiring and firing merchant for Massey-Ferguson and more recently as government 'trouble shooter' involved in such nasty pieces of work as the 1967 Longbridge dispute and the Devlin report on the docks.

Not all the workers' demands were conceded. Many wage packets will remain miserably small, with men taking home less than £14 for a 40 hour week. And council workers will have to struggle over the next two years. The Scamp report calls on the employers to introduce productivity deals before 1972.

Nevertheless, the council workers have made a vital breakthrough. They have reduced some ruling-class spokesmen to hysteria and frenzied demands for government action to stop the rot.

The government's intention is clear. Tory ministers are looking round for a group of workers to take on and defeat in open battle as a warning to the rest of us.

Threats of pit closures

There are threats that more pit closures will follow if the miners' strike goes on. There is talk of refusing the hospital workers the same increase as the council workers. There is a suggestion that the Tories should break with all their election 'promises' and introduce a wages freeze or 'incomes policy'.

But wishes are not deeds. If workers learn the lesson of the council workers' militancy, then the Tories can be defeated on one industrial battlefield after another.

The miners are strongly placed. There is a world shortage of fuel as well as just in Britain. If the power workers take action, government talk cannot keep the generators running. Hospital workers have already staged token strikes at individual hospitals.

But action in individual industries is not enough. Blacking by dockers and transport workers is needed to stop attempts to import coal or use substitute fuel. Sympathetic action must be ready if the hospital workers are forced to fight.

Above all, the attempts to legally bind the unions together with the attacks on the welfare services need a response from all sections of workers.

As the Tories are defeated in one section, they broaden their onslaught to take on others. Only a unified, militant response from as many sections of workers as possible can counter such attacks.

Widespread propaganda is necessary at shopfloor level to explain the dangers of the legislation and the need for united action. There has to be organisation from the rank and file upwards.

Action Committees, made up of representative delegates from as many factory organisations and union branches as possible should be built in each industrial centre. And the call must go out from the rank and file for union leaders who speak against the Tory measures to lead their members into real opposition to them on 8 December and after.

PASS LAW THREAT FOR IMMIGRANTS

THE PRESS has given details of the government's plans for yet another immigration Bill. It looks like being the nastiest one yet.

The law will be changed in two important ways. First, there will be a clear discrimination between immigrants from Europe and those from elsewhere. Only the former will be allowed to bring their wives and children with them.

Second, all immigrant workers will be regarded as 'aliens'. They will be allowed in only to work at a particular job in a particular city for a particular time. Only after four years, 'if a worker... has been well behaved' will they be allowed to stay for good.

Meanwhile they will have to carry passes, like the non-whites in South Africa, which the police can make them produce at any time, without giving reasons.

Such measures will mean even more blatant racialism. Many newcomers will find themselves with no rights at all. The police will be able to intimidate them at will. The most elementary family life will be denied them.

But these measures will also be a threat to white workers. Many immigrants will depend completely on their employers to stay in the country. Without legal rights they will be reluctant to involve themselves in trade unions and other activity that might get them into 'trouble'. The aim is to create a totally submissive labour force with a strong contingent of potential strike breakers.

The power to demand passes from some workers will only increase the ability of the police to intimidate strikers and pickets. Unless fought, such racist measures will weaken the ability of all workers to fight for decent wages and conditions.

What the TGWU told the militant cleaner:

'WHY NOT JOIN ANOTHER UNION?'

MAY HOBBS, a militant office cleaner, tells of progress in the movement to organise cleaners into the trade union movement.

EIGHT YEARS AGO, ten of us—all militant women who had been trying to organise—got the sack. The union didn't lift a finger to help us and things lay dormant after that.

We started up again in earnest about a month ago and once again the Transport Workers Union officials have been more of a hindrance than a help.

But this time I had other helpers. People like the International Socialists and Women's Liberation groups came in in a big way.

With their help we managed to organise four complete office buildings and various girls scattered all over London.

We have been out night after night telling cleaners about the union and why they should join. Applications for membership are now pouring in from all over London.

As well as this, people in a number of different towns have offered their assistance—Exeter, Liverpool, Coventry, Birmingham—to help organise the cleaners in their areas.

When we first started up I went to see a TGWU official. In a friendly fashion, he advised me that they thought I was a nut case.

Later I was told that I was too militant. I should really get someone else, more prepared to bend to the union, and not give them too much work to do.

'Perhaps you should join NUPE', the TGWU advised.

I tried another union official that I was told would be the appropriate man to organise the night cleaners. I tried to contact him over and over again, leaving phone messages all the time.

'Too big a job'

He never got on to me, but in the end I did manage to catch hold of him. He said: 'You're taking on too big a job, trying to organise the whole of the London area.'

I said to him: 'I organised more in three weeks than you could do in eight years.'

He turned a deaf ear to this. I told him that if they didn't wake up I would go to the Birmingham Workers' Control conference and tell Bill Jones or TGWU secretary Jack Jones, if possible, how bloody lazy they all were.

That seemed to buck their ideas up a bit. The official actually came down to a meeting with the girls at the Board of Trade and all 15 present joined the union.

I went to the Workers' Control Conference and spoke to Bill Jones privately. I told him of our plight,

and what was being done.

He said he would tell Jack Jones and something would be done. He would look into the unhelpful attitude of the officials.

I told him our aim was to have all the night cleaners under one banner. One good official for all of us is better than a hundred 'full-time' officials that do nothing for you.

After the conference, things really started happening. We have now got a district officer, Wally Churchouse, who seems to us to be the man we have been looking for—but time will tell.

He, at least, speaks to me on the telephone, which is more than anyone else did. He has promised to come to speak at two of our meetings, one in the Victoria area and one in the City area.



MAY HOBBS: night cleaners under one banner

'I told him: I organised more in three weeks than you could in eight years'

He told us: 'You and your colleagues are doing a wonderful job. You've organised most parts of London, which was more or less impossible when you had a number of officials with fingers in the pie in different districts.'

Embarrass the nobs

I've learnt a lesson—not to trust union officials. You've got to more or less embarrass them to make them work.

Only since the Birmingham Conference where we could openly embarrass the TGWU big nobs with our success in organising in spite of the officials have we now got smiles out of them.

And I won't stop worrying until every night office cleaner is organised.

Defend free social services

THOUSANDS of people would sooner go without the necessities of life than submit to a means test—hated by the working class for more than a century.

Both Labour and Tory governments have been presented with overwhelming evidence that people are reluctant to claim means-tested benefits, whether rent or rate rebates, prescription exemptions, supplementary pensions etc. During Labour's term of office, it was admitted that only one in four children who qualified for free school dinners were receiving them.

Is it any wonder? Is it surprising that a man in full-time work is ashamed to give a handful of payslips to an official to show his take-home pay is £12 10s, only to know that his children will then be branded by their classmates as the 'free dinner kids'.

There are thousands of poor mothers with children under five who will not answer the personal questions required to claim their entitlement of free milk and orange juice. Even if they were prepared to do so, the schemes are so badly publicised that many mothers don't know they are entitled to free welfare foods.

The Tories, in their usual two-faced way, promise to spend millions 'concentrating help on those in greatest need' but their scheme is disgusting. 'Selective' services, free only to those forced to prove their poverty by submitting to the degrading means test procedure, are wrong in every way.

The 'selective' system is time-consuming, embarrassing, administratively expensive in terms of paperwork and extra officials, and does not even succeed in

LETTERS

helping many who live in appalling squalor and poverty.

As revolutionary socialists, our main concern is not to worry about whether you earn less than £15, £17 or £20 to qualify for free service. The Labour Party and poverty organisations will be keeping their eye on that.

Our task is to defend the principle of 'universal' services, free to everyone on demand regardless of their income.

Only by providing all social and welfare services in this way can we be sure that everyone in need claims the benefits to which they are entitled, without having the humiliating label of 'poverty' hung around their necks. - VALERIE CLARK, London N8.

Good food versus starchy rubbish

ALL THAT Maureen Woodward said in her article about school meals is perfectly true (7 November). But simply to provide a cheap school meal service is not enough to solve the problems of malnutrition among working-class children.

My mum works in a school canteen. The premises are modern, the food is cooked on the premises and the meals are generally wholesome and tasty.

What upsets her, and the other cooks that work with her, is that whenever dishes such as roast meat and chops are served, the leftovers are enormous. Chips, baked beans, sausages, pies—all the

foods that contain almost no nutritional value at all—are devoured and second helpings are demanded.

It seems obvious that many of the kids have been brought up on diets where plain, unadulterated meat is a rarity. They simply don't like its unfamiliar taste, and in many cases won't eat it.

It reflects the fact that as prices rise, rents rise and wage packets refuse to stretch, then the easiest thing to cut back on is food. Foods with a high carbohydrate content are cheap and at least you always feel full on them, even if you are not getting all the right vitamins.

Another thing that affects people's diets is the television. Adverts for sausages and pies have been given all kinds of glamorous, mouth-watering images to foods that really are not much value nutritionally.

I feel certain that this in itself has an effect on diet. The recent fuss over breakfast cereals, which have become national habits in Britain and America, but contain almost no vitamins, proteins or anything else except roughage, illustrates my point.

As Maureen said, for many children the school meal is the only decent one they get. But even if school meals were cheap and full of all the healthy, nutritional foods that dieticians say are good for us, the problem would be only partially solved.

Eating habits have been established— Influenced by economic conditions. You can't force a kid to eat nutritional food just because it's 'good' for him even on the rare occasions when it is available, if he is used to, and likes, rotten, cheap, starchy food. - ANNA PACZUSKA, London N17.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Hong Kong workers get a taste of Tory medicine



Textile workers were at the centre of a recent bitter industrial dispute

AS THE HEATH GOVERNMENT prepares to attack the unions, British workers should know what is happening to their counterparts in Hong Kong.

There are lessons to be drawn from the results of harsh laws against workers in this British colony. The only way to stop the same situation happening in Britain is for the workers to join in united, militant action to stop the reactionary legislation and to continue the struggle after 8 December.

The population of Hong Kong is four million but only 100,180 are affiliated members of the left-wing Federation of Trade Unions and 73,465 are paid up members.

The right-wing TUC has 35,149 affiliated and 24,589 paid up members.

The membership of the left unions is increasing while the right-wing unions are declining.

But the attitude of the left unions is one of long-range political aims rather than changing the immediate situation. In the last year none of the strikes has been started by left

from CELIA CUNNINGHAM IN KOWLOON

unions but instead by right-wing unions or non-unionised workers. One union official has said that 80 per cent of Hong Kong's workers are not in unions because of fear of being victimised by employers.

Undermines

Trade unions in Hong Kong are governed by the Trade Union Regulation Ordinance (Chapter 332) of 1964. Picketing is legal but there is a proviso to the relevant section:

"Provided that it shall not be lawful if they so attend in such numbers, or otherwise in such manner as to be calculated to intimidate any person in that house or place (where a person resides or works or carries on business) as to obstruct the approach thereto or egress therefrom or to lead to a breach of the peace."

This undermines the principle of picketing. As a result, there have

been a number of police interventions in wage disputes.

The most striking example recently was at a strike by Great Eastern Textile Workers in Kwun Tong. 1600 workers stopped work when nine of their representatives, who had negotiated with the management for salary changes, were sacked.

130 workers were hired by the management elsewhere and brought along to the factory under protection of police and security guards. 300 of the strikers tried to stop them entering and the police, using force, arrested several of the workers.

Some workers had to be sent to hospital afterwards. All were union members.

The incident was seen by Mr. H.L. Gibson, General Secretary of the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers in Britain, who told a local paper that he would make a full report on the incident to the British government on his return.

In Hong Kong the Labour

Department is supposed to arrange conciliation meetings between workers and management. But when the management refuses to talk the negotiations are at an end.

The present strike by the Cross Harbour Tunnel Workers is an example of the uselessness of this government department. The workers came out because they were not paid the wage promised by the sub-contractor who employed them.

Locked out

The sub-contractor sacked five of the seven union officials. On the second day of the strike an agreement was made through the Labour Department and the workers agreed to return to work the next morning.

When they went back they were locked out and told they had 'resigned' as they had been absent from work for 72 hours.

The employer refused to attend negotiations arranged by the Labour Department and the strike is continuing its second week with no immediate hope of settlement. The only hopeful sign is that the workers are

still determined to press their claims.

The situation is bad now, but it will get worse. A new Bill has been introduced before the Legislative Council to curb still further the power of the unions.

The amendments incorporated in the Bill are:

Section 12C: Trade Union officials will be debarred from office if convicted of offences against public order.

Section 23: It is an offence to picket at an employers or worker's residence.

Section 24: It is an offence to block any street or way in a strike.

The last has been dropped when it was decided that it was already covered by another ordinance.

Commenting on these measures on a recent visit to Hong Kong, Mr. Anthony Royle, Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, said there were no grounds for reconsideration of the amendments to the union laws.

His opinion is indicative of the attitude of the Heath administration towards workers in both Hong Kong and Britain. In both places the Tories follow a policy of protection of big businessmen.

BIG STRIKE WAVE ROCKS SPAIN

A WAVE of strikes has hit Spain. In Madrid last week more than 20 concerns were affected, including banks as well as large factories.

Police used baton charges to break up workers' demonstrations and made many arrests.

In Barcelona one-hour strikes hit various factories, including the Siemens, Pirelli and Seat plants.

As many as 50,000 workers took part in sit-in strikes in Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao and Seville. The strikers demanded the release of political prisoners, protested at rising prices and opposed a new trade union law being drafted by parliament.

SHUTDOWN

Last week's events followed a rash of strikes throughout the year. Three building workers were shot dead in Granada in July during a strike.

A go-slow on the Madrid underground culminated in its shutdown in August.

The strikes take place against a background of legislation that makes all strikes illegal. Free unions are forbidden and workers have to join the state controlled 'unions' - the

from a Special Correspondent

syndicates.

All industrial disputes are supposed to be settled by the dictate of the government bureaucrats at the top of the syndicates. Yet strikes still take place and are even reported in the government-controlled press.

No law can do away with the contradiction between the interests of the bosses and the interests of the workers. Even in Spain a feeble attempt is made to channel militancy into verbal proclamations by the 'official machine'.

Workers have the right to elect shop stewards in the hope that this will enable the syndicates to discipline the real representatives of the workers. But this is not working either.

Many strikes take place because the workers refuse to accept the stewards as fit to negotiate for them - either because they have given in to pressures from above or because the syndicate has replaced democratically-elected stewards by their own nominees.

In recent years a new cohesion

had developed in the workers' struggle through the growth of the 'workers commissions', unofficial organisations of militants. These draw together members of various political organisations at the factory level of which the Communist Party is the most important.

'PACT'

Many militants look for guidance to the Communist Party but it does not provide any clear perspective for them. In a recent issue of its paper Mundo Obrero the party said that in some areas general strike conditions were approaching.

But it also calls for a 'pact' against the government of all forces opposed to the regime, including sections of big business. The party claims that without such a pact the mass movement cannot succeed.

The upsurge of the workers will go on. The government is attempting to impose a ceiling of 6.5 per cent for wage increases in a country where prices have risen by 90 per cent in the last 12 years.

Efforts to suppress the anger of workers by arresting militants have only deepened the mood of bitterness in the factories.

Productivity Dealing and the Miners' Next Step

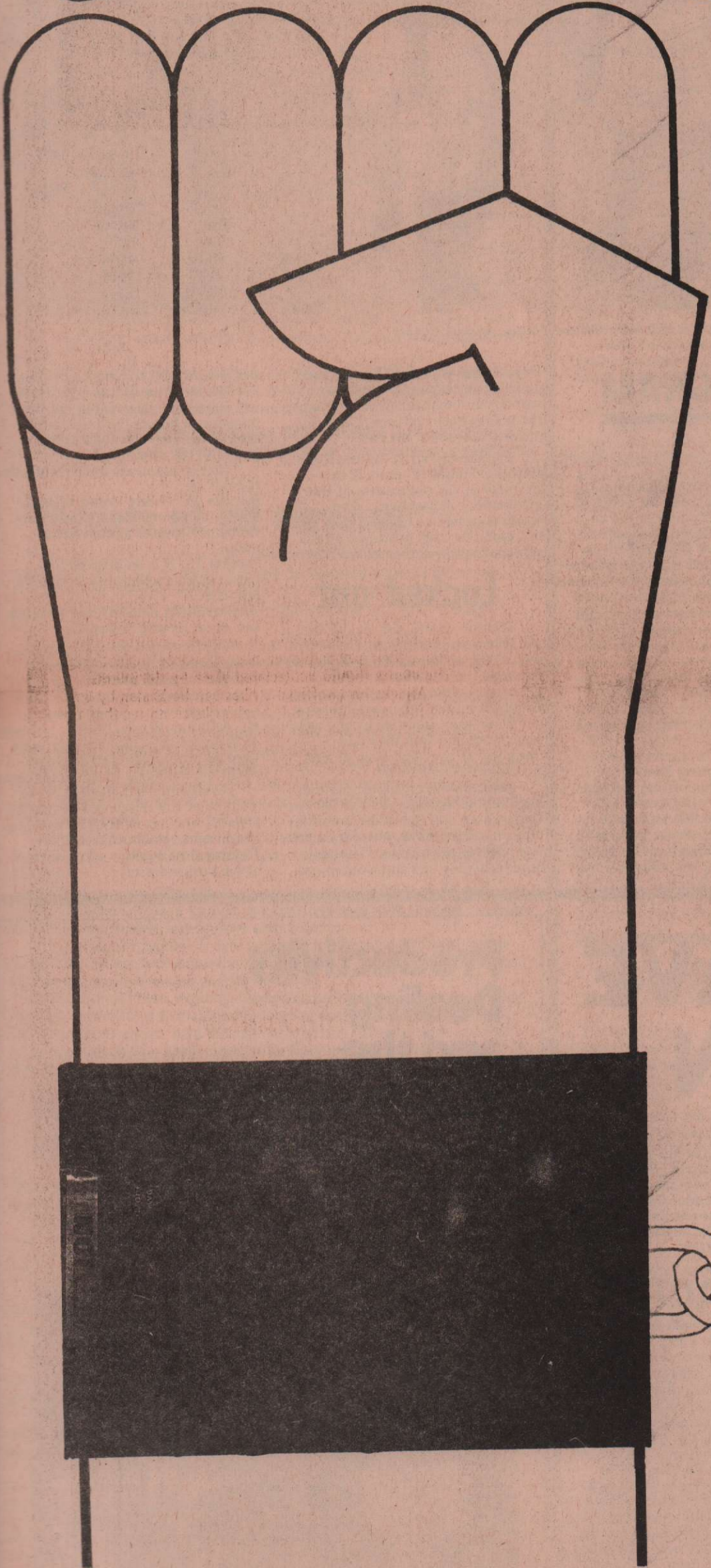
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SMASH ANTI-UNION



What the Tories propose

1. Appoint a Registrar of Trade Unions to make sure that the rules of registered unions are acceptable.
2. Make collective agreements legally binding.
3. Declare the 'closed shop' illegal.
4. Workers to be allowed NOT to join a union.
5. Make unions comply with an 'industrial code'.
6. Strengthen the Commission of Industrial Relations.
7. Set up an industrial court with status to adjudicate on 'unfair industrial actions'.
8. Declare a 'state of emergency' with a 60-day cooling off period before a strike.
9. Impose strike ballots.

How it would affect you

THE GOVERNMENT'S plans, if they become law, are a danger to every worker, every trade unionist in the country. They would gravely weaken trade unionists in the day-to-day work of improving wages and conditions.

Workers who break any of the new laws could be prosecuted, fined and even jailed.

Only registered unions would be allowed to call strikes—that is, unions whose rules have been approved by a government-appointed registrar.

But more than 95 per cent of strikes are unofficial. If the Tories have their way, 19 out of 20 strikes will become illegal because shop stewards' committees, district and regional committees of unions would not be registered organisations.

Last year the Yorkshire area of the National Union of Mineworkers went on strike. Because only the national executive of the NUM would be a registered union under the new laws, the Yorkshire regional executive could have been prosecuted.

Pressure on officials

Trade unions could be sued if they do not use their 'best endeavours' to end unofficial strikes. The strike funds of a union could be taken away from them by the courts. It would take some unions years to recover from such a loss.

There would be great pressure on union officials to get men back to work. And some of them don't need much encouragement in any case. Now they would have the judges and the law courts breathing down their necks.

The sweeping phrase about 'unfair industrial actions' includes such basic union activities as blacking and sympathy strikes. Any group of workers or a union that blacked supplies to a factory on strike could have an injunction imposed on them by a court.

Legal action could also be taken against workers who strike in solidarity with other workers in dispute. This means that the dockers would not have been able to strike in support of the seamen. It means that groups like nurses who cannot strike could no longer expect workers to strike on their behalf, as they did in the early 1960s. That would be illegal.

It would be 'unfair' for strike pickets to attempt to stop lorry drivers entering a factory in dispute. It will be 'unfair' for workers to threaten industrial action to have a blackleg dismissed.

Newspapers fined

And it will be 'unfair' for anyone to 'induce' (that is encourage) anyone else to go on strike. Journalists and newspapers that encourage and support strikes and call for solidarity action could be heavily fined.

It would be 'unfair' to induce workers to break legally binding contracts, which the government intends to bring in. Last year Ford tried to take the AEF to court to stop them organising a strike. Under the existing laws, Ford lost the case. Under the Tories' plans, the court would have fined the AEF for 'contempt of court' while the employer would sue the union for compensation.

'Closed shop' agreements would be 'unfair'. This would undermine the shop-floor unity of trade unionists.

It would hit hard at unions such as Musicians whose members face compulsory employment. The shopworkers' union would be in a bad way as well. So would printing and others threatened by closure.

Dangerous conditions

It would be 'unfair' to take any unsafe or dangerous working conditions into account. Last year, when a young worker was killed at Carrington, near Manchester, his tools and went home for the day. Under the new laws, the employer could have sued them.

Any groups of workers who 'resort to a 'stop work' procedure' (and that can take up to 14 days) could be sued for dangerous conditions could be sued. The number of deaths increased by 70 per cent between 1965 and 1969. Under the new laws, speed-up and productivity bargaining and more dangerous, workers must take immediate action to stop deaths.

Tories want to take that right away. White-collar workers would be in a bad way. Last year, the Inland Revenue Association (the regional branch of the IAA) took a half-day token strike in support of a claim. This action sparked off the through which they won an interim award a year.

The teachers would have been on strike on at least two counts under the new laws. The strikes were in breach of an existing law—the demand was for an extra day. Secondly, local branches of the NUT were not registered bodies and could not call a strike.

Ballots not demanded

If the government felt that a strike was in the 'national interest' (the bosses and the government) then they could declare a 'State of Emergency' and prevent unions or workers from financing industrial action. The only way to stop this is the famous 'right to work'—this is the famous 'right to work'—in addition, the government could order a strike before any industrial action is taken.

There is nothing 'democratic' about imposing on workers by the bosses' through mass meetings can workers of their mates and their collective action. The pressures on an individual worker, the daily paper, the television—will be increased.

It all adds up to a legal framework that will handcuff and shackle the trade union movement. Imagine any strike in recent years. The Tories' plans, would not have been 'unfair' against the 'national interest'. Unions, stewards, officials or national unionists could be successfully sued by the bosses.

If the trade union movement is to remain an independent movement, these laws must be opposed.

OUR PLACE OF WORK

UNION LAWS

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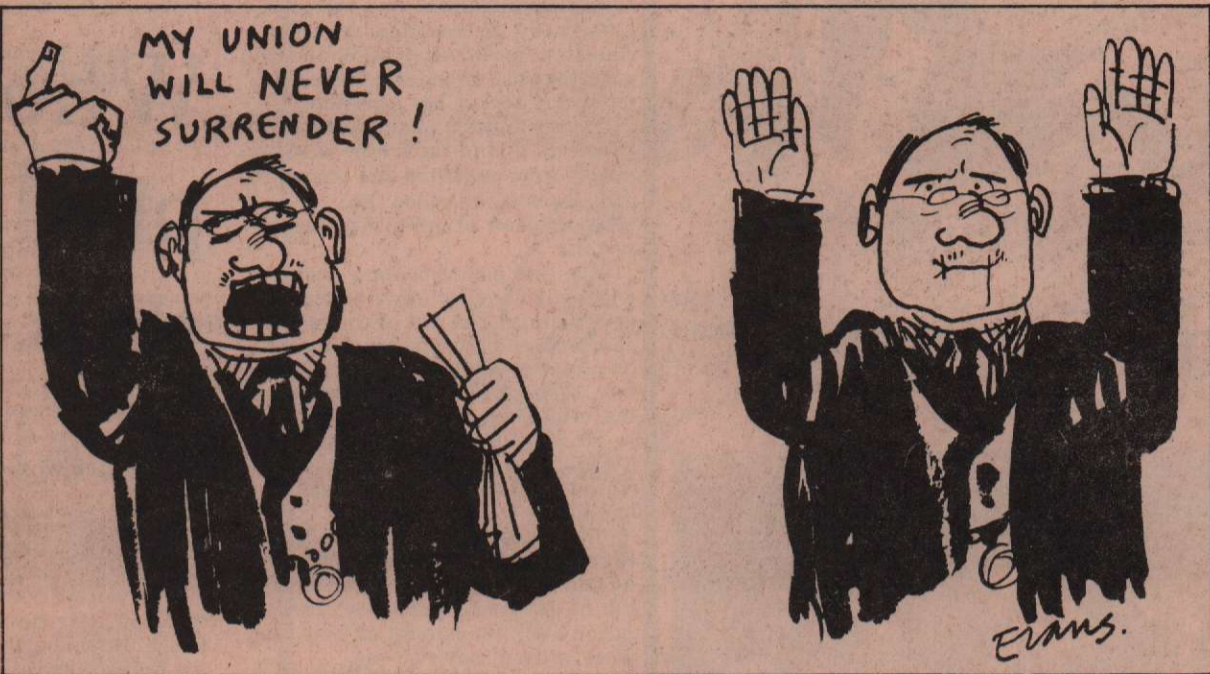
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ust be smashed.



How to fight ...and win

THE TORY LAWS can be smashed, even before they get through parliament, but only if the rank and file of the trade unions are roused to action.

Trade union leaders could stop the Tories right now if they really wanted to. A declaration that they would break the laws and go on breaking them would force the government to think again. And an official national strike would stop them dead in their tracks before the Bill gets its first reading in parliament.

But the sad fact is that the unions won't do the job. Vic Feather, the TUC general secretary, declared that strike action against the laws would be 'irresponsible'. The TUC has met the government, pleaded for more time for discussion and decided to call an emergency conference ... next year!

FIGHT TOOTH AND NAIL

What is needed is a militant strategy that will fight tooth and nail to stop the plans becoming law and that will disrupt and break them if the Tories do manage to get them on the statute book. Such a strategy must be fought for now by calling mass meetings at your place of work and winning support for it at every level of the trade union movement.

The government will set up national and local industrial courts. They dearly want to have trade unionists on these courts to give them an air of 'impartiality'. No trade unionist should sit on such a court. Without them, their pro-employer bias would be plain to see. The courts should be declared black by the unions.

Attacks on unofficial strikes can be beaten by writing into every union rule book a clause stating that any action by the members is automatically official.

To stop blacking from becoming an 'unfair industrial practice', every union should instruct its members that on no account must they cross picket lines or handle black goods.

No union should accept legally binding contracts. If one is imposed by a court, it should be broken with the full support of the union executive. Similarly, unions should refuse to abolish the closed shop.

As for national emergencies, if a 60-day notice is required then all trade unions should keep the government in a perpetual state of readiness by putting in strike notices every 60 days. Mass meetings should be called to vote and discuss on strikes and refuse to accept strike ballots. Ballot papers should be handed back to the union unsigned.

SET OF DEMANDS

In brief, we believe the following demands should be fought for:

1. Tell the TUC to abandon its futile attempts to get concessions from the government and announce its intention to resist the laws.
2. Executives of unions should announce that they will refuse to register with the new Registrar or assist in the work of the proposed industrial courts. They will refuse to pay any fines imposed under the legislation or accept any government-imposed strike ballots.
3. Unions should declare that they will not enter into legally-binding agreements.
4. Unions should instruct their members individually that they will have the full backing of the union in refusing to handle goods that are black or deliver across a picket line or take part in any sympathy actions.
5. Unions should declare their complete opposition to state-imposed and employer-policed 'agency shops' and should fight for 100 per cent trade union membership. There must be total opposition to any 'scabs' charter' and militant defence of workers' rights to discipline other workers who flout democratic decisions.
6. All unions should boycott the Commission on Industrial Relations and similar bodies.

The government is out to cripple the workers' strength in the union branches, the shop stewards' committees and on the factory and work-place floor. And that is where the fight back must be centred. Workers should be mobilised to action by:

Supporting the 8 December national strike against the government's laws and any other militant strikes and demonstrations.

Setting up Councils of Action in every locality made up of delegates from unions and work places to agitate among the rank and file for support for industrial action against the Tories.



Last year's teachers' strike: it would have been illegal under the new Tory proposals

Why you must fight

MANY WORKERS agree that 'something is wrong with industrial relations'. The trouble is that they draw the wrong conclusion and end up agreeing with the government, the bosses and the press, that the unions are to blame for Britain's economic difficulties.

An important part of the struggle against the Tories and the bosses is to arm workers with facts and information about the real situation in our society. You don't get it from the national and local press, most of which is owned by five powerful men - and four of them are right-wing Tories. They don't tell you that for every day lost through strikes, four are lost through unemployment, and seven through sickness and injury. They attack only strikes because strikes challenge the bosses' right to dominate our lives.

Trade unions are not privileged organisations. They represent the least privileged people in society. One-third of trade unionists earn less than £20 a week.

The trade unions in Britain are too weak, not too strong. Only 10 million workers, out of a total adult labour force of 25 millions, are actually in trade unions. Compared to continental workers, British workers have fewer holidays and worse pensions and sickness

benefits. Fighting the trade unions are a tiny, tiny minority who own and control our capitalist society. Two per cent of the population own more than 80 per cent of the wealth in Britain and since the last war more wealth has been concentrated in fewer hands. The proportion of the national economy that goes in wages has hardly changed for a hundred years.

Add on to this continuous inflation - rising prices, rents, fares - and you will find that the unions have to run very hard to stay in the same position. But it is only wages that are under attack. Prices, profits, dividends go on rising all the time and nothing is done about it.

We live in an incredibly unequal society. While industry makes profits of £8000 millions a year, eight million live below the poverty line and 10 million earn less than £15 a week. The Tory laws will make society more unequal. It is working people, in factories, in offices, shipyards, mines and docks, who produce all the wealth. The bosses, the profiteers, the get-rich-quick boys rob us of that wealth and pay us miserable wages. Now they want to take away our right to strike. Without that right we will be completely at their mercy. We must organise to stop them.

The struggle for workers' power —the only solution to race-hate and disunity



BRITAIN today is faced with what social scientists call a 'colour problem'. This 'problem' is made up of Britain's history as a robber, colonial nation and from the recent influx into Britain of thousands of black immigrants.

What should the attitude of socialists be to this issue?

First and foremost, we must be crystal clear that socialists can have no truck whatsoever with any form of racial discrimination or racial prejudice.

Socialism is about the brotherhood of man, not his separation into black, pink, yellow and off-white. Fascism and racialism are movements aimed specifically at reducing the united power of the working class as a socialist force.

There is no room for any suspicion of 'socialist racialism'. As socialists we stand for every single thing that the racist hates and fights to destroy.

The lesson of Nazi Germany in the 1930s must never be forgotten. We are the sworn, bitterest enemies of all racialism, anti-semitism and fascism.

Information

But there are many workers who are affected by racist ideas. Our approach to them must be clear and principled.

Part of our task is quite simply to spread information. It is not widely known that:

1. Every year more people leave Britain than enter the country.
2. Every year there are many more non-white immigrants than there are black immigrants.
3. The average black immigrant receives LESS in social service benefits than does his white neighbour.

Facts like these must be used to rid people of the myths and prejudices that exist. But facts alone are not enough.

People choose various ways of thinking about the world, they choose between rival ideologies and they select different solutions for their problems.

In this way, workers either believe that their problems exist because of black men in Britain or they believe that their problems exist because of the unjust nature of the capitalist system that can never satisfy the needs and demands of the workers.

Workers who hold racist ideas



The Barbican strike: a magnificent example of united class action

are insecure, frightened of what the future holds in store for them. They express these fears through irrational prejudice against people of a darker skin than their own.

In this situation, our job as socialists is obvious. It is to provide workers with a total alternative view of the world to the one offered by the racials.

That perspective is socialism — workers' power against the bosses, to build a new and better society for all workers whether black or white. Only by showing workers that there is a way forward, that a different system is possible, will we overcome racialism and racist ideas.

The mistake made by the 'liberal' approach to race relations is to avoid this central, alternative perspective. The liberal argues in terms of evil men like Enoch Powell and of quite nice chaps like Gary Sobers.

Overthrow

He does not pose the question of how the system is going to change. He says simply 'Accept the evils of society but don't blame the black man, it isn't his fault'.

Socialists must say, 'Don't accept the evils of society, fight to overthrow them alongside black workers with the same interests as yourself.'

The Barbican strike of 1967 gave a magnificent example of the huge

potential for such action. Black and white strikers immobilised the giant Barbican building site for almost a year in support of their demands.

More was learnt about racialism in five minutes of united struggle than in a lifetime of arguments and programmes on BBC telling people to be nice to their black neighbours.

It is in this general context that we should view Enoch Powell and groups like the National Front. The only way to deal with fascists is to physically drive them off the streets.

Stamp out

There can be no two views about that. You don't debate or negotiate with snakes, you stamp them out.

But we must be careful not to give too much importance to such groups. Our main activity must always be to win socialists and spread our ideas. In the course of this activity, the 'problem' of colour can be dealt with firmly and clearly.

Socialists must be at the head of all groups fighting racialism, showing how capitalism tries to use racialism to divide the workers. We also support unconditionally the right of black people to form their own groups and to form self-defence units.

This is essential in a country with a colonial history like Britain's and this must be the starting point of our activities.

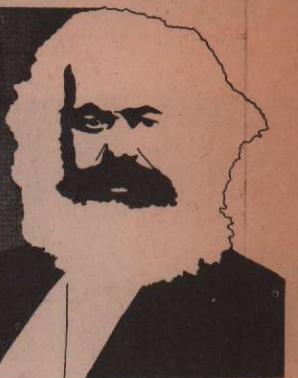
The enemies of the black and white workers are just the same — the ruling class of big businessmen. As Enoch Powell said 'Often, when I am kneeling down in church, I think to myself how much we should thank God, the Holy Ghost, for the gift of capitalism.'

That is straight from the horse's mouth. Racialism can only flourish and succeed when the labour movement is weak and divided and when socialist ideas have been defeated.

It is our job to make sure that this never happens. The warning of the past in Germany and Italy is too painfully clear.

THE MEANING OF MARXISM

A weekly column by Duncan Hallas



GEORGE BERNARD SHAW once said, 'I don't need a theory of value to tell me that the poor are exploited'. He thought that marxist economic theory was an unnecessary piece of armchair theorising.

It is a common point of view and is often connected with the idea that marxist economics is very complicated, boring and hard to understand.

Actually the key ideas are easy enough to grasp once you understand what they are intended to be used for. Every theory has a purpose.

Marx's purpose in analysing capitalism was first to show how working people were exploited and second to discover what he called the 'economic law of motion' of the system.

The first point becomes clear when you consider other systems of exploitation. The serf of the middle ages worked part of the time on his own plot of land and also worked two, three or four days a week on his lord's land.

He was not paid for this, so it was obvious that part of the fruits of his labour went to the lord. He was exploited.

Now the modern worker is paid for all the hours he puts in. He may be underpaid by current standards but he does not, apparently, have to put in a certain amount of time each week without pay.

More work

How can he be exploited in the scientific sense of having to work for nothing for the benefit of an exploiting class?

Marx's labour theory of value explains how. First of all capitalism is a system of commodity production. This means simply that goods are produced for sale.

What then decides the relative prices of, say, TV sets and motor cars? Clearly it has something to do with the fact that it costs more to make a motor car than to make a TV set.

Why does it cost more? Marx's answer is that, 'the value of a commodity is determined by the quantity of socially-necessary labour-time required for its production.' To put it crudely, the car costs more because more work has to be put in to make it.

This idea did not originate with Marx. As a modern economist put it, 'the labour theory is one of the most powerful truisms in classical economics... and it apparently would have been still current — with refinements, to be sure — among orthodox economists if Marx and some of his forerunners had not put it to such effective use as the touchstone of working-class ideology.'

Marx himself introduced a number of refinements. For example, 'socially necessary' labour time means man-hours put in using the current techniques of production.

It would cost a lot more labour-time to make cars by the methods prevailing in 1900 than by those of today. But such cars, if produced today, would not have a correspondingly high value because they would have to be sold at current prices.

Average

Of course different producers at any one time are using equipment that is a little more or a little less advanced than the average. It is the overall average that is taken as the 'standard'.

It is also the case that the cost of the materials that go in to the making of the car is greater than the cost of those that go in to the TV set. But these materials are also commodities and their value is determined in the same way.

The value of the end product includes the value of all those items that have gone into its production. It is determined by the total number of man-hours needed, on the average, for the whole process of producing the end product and everything that went into it, including the necessary transport.

What has all this to do with exploitation? The crux of the matter is this: the capitalist gains revenue by

Who produces the wealth?

selling commodities at prices which, as a first approximation, are assumed to be close to their values.

The worker does not, generally speaking, have material commodities to sell. He does have something to sell though: he has his ability to work, his labour power.

Wages are the price of labour power and since labour power is also a commodity, bought and sold like any other, it has its value. 'The value of labour power is determined by the value of the necessities required to produce, develop, maintain and perpetuate the labourer... Wages so determined are the wage minimum.'

Marx was well aware that wages were not necessarily held at bare subsistence level. 'Besides this mere physical element (ie, what is necessary to keep the worker and his family alive and able to reproduce, DH), the value of labour-power is, in every country, determined by a traditional standard of life.'

'It is not mere physical life, but it is the satisfaction of certain wants springing from the social conditions in which people are placed and reared.'

In short the actual level of real wages depends, in part, on the outcome of the class struggle. There is a floor below which they cannot fall for long — bare subsistence — but above this they can be pushed steadily upwards.

Surplus value

However, Marx believed that there were mechanisms in the system to check and throw back increases in real wages. These will be examined later.

Meanwhile it is worth noting that real wages in Britain have risen very greatly in the last century but that relative wages — the share of wages in the total national income — have remained constant, at around 42 per cent, since 1870.

The difference between the value of the commodities produced and the value of the labour power used in their production — and with a high productivity of labour it is a very big difference indeed — is called surplus value.

The surplus value belongs to the owners of the means of production. It is the source of their income.

To sum up: provided that commodities, including labour power, sell at prices close to their values, then the owners of the means of production will receive, after allowing for payment of raw materials, semi-finished goods, depreciation and wages, an income, surplus value, that actually represents the unpaid labour of their workers.

This is the source of exploitation under capitalism and it is the best paid, because the most productive workers will be the most exploited.

Having established this, Marx went on to consider the effects of changes in the productivity of labour and in the distribution of its product on the working of the system.

The Employers' Offensive

PRODUCTIVITY DEALS AND HOW TO FIGHT THEM

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Seven times seven



THE 'INVASION' of the Frost Programme by supporters of American hippy revolutionary Jerry Rubin livened up the sleep-walking quality of the weekend viewing.

I have a strong distaste for Frost's methods and phoney showbiz attitudes and it was pleasant to see him driven from the stage and forced to take refuge among the middle-class hyenas who make up his audience.

His angry interjections of 'nonsense' and 'rubbish' when Rubin and his colleagues spoke of the Vietnam war and the situation of the American blacks underlined the narrow, philistine attitudes of this cardboard television 'personality'.

But the most important aspect of the programme was Frost's much-applauded victory for 'free speech' when the hippies were cleared from the studio.

Tiny elite

Free speech in the Frost sense means the freedom of a tiny elite to decide what we see, hear and think. It means the domination of television by market values, by the needs of the advertisers.

It means that peak-time programmes must be geared to sensation or famous personalities in order to grab the biggest audiences. It means that discussions are shallow, one-sided and reflect safe, middle-ground, 'consensus' ideas.

Why should David Frost speak for us, and at us, the personification of respectability, deferentially addressing prime ministers and presidents, laughing at and deriding anyone - revolutionary, striker, criminal - who challenges the values for which he and the makers of Tide, Stork and Fairy Liquid stand?

Happy minority

The decision by a section of his audience to walk down and take over the programme was a blow for free speech, not against it.

That said, the use to which Rubin and his followers put their control of the programme must be criticised. Some of their antics were a disservice to revolutionaries who seek to win the support of the mass of working people, not to alienate them.

They seem happy to be a minority. They wish to change society for people, not to help develop people to change it themselves. This is a form of elitism less reprehensible than Frost's but in the long run far more dangerous.

ITV is screening on Friday nights a vehicle for the peroxide talents of Miss Diana Dors. Called Queenie's Castle it purports to show life on a council estate. Miss Dors and her large family of dubious origin steal, lie, cheat, booze and wish to live permanently off the state.

It is cheap and nasty stuff. Stealing, lying and cheating are the prerogatives of the social class to which the authors belong. Like all miserable petty bourgeois hacks, they work out their boozey frustrations on a class deprived of the right to reply. Just wait until they take that right.

David East

It gets on your nerves...

'VAPONA,' says the television commercial, 'tracks down flies like radar... kills them quietly, efficiently, effortlessly.' Over one hundred million Vapona strips have been sold by Shell, in over 30 countries.

Vapona works by slowly releasing the chemical Dichlorvos into the atmosphere in the room where the strip is hanging. Dichlorvos is, quite simply, a nerve gas.

It interferes with the action of cholinesterase, a substance vital to the functioning of the nervous system of insects. And not only insects.

A year ago, the magazine New Scientist published a survey of recent research which showed that Dichlorvos also interferes with human nerve actions. It was shown that even when used at the levels recommended by Shell (one strip per 1000 cubic feet of room) anyone exposed to a Vapona strip for nine hours per day would inhale more than the World Health Organisation maximum acceptable daily intake'.

Warning label

New Scientist called for the withdrawal of Vapona from the market if Shell had any reason to suppose that the nerve gas claims were correct. Shell refused.

Meanwhile in the USA Vapona strips started carrying a label warning against their use in kitchens, restaurants, nurseries and hospitals. No such warnings are on Vapona strips sold in Britain.

Last week New Scientist published more evidence on the dangers of Vapona. Not only does it act like military nerve gases but it can also cause genetic mutations.

Over a longish period it can act on the hereditary material in human cells, slightly changing the chemical structure of this material, possibly producing cancers or defects in the offspring of the person affected.

So New Scientist once again is calling for the immediate suspension of sales and asks 'whether continued domestic marketing of Vapona is in the public interest'.

'Strictest Confidence'

Although Shell refused to make public their evidence on Vapona's supposed safety, they did pass it on to the Pesticides Advisory Committee. This body advises the Ministry of Agriculture on the safety of pesticides and approved Vapona for sale.

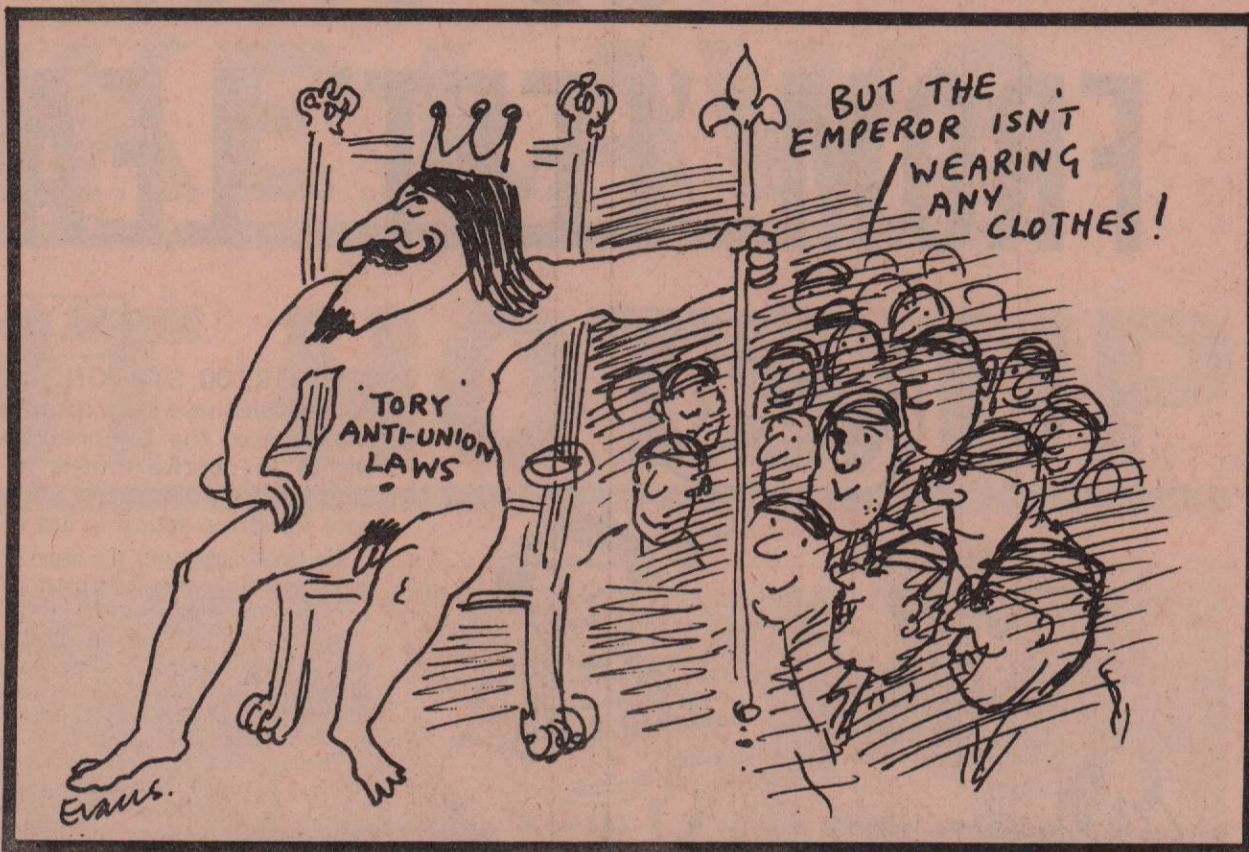
The committee also refused to divulge the evidence, arguing that it had been given 'in the strictest confidence'.

The most worrying aspect is the attitude of the manufacturers whenever one of their products is questioned. The manufacturers of Thalidomide, even when they discovered what horrifying effects the drug was having, did not withdraw the drug but suppressed the evidence until they were overwhelmed by it.

It is this shockingly careless attitude that should give the most concern.

As New Scientist puts it: 'Shell, with its duty to its shareholders very properly in its mind, no doubt hesitates to reply to doubts expressed on Vapona's safety for fear of thereby giving them wider currency and affecting sales of a most profitable product.'

Ken Green



COTTONS COLUMN

COURAGE, Barclay and Simmonds, the brewery giants, have announced a £100,000 increase in profits for the first half of the year and bigger dividends for shareholders. They also announced that, in line with other big brewers, they would shortly be putting up their beer prices.

Oh Brother!

LOOKING for a lead from the TUC against the Tory union laws? Don't strain your eyeballs. A circular this week from the noble brothers of Congress House to union executives shows that, when it comes to a fight, they couldn't knock the skin off the proverbial rice pudding.

There is no strategy to fight the government's proposals. On the contrary, White Feather and his merry band are linking their pathetic campaign to the Tories' own parliamentary tactics.

'The timing of the campaign,' says the circular, 'will depend on the legislative timetable. The General Council are provisionally assuming that the Bill will be published about the end of November, that the Second Reading will take place during December, that the committee stage in the House of Commons will begin early in January, and that, if it is carried, the Bill will become an Act towards the end of March.'

Shining through the circular's plodding prose is the bureaucratic fear of rank and file trade unionists taking action themselves to fight the government. Full-time officials will be trained to explain the Bill to the workplace. Meetings will be organised for regional and district officers.

But rouse the members to fight? Perish the thought. 'Some Trades Councils are already beginning to arrange local meetings on the Bill. We are advising Trades Councils that we think that the main effort should come early in the New Year when the Bill will be in committee stage and by when local speakers will be available as a result of the training programme.'

And then the final, inevitable



FEATHER: keynote is caution

warning' 'The General Council... strongly advise all affiliated unions not to support in any way the activities of unofficial bodies who may be arranging conferences or demonstrations or recommending stoppages of work. The movement must ensure that maximum united effort is put into the campaign being mounted by the General Council.'

Now, brothers and sisters, all together, put your heads on the chopping block.

HOW THE old lie machine rolls into action when workers go on strike. A Mr Hugh Faulkner, director of Help the Aged, joined the witch-hunt against the miners this week when he asked them to go back to work and 'lift the threat of sentence of death over old people'.

Some 90,000 old people die every year because of cold, said Mr Faulkner. Right. That is a savage indictment of a society that treats old people like cast-off shoes. Don't blame the miners. Aim your sights a little higher, Mr Faulkner.

Happy Band

A COUNTRY PARSON is going to do a TV commercial for Blue Band margarine. He will have a free hand to write the script. Generosity being the hallmark of this column, here are a few free samples

'In the beginning was the marge...' 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of Summer County, I will fear no evil for Blue Band is with me...' 'Faith, hope, Blue Band - these

three. But the greatest of these is Blue Band.'

Mind you, he'll never go to heaven. They don't take people who can't tell marge from butter.

Eye, eye

OUR MAN IN NEW YORK writes: The only incident of any real interest during the Congressional election campaign was when a certain Walensky, Democrat candidate for a state post, couldn't make a public appearance because his contact lenses were swallowed by an aide. The lesson is, don't leave your lenses in your tooth mug.

NO HEADACHES for the bosses of Beechams, the giant drugs and toiletries firm. On Monday they announced pre-tax profits of £15,573,000 for the first six months of the year, compared with £13,463,000 for the previous six months.

Beechams results are in line with the general trend this year. Total company profits are up by 2.6 per cent and dividends by 1.6 per cent. Did someone say there was a crisis?

Up in smoke

CARRERAS, the Piccadilly and Rothman cigarette group, paid a £42,000 'nicotine handshake' to their former chairman, Mr C A C Bulpitt. We understand he is gravely discontented. When Mr R W S Plumley left the company in 1967, he got £83,000 to help him withstand the rigours of the dole queue.

Ah well, that's inflation for you...

NOTICES

THE EMPLOYERS' OFFENSIVE: Speaker Tony Cliff, Friday 13 November, 8pm, William Morris Hall, Wimbledon Broadway

TORY anti-union laws: Speaker Duncan Hallas, Sunday 15 November, 8pm, William Morris Hall, Wimbledon Broadway.

IAN and NORAH BIRCHALL announce the birth of a son, Daniel Paul, on 13 October.

DAGENHAM 15: Paul Foot on the Labour Party. Monday 16 November, 7pm, Marsh Green School, South Close, Dagenham

TEESSIDE public meeting sponsored by Redcar AEF No 2 branch and Teesside IS: How to fight Tory union laws. Speakers: Terry Rodgers (DATA divisional chairman) and Tony Cliff. Monday 16 November, 7.30pm, Co-Op Hall, Elliot St (off Corporation St) Middlesbrough.

MERSEYSIDE IS public meeting: Fight for Workers' Control. Speaker Tony Cliff. Mitre Hotel, Dale Street, Liverpool, Friday, 20 November at 8pm.

CITY COLUMN

NEWS that bread prices will shortly be going up for the third time this year has been well received in the Stock Exchange. Sunblest announced a 1d increase on Monday and all the major manufacturers will be putting up the price of a large loaf by at least 2d to 2s with other increases all along the line.

It all appears to be part of the general 'rounding up' of prices in preparation for decimalisation. Admittedly, a 9 per cent rise seems to be taking enthusiasm for decimal coinage a little too far, but no doubt the manufacturers will throw in the usual ingredients about 'pressure of rising prices'.

In fact, the only thing that's really rising fast among the big baking groups is profits. Associated British Foods (their subsidiary company makes Sunblest bread) pushed up pre-tax profits last year from £20.4 millions to £22.1 millions while Rank Hovis saw their surplus grow from £12.2 million to £13.7 millions.

Another increase, particularly on the scale proposed, will give added impetus to the profits upswing. Bread certainly means money on the Stock Exchange.

WITH ALL the talk about the Tories handing back large sections of nationalised industries, it seems to have been forgotten that, provided you've a bob or two, it's quite possible to make a good living from one of the state corporations.

Like any private company, when a nationalised industry needs cash it treks down to the City of London to raise a loan. And the stock market, ever mindful of its obligations in a mixed economy, is only too willing for the stock to be dealt in.

The returns at the moment are quite tempting, in line with the high interest rates. I see from the Financial Times that returns from electricity and gas stocks are well over 8 per cent. In other words if you've a spare £100,000 to invest you can make a comfortable living on the £8000 a year return.

But what really attracts investors is that unlike ordinary public companies there's no danger of a nationalised industry going bust and the stocks are guaranteed by the government.

With a Conservative government in office, investors are now expecting even greater freedom to milk the nationalised industries. For in spite of the mountain of abuse heaped on the state corporations by the Tory press, sharp-minded analysts in stockbrokers' offices have been doing a little research of their own.

They have noted that for many years now, nationalised industries have headed the nation's league table for increases in productivity. Even a declining industry like the Coal Board has been boosting output per man at a rate which most public companies envy.

There is a growing feeling that the most successful exponents of capitalism should play an even fuller part in dealings on the Stock Market.

Arthur Millium

MINERS REJECT 'GO BACK' CALL FROM 'LEFT' LEADERS

by John Charlton

THE 119,000 STRIKING MINERS of Yorkshire, Scotland and South Wales have been ruthlessly attacked this week. Lord Robens, chairman of the National Coal Board, with a cool £250 a week, wishes to deprive miners of a living wage. He accuses them of 'undemocratic practices', conveniently forgetting the clear majority vote for strike action in last month's ballot.

He has dragged out the usual 'Red Scare'. Desperate men will try any dirty tactic and Robens is a desperate man, with a coal shortage looming and the Tory government breathing down his neck.

No one should be surprised by the vicious smear campaign being mounted by the Tory press, both nationally and locally. Where do these rich barons get their nerve from?

Owners like Lord Thomson and Rupert Murdoch have vast sums of money at their disposal to live in luxury. Their editors, too, struggle along on £200 a week.

Yet they begrudge the miner £20 a week and peddle lies and smears to divide and disrupt the miners' struggle.

ARROGANT

Right wing union leaders, like Sidney Schofield of Yorkshire, have refused to abide by democratic decision. On Monday, after the Yorkshire Council of the NUM had voted by 43 to 33 votes for strike action, this arrogant bureaucrat ordered the 33 to ignore the majority and to return to work.

The general secretary of the NUM, Mr Lawrence Daly and many of the left leaders have been intimidated by the violent outbursts of the bosses and the press. They have joined the chorus of 'get back to work, lads'.

They deserve the most serious criticism. If they were sincere in their claim to serve the interests of the miners, then from the moment the call went out for a strike ballot they should have toured the country energetically encouraging the miners to follow a real militant lead.

The ballot had a clear majority in favour of strike. Rank and file members had shown their determination to fight in large numbers.

With such a result, the left leaders, elected on a militant ticket, had an even greater responsibility to fight for their principles.

EXPOSED

Instead, they have hidden behind an out-of-date and reactionary constitution. They stand exposed to the view of every miner who has sacrificed his wages for the past two weeks in the cause he knew was right.

They are fakers who deserve never to be listened to again.

No, Lord Robens, the strike is not stirred up by 'Reds'. Anyone who has been close to the fighting miners will realise they were angry and frustrated by the treatment meted out to them over the years.

The thousands of men who are out must campaign to spread the strike by visiting every pit. The message must go out. The rank and file have more authority than the leaders.

The claim for £5 can still be won. The fight must go on. Victory to the miners!

BATTLE FOR UNION RIGHTS

TWENTY WORKERS from the American-owned firm Nene Valley Mobile Homes at Rushden, Northants, have been on strike for two months because 15 of the 155-strong workforce have refused to join a trade union.

The bosses assembled the 15 scabs in the canteen and promised them full support. The firm has advertised for blackleg labour in the local press.

The strikers belong to three unions - Woodworkers, Transport Workers and Electricians and Plumbers. After a militant speech, the EPTU area organiser refused to make the strike official and ordered the five electricians back to work.

Patchy turnout for Scots jobless strike

by Steve Jefferys

AEF shop steward, Chrysler, Linwood

WE MUSTN'T PRETEND it didn't happen - it did. Tens of thousands of workers on the 'Red Clyde' voted against the call for a one-day stoppage on 11 November against rising unemployment.

In Glasgow the strike went ahead. But in Paisley lack of support caused the protest to be abandoned.

In factories where the shop stewards have been traditionally 'non-political' or right-wing Labour, such as Chrysler, Linwood and Singers, Clydebank, the vote went the same way as in factories where Communist Party militants have been well represented, such as Babcock and Wilcox, Renfrew, and Rolls-Royce, Hillington.

The joy in the Scottish Daily Express, which led the anti-strike campaign, and in the Daily Record (sister of the English Mirror) which backed it up, is unlimited.

If we're to make sure that the bosses wipe the smile from their faces on 8 December, we must look at what went wrong in Scotland.

Made no difference

The strike was 'official'. It was called by the Glasgow District Committee of the AEF and supported by the Clyde District of the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions. But this made no difference.

The job of organising support for the strike was left to the Confed. They promised a mere 10,000 leaflets to bring out 100,000 workers - and these leaflets didn't even appear in time for mass factory gate meetings.

Shop stewards and socialists must not risk leaving the job of getting the rank and file behind the 8 December call to sympathetic full-time union officials. Every shop-floor organisation that will put the recommendation to strike to its members must do the job itself.

Factories must be flooded with bulletins arguing the case for action against the laws. Tea-break and lunchtime meetings must be held in every area to allow a full discussion to take place, preparing the rank and file for action.

Let's talk openly about the setback the working class movement in Scotland received on 11 November, correct the mistakes and, from the 14 November Liaison Committee conference in London, go forward better prepared to wage a successful war on the Bosses' Charter.



THE NATIONAL COAL BOARD HAS PLANS TO CHANGE WORK PROCEDURES AT MANY COLLIERIES....

Opposition grows to print union split

LEADERS of Division 1 of the print union SOGAT threatened to stop the printing of The Observer last Sunday if the paper carried a report about opposition to their plans to split the union.

Division 1 general secretary Richard Briginshaw and his executive want to split the union into its two former separate parts, NATSOPA and the Paperworkers' Union, now SOGAT Division A.

Briginshaw and co are acting as though NATSOPA were a separate union. John Lewis, a longstanding lay member of the Division 1 executive, has been sus-

pended indefinitely from holding any office. Lewis sympathised openly with opponents of the split in the clerical section of Division 1.

There was a mass walkout at a clerical section delegate meeting when the chairman refused to allow any discussion on the SOGAT split. Attempts are being made to discipline all the delegates who left.

Some chapels (workplace committees) are paying their union dues to the Official Receiver and not to Division 1. They want a ballot of the entire SOGAT membership to decide the union's future.

Briginshaw's executive have told them that unless they pay their dues to head office they will be regarded as lapsed members. And union officials have not been slow to point out that loss of membership means virtual loss of work.

But the executive's actions are not killing the opposition. Militants see the disciplinary moves as a sign of the leadership's fear.

Many rank and file members point out that the union has rarely used its strength to stop the millionaire press attacking the unions. Instead the gag was used last Sunday to stop The Observer in case the opposition's views might have been aired.

They also point out that Division 1 has refused to back the call by Division A for strike action on 8 December against the government's anti-union laws.

But in spite of the opposition of Briginshaw and co, many Division 1 members will be on strike on 8 December. It is from these militants and their opposite numbers in Division A that a united SOGAT will be built.

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