

Socialist Worker

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Workers vote to occupy UCS as bosses and Tories threaten to turn Glasgow into a city without jobs

CLYDE CARVE-UP

by PETER BAIN: Glasgow

THE DECISION by workers at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders to occupy the yards is the result of years of frustration for the workers and a recognition of the desperate job situation on Clydeside. If one man is laid off or any attempt made to close part of UCS then the occupation will begin. The yard workers have overwhelmingly supported this proposal from the joint shop stewards' committee.

If necessary shifts will be organised to occupy the yard 24 hours a day. As the British Steel Corporation has already cut off supplies, lay offs are expected this week. When this happens shop stewards will allocate work and control the work flow. In the event of threatened closure then, according to Jimmy Airlie, the UCS convenor, 'the liquidator may have a problem getting in'.

The immediate reason for UCS's request for £6 million is their shortage of ready cash. Because of the company's recurring crises and the government's 'lame ducks' policy, UCS's suppliers have been demanding cash on delivery.

John Davies, the Minister for Industry, has stated that when offering security to ship owners he had to take into consideration UCS's ability to complete the orders. He was not convinced of the company's viability and so refused to underwrite the ship owners demands.

But as usual the popular press and television have ignored the real roots of the crisis. The Clyde shipyards were owned and controlled by companies whose most prominent characteristics were a ruthless pursuit of profit and a mole-like inability to see what lay ahead of them. With the rebuilding of Japanese and German yards after the war, the Clyde bosses' failure to invest caught up with them and a steady stream of closures followed throughout the late 50s and 60s.

COMPENSATION

Even when the newly-formed UCS received its first shipbuilding industry board grant in January 1968, only £1½ million out of £5½ million was used for investment. The remainder was divided among the old companies as compensation for future orders they might have got or for good-will they had built up among ship owners.

Since then the company's workforce has been cut by 4500 plus 2000 workers who left with the Yarrow breakaway. According to UCS's Managing Director, Kenneth Douglas, the steel workers' productivity has increased by 85 per cent.

These measures have been achieved by the company by means of a consistent policy of blackmail. 'Accept this or we close' should be emblazoned on UCS's coat of arms. The result of the unions' acceptance—with honourable

Unions must campaign on unemployment

exceptions—of these measures is now apparent: yet another crisis.

The liquidator will recommend the closure of John Brown's and probably Connell's yards. This will leave Fairfield open with the adjacent Stephens yard also available and would permit the company to concentrate production in one yard. This would result in at least 2000 redundancies.

The proposed occupation represents a significant advance in the British labour movement's tactics. It challenges the employers' right to absolute authority at work. It poses the question: 'Do we need the boss?'

But the UCS workers must not be allowed to fight on alone. The whole labour movement must start to campaign around demands like a 35 hour week, longer holidays, no productivity deals, and for work or full maintenance

The stoppage of all workers in the West of Scotland should be fought for to launch the campaign, and steps have already been taken to get the AUEW to take such action.

The UCS workers' struggle must not be allowed to be used by cynical MPs and union officials for their own ends. Some of the people who are protesting loudest have themselves attacked the UCS workers or connived in such attacks.

The yard workers occupation should go ahead. If they can link the occupation to demands for no redundancies, work sharing without loss of pay, and the nationalisation of the company under workers' control, then the Clyde-side labour movement might launch a campaign the like of which this country has not seen for many years.



A SECTION of the Clydeside delegation that visited Downing Street on Wednesday to lobby the Prime Minister. Later, workers complained that Heath had shown no understanding or sympathy with their plight. One steward said: 'They'll have to take the troops out of the Bogside in Northern Ireland to get us out of the yards.'

One year of Tory offensive

THIS WEEK marks one year of Tory government. It has also seen redundancies soar upwards yet again.

The collapse of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders threatens the livelihood of more than 8000 workers directly, and some 30,000 indirectly. But it does more than that. It is yet another step on the road that is turning Scotland's major city into an industrial wasteland.

Already, before the UCS decision, unemployment in the area affected one male worker in 10. And this figure takes no account of the thousands each year who migrate to the South of England looking for jobs. In recent months alone there have been 1700 redundancies at Rolls-Royce and closures at Prestcold-Sterne, Fibreglass, Voith Engineering and Vickers IOCO.

A grim and desolate future faces hundreds of thousands of working-class families. They find they have no work and no prospect of work. They live in a city that is being killed, with nothing to keep them going but continual scrimping and saving and the weekly

visit to the dole queue.

This is not just the picture in Glasgow. It is also true of many other areas—parts of South Wales, old mining areas of Durham, places like Irlam in Lancashire, and Northern Ireland. Even in the 'prosperous' Midlands and South, people are beginning to learn what unemployment means.

But unemployment is not an unavoidable accident. It is not as if the world is so well off that it does not need the goods which the factories that are closing can produce.

Unemployment exists because under the present organisation of society the small minority who own industry only employ people if they can make big enough profits.

The Tory government is committed to upholding this principle. It has deliberately encouraged concerns such as Rolls-Royce, the British Steel Corporation, and now UCS to sack tens of thousands of workers in order to make increased profit from the remainder.

The Labour Party leaders are protesting at this policy. But they had no alternative when they were in office. They bribed big business with massive government handouts to keep going, but the upward trend of unemployment started during their period of rule.

What is needed is a real fight back from the organised trade union movement now. A campaign should be launched in every locality with high unemployment to bring together employed and unemployed workers. Demands must include:

No more productivity deals that involve a reduction in the work force
Reduce the working week to 35 hours without loss of pay
Five days work or five days pay
Work sharing instead of redundancies
A complete overtime ban in any company that declares redundancies in any one of its factories.
Nationalisation under workers' control and without compensation of any firm that shuts any of its factories.

BENGAL: THE GUILTY MEN...

NOWHERE in the world since the last war has there been such misery and horror as that now being experienced by the people of East Bengal. Tens of thousands have been systematically murdered by the West Pakistani troops
Five and a half million have fled in terror across the border into India, many dying of cholera on the way.
As they swarm desperately into

India in such a plight that they see the city with the worst slums anywhere in the world, Calcutta, as a paradise to be reached, the nightmare they leave behind is only just beginning.

For the devastation caused by the West Pakistani army is bound to mean a reduced rice harvest. And that could mean death through starvation for another five million people.

All the great powers have made fine speeches about their sympathy with the suffering in Bengal, except for the Chinese, who continue to give Yahya the weapons he needs for his reign of terror. Yet the holocaust of Bengal is not an accident.

The military group that runs West Pakistan and has been heaping devastation on Bengal had its power and

influence fostered deliberately by the British and US governments in the 1950s and early 1960s

More recently, Yahya has got his guns from China. But Britain and the US continue, even today, to pour money into the pockets of his friends in the West Pakistan ruling class.

If the western powers were to stop these hand-outs to the rich of Pakistan

they could force Yahya to withdraw from Bengal immediately

The regime in Pakistan, like so many of the reactionary and murderous regimes throughout the world, has been sustained in power for many years by our own rulers, among others. Much of the responsibility for Yahya's barbarous behaviour must be laid at their doors of Westminster.

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The Left and the Common Market fight

THE GOVERNMENT and the most important sections of big business are determined to get into the Common Market. The European powers seem prepared to accept them. But the Tory leaders are having great difficulty in getting political acceptance for the scheme in this country. To understand why, it is necessary to look at what the Common Market really is.

The whole history of capitalism has been one of the growth and dominance of ever larger firms that, through competition, drive weaker and less efficient concerns out of business. The point has now been reached when the biggest firms operate beyond the confines of any individual country. They resent old national boundaries that obstruct their attempts to rationalise production on an international basis.

The Common Market is an attempt to change the political structure of western Europe in order to allow the biggest firms to operate as they wish. They also believe that the increased competition that results will make it easier for them to drive smaller businesses into their tender embrace.

Any reorganisation of big business on such a scale is bound to operate at the expense of workers. When two firms are merged together, the results in terms of redundancy hit at workers' living standards. The attempts to integrate the capitalist economies of Britain and the six will similarly make life harder for many workers.

To this extent the Common Market is just another feature in the overall strategy of this government (as of the last Labour government) of trying to solve the problems of British capitalism at the expense of workers.

But the existing opposition to the Common Market is dominated by ideas that no genuine socialist can support. Among those who will suffer from entry are many small firms that fear they will be forced out of business by the increased scale of competition. Their owners and their political spokesmen demand that things stay as they are—with continued wage cuts, rising unemployment, dismantling of the welfare state and growing racialism—but outside the Common Market.

And so they wrap themselves in the Union Jack and scream about the need to maintain 'British independence'

Unfortunately, the 'left' trade union leaders, the 'left' MPs, and even the Communist Party, are speaking in the same terms. Such talk will be particularly dangerous if the government manages to join the Market. People like Enoch Powell or even Harold Wilson will be happy to get support from workers by talking about the threat from 'foreigners'. Such cheap nationalism will make it more difficult for workers in the different parts of Europe employed by the same international companies to unite in a common struggle.

But the continuation of an isolated Britain dominated by big business offers no alternative for ordinary workers. In such an 'independent' Britain our rulers would still attempt to boost their profits.

There is only one effective way to oppose the rationalisation of capitalism at our expense: that is to fight (and not just talk) against unemployment, against anti-union laws, against welfare cuts and so on, and for a socialist transformation as the first step towards a socialist integration of Europe.

We believe that our readers should put such arguments whenever they can, at meetings and conferences. It is vital for the real internationalist Left to maintain an absolutely distinct position from the flag wavers and little Englanders.

But if we fight for such a position and lose, we still have to face the question of our attitude here and now to the government's plans to rationalise capitalism. It would be quite irresponsible for the Left in any way to give the impression that we do not care whether the Tories have an easy or a difficult task.

If we are defeated in our own resolutions, then we have to vote for any that bind the Labour leaders to opposing the government's policy, while making clear in our arguments our independent attitude based upon socialist, class principles.

DON'T FORGET THE BILL

THE Industrial Relations Bill has not been in the news much in recent weeks. But it will soon become law and the struggle against it must continue. For the trade union movement still has the power to defeat this measure even when it is on the statute books.

Three things need to be done:

First, in every union the fight against co-operation with the law must go ahead. Individual unions have to be forced to de-register. Their leaders have to be instructed to give official support to strikes and the blacking of goods in defiance of the law.

And in every union resolutions must be pushed now for the September TUC to make de-registration a condition of TUC membership and for industrial action against the law, particularly if any trade unionists are prosecuted under it.

Secondly, the campaign has to be pressed forward at local level. In every factory, shop stewards committees should now commit themselves to:

1. Opposition to the law.
2. Defence of the closed shop.
3. The right to continue blacking goods.
4. The right to organise sympathy strikes.
5. Refusal to pay fines or penalties.
6. Strike action if any worker in the factory is victimised by the law.

Finally, we believe that the simplest way for workers to express their solidarity and determination not to be bound by the law, is for them to take strike action the first day the law comes into force. If well-organised sections of workers do so they can prove that the government and employers cannot fine or imprison workers who have the will and the strength to fight. Such action would be an inspiring example to weaker groups of workers who might otherwise be intimidated by fear of legal action.

THEIR WEEK IN AND AROUND PAKISTAN

The blood count: Bengali escapees to India clocked up five million. As the West Pakistan army draws in from the border areas and tightens its ring of 'kill and burn' the numbers are likely to double. Meanwhile, in West Pakistan...

A hornets' nest as all big denomination notes (of £40 and £7.50) are called in, in order, they say, to smash the Bangla Desh bank robbers. Real reason: to head off a terrifying inflation in West Pak. Real victims: small farmers and, in the towns, secretaries, drivers, servants, guards—the people who have some savings but don't use banks. These people, the army's mass support in the West, are now being made to pay for the reconquest of Bangla Desh, while the big moneybags and speculators with bank accounts go scot free. All this means serious trouble for Yahya unless he can get hold of some...

Big aid: But except for the People's

Republic of China, nobody's reaching for the cheque books. Says Washington/London/the World Bank: we need a guarantee of stability in the area—a 'political settlement' (Home); says Moscow: we need a guarantee of stability in the area—a solution to 'all problems between India and Pakistan' (Kosygin). Meanwhile there's some shamefaced...

Aid in a G-string: \$1 million from the US for food distribution in Bangla Desh—but under US control. Reason for the stipulation: US AID officials in Islamabad recognised the food distribution vessels donated to Pakistan after the cyclone disaster last year in a photograph published by the Pakistan Observer (19 May). It showed General Niazi with waterborne troops in US craft on a search-and-destroy mission in Bangla Desh. Britain too is keeping options open by not choking off the 'aid' pipeline while at

the same time not replenishing it. Meanwhile India's...

Human refuse disposal system has broken down. Army units are guarding Calcutta's slums, the world's worst, from the onrush of refugees and state governments are refusing to allow them in. Since the US-Russia-Britain-Australia offer of a combined air-lift to move 2½ million from West Bengal is strictly and cynically conditional, an offer to shift them within India and not to their own countries, we can expect Indian troops soon to turn the refugees back at the border and not only on the outskirts of Calcutta.

Pak quote of the week: 'Our public relations machine was not ready. The army PR people were not in Dacca on March 25 and 26 and we definitely made a mistake with the foreign correspondents there'—senior West Pakistan diplomat.

RAILMEN JOIN IN FRENCH STRIKES

SW Reporter

MORE workers have been drawn into the strikes that have been hitting the French employers in recent weeks. No sooner has one strike been settled than others have broken out.

Last week it was the turn of the railway workers to take action. When negotiations between management and the unions for a wage claim broke down, railwaymen at Avignon walked out. The strike spread to most of Eastern France and then to the rest of the country within a couple of days.

The main unions, the CGT and the CFDT, did not officially call the workers out on strike, but seem to have been encouraging their local sections to take action. This is in marked contrast to the behaviour of the Communist Party-led CGT in other recent strikes, like the big one at Renault, where it attempted to make strikers return to work with secret ballots.

Beyond control

In recent weeks the CGT leaders have attempted to prove their 'respectability' to middle class politicians by trying to prevent strike actions. But their efforts to contain the militancy of workers have been unsuccessful, and now they fear that movements might develop that are completely beyond their control.

As the authoritative paper Le Monde has written, the CGT 'wishes to prove to all French workers that it remains the most militant union'. So it now gives limited support to rail strikers.



The French revolutionary organisation Lutte Ouvriere held a Whitsun fete attended by more than 10,000 socialists and militants. Picture shows the stall arranged by the British International Socialists with books, pamphlets and a montage from copies of Socialist Worker.

But it is doubtful if workers at factories like Renault will be convinced. They know from their own experience that when they were struggling it was not the 'Communists' of the CGT who stood for their interests, but revolutionaries that the CGT condemns as 'extremists'.

Engineers end sit-in as bosses give way

THE STRIKE at the Polymechanique factory at Pantin (see last week's Socialist Worker) has ended in at least a partial victory for the workers.

After 36 days of striking and occupying their factory, the workers voted by four to one to return to work.

Communist Party and CGT officials had wanted to end the strike earlier, but were prevented from doing so by the militant attitude of the workers, particularly of the FO union section in the plant, which was led by members of the revolutionary group Lutte Ouvriere (Workers' Struggle).

The militants' attitude was proved correct when the management conceded most of the demands the workers had been fighting for.

Atrocity-hunting not enough in South African coverage

MAY I complain about the article on South Africa (12 June) by W. Enda? A socialist paper cannot be content to publish an article reporting the atrocities committed by the government or the white people there.

After all, we can read this type of article in liberal or even Tory papers which are ready to condemn cruelty—but not the system which breeds it.

Socialists would do better to study the valuable pamphlet by Barbara Rogers, just published in London by the Africa Bureau. Miss Rogers resigned from the Foreign Office because she is opposed to its friendly policy towards South Africa.

Her facts and figures show this: South Africa needs to trade with Britain far more than Britain needs her diminishing share of world trade with South Africa. This means that it is false to argue that we cannot afford to break with the land of apartheid. Surely this type of economic argument should appeal more to socialists than a mere recital of cruelties?

We should then go on to ask how we in Britain can help those who are struggling to end apartheid and build a society free from racial prejudice. This aim would require support for the guerrillas fighting in the Portuguese colonies which are close neighbours of South Africa and linked

with its economy.—JOHN GILD, London WC1

Sex and cinema

LAST WEEK's film review of Carry On Henry was a disgrace to Socialist Worker. Firstly, there was praise not searing criticism for the film's portrayal of human relationships.

While James Fenton was raving about the film's 'titillation', he should have been explaining how our society and its products turn the relationship between people into relations between things: how sex is turned into a commodity to be sold and how women are portrayed as nothing more than objects for men to play with—thus the 'titillation'.

Again we are told of the merits of the story—the English (peasants or aristocrats?) hatred of France, instead of explaining how the media in all fields tries to show history as being about famous 'top' people (kings, lords or presidents), not about the struggles of ordinary people for a decent life. Thus we get Carry on Henry and BBC classic serials.

Further, there is no criticism of why these films are made, about their gigantic profits as a result of appealing to our most backward feelings, about the way

films treat society's scapegoats—blacks, homosexuals or trade unionists.

There is rarely anything approaching a marxist analysis of art and the media in Socialist Worker. What needs to be explained is how the ruling class uses the media to reinforce their conception of the world on ordinary working people, that only the lives of those who rule are meaningful and how the struggles of workers are only an aberration, a mistake by those sad, unintelligent fools.

Similarly, the whole existence of the media in our world depends on creating a division between those who create and control—producers, directors and actors—and those who passively watch, which reinforces the division under capitalism of leaders and led, managers and workers teachers and taught.

What we should emphasise is the potential the media has for us—how we can use it to open new horizons in people's lives; how it is possible to turn every receiver into a transmitter (and that goes for people too) and thus make everyone a creator and involved in the rebuilding of the world. The media could be used to show people what they could do, not just what they believe they can do.—NEIL ROGALL London N8.

PAY FIGHT AHEAD FOR MINERS

Anger in the pits as productivity soars and wages stagnate

MICK McGAHEY's failure to win the Presidency of the National Union of Mineworkers is a set-back for the militants in the industry. McGahey, President of the Scottish Mineworkers and a prominent member of the Communist Party, was one of the leading militants in the 1970 strike. In his election campaign he pledged himself to spearhead the crucial struggle on wages and conditions this autumn.

His election would have shifted the balance to the Left on the union executive. This would have proved to be a severe test of the Left leadership's willingness to make their post-election actions match their pre-election words.

Many miners will remember that in his election manifesto of 1967, Lawrence Daly, called, among other things, for 'guerrilla strikes' in the fight for a fair deal for miners.

But in both the 1969 and 1970 struggles, Daly, by then NUM General Secretary, tried his utmost to prevent the spread of such actions—in spite of the fact that more than 50 per cent of the miners showed in a secret ballot in 1970 that they were prepared for a fight with the Coal Board and more than 100,000 miners took strike action, the biggest spontaneous action since 1926.

Preparing for battle

The result of the presidential vote is disappointing, but 92,000 votes cast for a Left-wing candidate shows clearly that despite the sell-out and disillusionment of last October, a large number of miners are preparing for a further battle this year. Discontent and anger are still widespread.

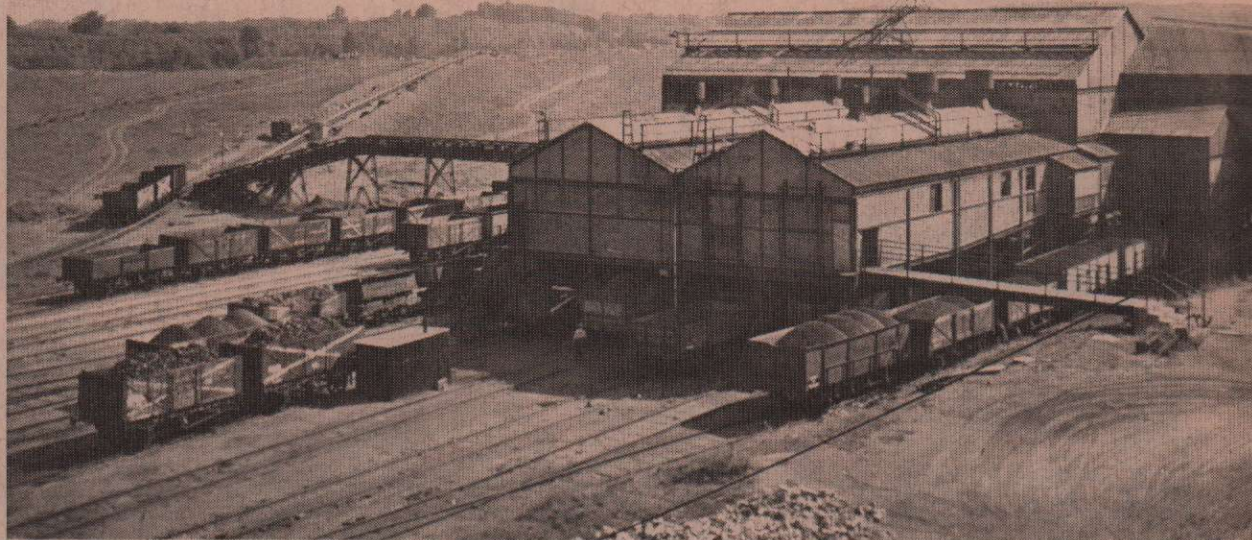
And well might the miners be discontented. Last year's pay rise was the biggest ever won but it has already been gobbled up by rocketing prices.

This makes the current Yorkshire Area demand for £35 for face workers, £28 for underground and £26 for surface, very realistic.

In addition, three areas, North West, Notts and Yorkshire are to press for financial compensation for the disruption to their lives caused by the three and four shift system. It is disgraceful that the Coal Board, which is dramatically increasing miners' productivity, is so stingy on financial rewards and holidays.

Absolute minimum

Fifty weeks of the year, working beneath the ground in often appalling conditions, deserves better than two miserable weeks annual holiday—plus seven rest days. Four weeks should



by JOHN CHARLTON



Flashback to last year's strike: Yorks miners seen listening to a union official. There was too much reliance on official channels.

be the absolute minimum that is acceptable. Already most East and West European miners do better than that.

Redundancy pay is another major issue that demands a real fight from the union. Most workers would find it incredible that the boss could close down their workplace, offer alternative employment as far as 30 miles away and then when it was turned down for perfectly good domestic reasons, say 'Sorry lad, I can't pay

you any redundancy money'.

That is what the Coal Board does regularly. And their miserly decisions are upheld by the Industrial Tribunals in nine cases out of 10.

Face scrapheap

The most vicious effect of this policy in a time of rising unemployment is that men from their early 50s are thrown on to the scrapheap

with no chance of ever working again.

And the ever-present issues like dust control still rankle. Despite the Coal Board's pious anti-dust campaign—'Sharp tools cut cleanly, destroy dust'—a recent article in the Deputy's (foremen) journal INBYE states that more than 500 miners a year are dying from pneumoconiosis.

What can be done? The unofficial actions of 1969 and 1970 show that there are a vast number of miners ready to fight.

Hostile press

But the failure of both strikes was to a large extent the result of the lack of consultation between militants up and down the country. This was exploited by BBC, ITV and the national and local press, all completely hostile to the miners' demands.

The most extreme example was that at one point during the strike, when 20,000 Scots miners were out, miners in Yorkshire believed that the majority had gone back.

This weakness was caused largely by the complete reliance on the

official machinery and the official channels. In the areas with a conservative leadership—Notts, Derbyshire, Durham and Lancashire—this was disastrous as there was no way for the lads in those areas who wanted to fight to communicate with each other or with other areas.

Even in the predominantly militant areas, the lack of links allowed the conservative officials to exercise an undue influence. It explains the action of Sydney Schofield, president of the Yorkshire NUM, who blatantly led a majority decision of the Yorkshire Council and encouraged miners to blackleg.

Another serious problem is that hardly any attempt has been made to collect together the hundreds of miners who played a leading part in organising the strike in their pits and who turned up every day to form teams of mobile pickets.

Together, in a nation-wide rank and file organisation, they could develop an effective programme to fight for in the union and against the Coal Board. After the set-backs of the past two years, the building of such an organisation becomes an urgent priority.

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IN THE CITY WITH ARTHUR MILLIUM

Breaking up—profiteers' love affair with new 'black gold'

OIL is such a profitable commodity that it has been nicknamed 'black gold'. Today that expression could be applied equally to Britain's latest technological miracle—carbon fibres.

Stronger than steel and yet a fraction of the weight, the specifications not only excited the engineers but had the company chairmen drooling.

Courtaulds and Morgan Crucible rushed to put in plants. Rolls-Royce, with its eyes on an apparently tempting contract with Lockheed, did likewise.

Even the fact that you could buy almost a ton of steel for the price of 1lb of carbon fibres did not dampen their enthusiasm. One day, they reckoned, the price would come down as sharply as profits went up.

Progress admittedly has been slow. Poor Rolls-Royce had to abandon its carbon fibre fan blades after it found that the

impact of a bird caused the blades to fall apart.

But interest has been growing, particularly among the world's aircraft companies. And what better reflection is there than the profits of Fothergill and Harvey.

Once an obscure textile company, the firm moved into carbon fibres and caught the imagination of the City. Profits, a derisory £50,000 seven years ago, topped £370,000 last year and are now heading for the £500,000 mark.

Abrupt end

But trouble, I fear, is heading for these capitalist pioneers of the new technology. Two physicists at the Atomic Energy Research establishment published a technical paper in the British Journal of Physics earlier this year which could bring their profits rush to an abrupt end as that facing the occupants of a carbon fibre aircraft.

What the physicists discovered was a very peculiar property of carbon fibre materials. Stress waves, after entering a carbon fibre structure, find it rather difficult to come out again. So they just go on building up until the structure breaks up or blows up.

The paper has caused some considerable alarm among the companies in the field. Desperately, they are trying to find some way of either refuting the paper's conclusion or getting round the problem.

Their only consolation so far has been that the paper has attracted little publicity, apart from a couple of short reports in the technical press.

I have already heard the physicists dismissed as 'theoreticians who know nothing about the practical problems' by scientists at one company.

With so much money at stake, going back to the drawing board can be an expensive business.

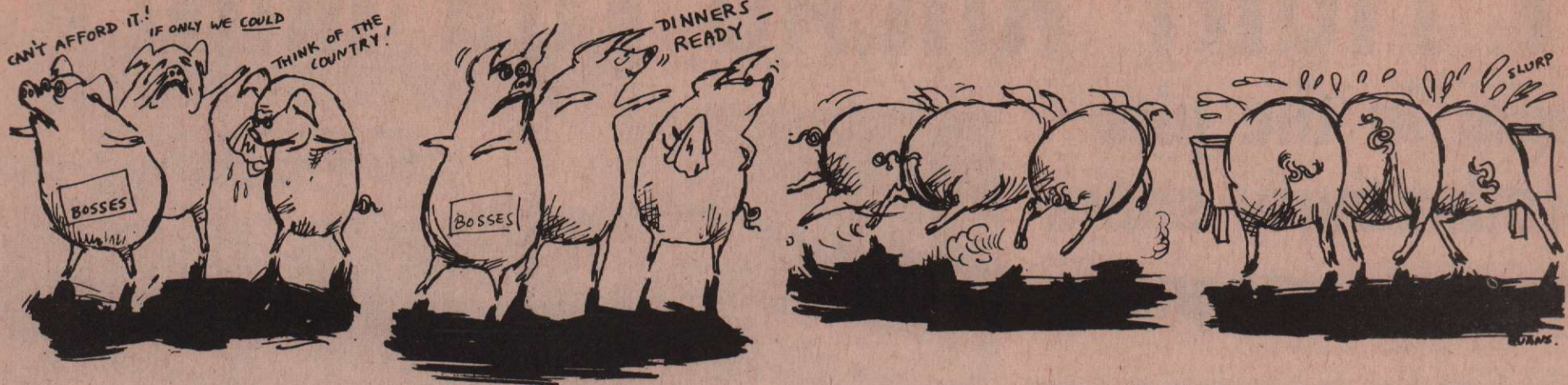
International Socialism 47

Revolutionary trade unionism: Jim Higgins
Greece four years after the coup: Nikos Syriotis
Art in revolution: Robin Fior

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'PALM-GREASING': THE OFF-THE-CUFF REMARK THAT JULIAN AMERY NEVER (OFFICIALLY) SAID



One of Evans' most popular cartoons from Socialist Worker September 1970

The eat and swill brigade have a laugh at the unemployed

THEY're always eating, the employers. Expense accounts, lunches here, lunches there. And then they belong to employers' federations which have local eating sessions, regional eating sessions, and once a year the great day, the annual dinner.

that one and many are the saddened men who are not invited.

chairman speaks. After him they have a man from the government of the day, and then a law lord or

some such notable.

The speakers speak, the members of the employers' federation listen, laugh and absorb the wisdom that is handed down from on high and the top table.

The audience is there only to fall into line, to obtain the 'right' ideas even as they wear the 'right' clothes. And their clothes are all exactly the same, being dicky bows, black jackets and trousers with liquorice up the sides.

The Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors has just had its annual dinner. The set was lush, the Dorchester Hotel in London's Park Lane, owned and built by this federation's own president Sir Robin McAlpine. He was chairman for the night too.

The food—expensive and in large quantities—is eaten, the air is heavy with cigar smoke, the smell of brandy and the gabbling of a hundred conversations.

Hoots of laughter

Mr Julian Amery, the Minister for Housing and Construction speaks first proposing the toast to the Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors.

Our Julian knows a lot about the Dorchester, ate there regularly since he was a young man. He recalls the day during the war when he was there with that great and witty socialite Lady Cunard.

"I remember when I walked with her down Park Lane one summer evening, and a very old unemployed man, unshaven with a cloth cap and scarf came up, took off his cap and held it out, and said, "I've eaten nothing for two days."

"She said, "That is very wrong, my dear man. You must try, you must force yourself!"

The audience hoots with laughter at this crack, including the union representative there, Jim Lewis of the General and Municipal Workers. Class hatred, some call it.

Unemployment is nearly 800,000, the highest figure since 1940, as Amery tells his joke. 150,000 of the unemployed are from the building and civil engineering industry.

says. Loving it, he adds a bit off the cuff. "They know how to grease the right palms," says the Minister for Housing and Construction.

More laughter, a little embarrassed. Gone over the mark and told the truth he has. But he's safe, the tame journalists are only there to record the political parts of the speech for next morning's papers. The rest of the audience know all there is to know about palm-greasing.

Julian Amery sits down to kind applause.

One journalist can take no more. He cuts out and runs, into the same Park Lane where Julian Amery laughed when he heard Lady Cunard tell a hungry man to eat cake. He heads home to escape the stench of corruption and hypocrisy, the contempt for ordinary human beings that has been taken in with the rich food and rare wine.

He told me his story so that it could be told to you who share his revulsion of a corrupt ruling class.

After considerable efforts we obtained a transcript of the speeches from which all the above quotes are drawn.

As is usual, a firm of official shorthand writers had been hired to cover the live event, and cover it they did. But Julian Amery's remark about 'palm greasing' does not appear in that transcript.



Amery: help from Hansard

Socialist Worker rang the firm and explained there was a query on the record of what Mr Amery said. Back came the reply that it wasn't one of their partners who actually covered the job. It was a Mr Bear who could be contacted at the House of Commons.

We rang Mr Bear who turned out to be not a common parliamentary reporter but the top dog himself, the editor of Hansard, the official report of the proceedings of our British democracy.

But Mr Bear could remember no such phrase as 'palm greasing' in the Minister's speech. He had, he said, made an accurate record.

But say it our Julian did. And strange that the shorthand writer then to miss it was the top banana in the whole parliamentary outfit. There are some things they will say only in private. Maybe Mr Bear's job is to keep them private.

There you see then, that's the story of one employer's annual dinner in 1970. There are others going on every week. It appears they're no different, though the food and drink might be.

So then in our world it's not just the news that needs changing, it's the whole eating arrangements and a few other things besides.

ARTHUR MALONE

WHAT WE STAND FOR



THE International Socialists is a democratic organisation whose membership is open to all who accept its main principles and who are willing to pay contributions and to work in one of its organisations. We believe in independent working-class action for the abolition of capitalism and its replacement by a classless society with production for use and not for profit.

We work in the mass organisations of the working class and are firmly committed to a policy of internationalism.

Capitalism is international. The giant firms have investments throughout the world and owe no allegiances except to themselves and the economic system they maintain.

In Europe, the Common Market has been formed for the sole purpose of increasing the trade and profits of these multi-national firms.

The international power of capitalism can only be overcome by international action by the working class.

A single socialist state cannot indefinitely survive unless workers of other countries actively come to its aid by extending the socialist revolution.

In addition to building a revolutionary socialist organisation in this country we also believe in the necessity of forming a world revolutionary socialist international independent of either Washington or Moscow. To this end we have close relationships with a number of other socialist organisations through-

out the world.

We believe in the necessity to unite socialist theory with the day-to-day struggles of working people and therefore support all genuine demands that tend to improve the position and self-confidence of the working class.

We fight:

For rank and file control of the trade unions and the regular election of all full-time officials.

Against secret negotiations. We believe that all settlements should be agreed or rejected by mass meetings.

For 100 per cent trade unionism and the defence of shop stewards.

Against anti-trade union laws and any curbs on the right to strike, whether the strikes are 'official' or 'unofficial'.

Against productivity deals and job evaluation and for militant trade union unity and joint shop stewards' committees both in the plant and on a combine basis.

For equal pay and a better deal for young workers.

For a minimum wage of at least £25 a week.

Against unemployment, redundancy and lay offs. We support the

demand: Five days' work or five days' pay.

For all workers in struggle. We seek to build militant groups within industry.

Against racialism and police victimisation of black workers.

Against immigration restrictions.

For the right of coloured people and all oppressed groups to organise in their own defence.

For real social, economic and political equality for women.

Against all nuclear weapons and military alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Against secret diplomacy.

Against all forms of imperialism. We unconditionally give support to and solidarity with all genuine national liberation movements.

For the nationalisation of the land, banks and major industries without compensation and under workers' control.

We are opposed to all ruling class policies and organisations. We work to build a revolutionary workers' party in Britain and to this end support the unity of all revolutionary groups.

The struggle for socialism is the central struggle of our time. Workers' power and a world based on human solidarity, on the increasing of men's power over nature, with the abolition of the power of man over man, is certainly worth fighting for.

It is no use just talking about it. More than a century ago Karl Marx wrote: 'The philosophers have merely interpreted the world. The point is to change it.' If you want to help us change the world and build socialism, join us.

THERE ARE 15 BRANCHES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

SCOTLAND
Aberdeen/Dundee/Edinburgh/Fife/Glasgow N/Glasgow S/Stirling

NORTH EAST
Durham/Newcastle upon Tyne/Teesside (Middlesbrough and Redcar)

NORTH
Barnsley/Bradford/Derby/Doncaster/Grimsby/Huddersfield/Hull/Leeds York/Selby/Sheffield

NORTH WEST
Lancaster/Manchester/Oldham/Bolton/Merseyside/St Helens/Wigan

Potteries

MIDLANDS
Birmingham/Coventry/Leamington/Leicester/Oxford/Nottingham/Northampton/Redditch/Telford

WALES and SOUTH WEST
Bath/Bristol/Cardiff/Exeter/Gloucester/Mid-Devon/Plymouth/Swansea

SOUTH
Ashford/Brighton/Canterbury/Crawley/Folkestone/Guildford/Poole/Southampton

EAST
Basildon/Cambridge/Harlow/Ipswich/Lowestoft/Norwich/Colchester

GREATER LONDON and HOME COUNTIES
Acton/Bletchley/Camden/Chertsey/Croydon/Dagenham/Enfield/Erith/Fulham/Greenford/Havering/Harrow/Hemel Hempstead/Hornsey/Ilford/Kilburn/Kington/Lambeth/Lewisham/Merton/Newham/Notting Hill/Reading/Richmond/Slough/Stevenage/Tottenham/Walthamstow/Wandsworth/Warford/Wickham

I would like more information about the International Socialists

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T.U.C. DEBATES 1926.

Union leaders
 blame miners
 for defeat of
 general strike

Philip Evans

In 1927 the Trades Union Congress called a Special Conference. The executives of all affiliated unions were gathered to consider the General Council report on the strike of May 1926.

The strike (or as the TUC preferred to call it, the 'partial' strike) lasted officially for nine days. It was called by the support of the miners. At the end of the First World War the miners had been the victim of a massive crisis in the mining industry. Coal owners proposed severe wage cuts and terminated the 1924 national wages agreement, which had been the result of the French occupation of the Ruhr had eliminated competition in coal.

The miners, already living below the breadline, refused to accept the wage cuts. In desperation, their union, the Miners' Federation, led by president Herbert Smith and secretary Jimmy Thomas, took their case in the hands of the General Council of the TUC.

At the time the Tory Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, set up a Committee of Inquiry—the Samuel Commission. And the Government also set about secretly preparing plans and an Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies (OMS) in case of a general strike.

The Samuel Commission eventually reported. Not surprisingly, since it was representative of the labour movement on the commission, it recommended reduced rates of pay and decided against government intervention in the way of a subsidy.

The Miners' Federation struck against these proposals on 26 April 1926. The following day the Locomotive, Engineers and Firemen (LEF) joined in calling a 'partial' national stoppage on 3 May. This was the start of a general strike.

The details of the abortive nine-day stoppage is well known. The Government feared that the strike might 'get out of hand', and faced by a well-prepared state machine, the General Council called a conference to discuss the agreement of the miners.

The fact that the number on strike increased by 100,000 men in the hours after its nominal 'end', this signalled defeat for the miners who were left to stay out alone and in appalling hardship for the next few days.

The 'Minutes of Proceedings' of the Special Conference clearly show that this unnecessary defeat. On the very first day the lack of preparation by the TUC was raised.

Herbert Smith, president of the Miners' Federation, asked: 'What was made prior to the general strike by the Trades Union Congress? Secondly, who authorised Messrs. MacDonald to give any assurance at all to the Government Minister that there would be no interference with the strike?'

Miners' secretary



Scene at Chiswick Works, London, at the end of the strike

Ernest Bevin (Transport Workers) answered for the General Council. 'At 12 o'clock at night I had men and women coming to me who talked about their leaders being cowards and in a state of hysteria over the food supplies. If we had 12 months to run this thing we might have been perfect, but in 12 days you cannot be perfect.' (A Delegate: You had nine months!)

Bevin went on: 'With regard to preparations for the strike, there were no preparations until 27 April, and I do not want anyone to go away from this conference under the general impression that the General Council had any particular plan to run this movement.'

'In fact the General Council did not sit down to draft the plans until they were called together on 27 April...and when that task is understood, you will be able to appreciate not the little difficulties, but the wonderful response and the wonderful organisation we had.'

In other words, Bevin admits that the preparation by the TUC was nil—but goes on to congratulate his colleagues and himself on their 'wonderful' last-minute arrangements.

Herbert Smith, president of the Miners' Federation, put forward the miners' criticisms of the handling of the strike. He described the miners' position: 'Every time we met the government we were faced with this position—the General Council can either admit this or deny it—that what we had to agree to from the starting point was a reduction in wages. Would any Trade Union official who was contesting a position affecting the men he was trying to help go into Court agreeing to a reduction of wages before discussion took place?'

He went on: 'When the General Council says "we took the miners into consultation every time: we had them there continuously with us", I want to say to the people I have worked with for years, people I have held in high esteem, that we were not treated in the way we ought to have been. We were ignored.'

Smith complained that the TUC presented the 'settlement' to the miners as an accomplished fact. (Sir Herbert Samuel, head of the Commission whose previous findings the TUC had rejected, approached the General Council in a semi-official capacity and they agreed to his terms.) Smith reports his reaction when told of the return to work by Mr Pugh of the TUC negotiating committee:

'I said "Is that the unanimous decision of your committee?" and he said "Yes", I said "Is it not possible to sit down and see how far we can get? Is it just crossing the t's and dotting the i's?"'

'And he said: "That is it Mr Smith; that is the final decision and that is what you have to consider as far as you are concerned and accept it". Smith concluded: 'The General Council when it came to a fight fell down like skittles. They would not face it.'

Jimmy Thomas MP, one of the Labour Party's earliest 'hatchet men', defended the lack of preparation by the TUC on two grounds: 'First, you could not get into any negotiations that would be likely to bring peace; and secondly, the other side could anticipate every move'. (A Voice: 'They did')

Thomas follows this remarkable defeatist statement with an attack on the miners' leaders. He accuses them of not showing solidarity—by not leading the return to work!

'What Mr Smith did not say was this: we argued the pros and cons and said to the miners themselves—did we not say it to you?—the better plan will be to save victimisation, to save the aftermath, that you, the miners, should ask us to declare it off? That will give confidence to the rank and file and we will go back a united body. We asked you to ask us to declare it off.'

'There are some men', Thomas went on, 'but not all, who failed ignominiously to realise the sacrifice that was made and their duty to other people'. Thomas was referring to the miners' leaders. He should have been talking about himself.

A.J.Cook, secretary of the Miners' Federation, reminded the conference of the miners' position before the strike. They had no room for negotiating. They had 'Nowt to give'.

He went on bitterly: 'I should be insulting your intelligence if I put it to you, did we need to come to the General Council to get a reduction in wages? We could have got a reduction without going there...Therefore when the decision was arrived at for the men to line up they lined up in the fight believing they were fighting for the same policy and principles that had been decided upon in 1925, and, so far as the rank and file were concerned, they were fighting for in 1926.'

Cook attempted a reference back of the General Council report to the membership of all the unions involved: 'Let the rank and file decide who was right in this great struggle. First they (the General Council) committed us to a wages reduction, then to district (rather than national) agreements, and then to hours.'

Therefore it is clear and true on the three questions that they said they would stand by us on, they committed us, and the miners are suffering. But we will re-build and organise and the movement will get stronger, but it will get new leaders who will have the courage to lead.'

W.M.Citrine, General Secretary of the TUC, then rose to defend the General Council. His defence again took the form of an attack on the miners' leadership—and on Cook in particular.

He accused Cook of making irresponsible statements before the strike about the state of preparedness of the movement. He quoted the co-operative movement (that revolutionary vanguard!) as dissociating itself from Cook on one occasion and concluded: 'I am trying to prove, if I can, that the people who are making the accusation of lack of preparedness themselves prevented that preparedness.'

According to Citrine, it was the miners' own over-eagerness which led to the defeat. He did not suggest an 'alternative approach' however. How could he? In their desperate situation the miners only had two choices. To fight, or to capitulate to the coal owners' demands.

On the last day of the conference a

speaker for the Furniture workers, A.Gossip, outlined the situation for the working class as a whole. Before the strike: '...we all felt and knew that if the miners were not supported up to the hilt, and if they were forced to accept a lower standard of comfort, the inevitable result would be that the whole of us would be compelled to follow suit in a very short space of time.'

He criticised the General Council's propaganda effort during the strike: 'I want to say it was a lamentable error to stop the labour press in the way it was done in the early days of the general strike. In our opinion it was a stupid thing to do, and the British Worker (the TUC strikesheet) was not issued until after the government—who have no scruples when they are fighting the working class—had started the British Gazette.'

'The British Worker was issued and the articles generally speaking in the British Worker were of the tamest possible kind. There was nothing to raise the spirit and enthusiasm of the workers.'

'You want to treat the employing class as what they are, our bitter and vindictive enemies, and fight them with all the power at your disposal in the same way as they fight us.'

A Mr C.T. Cramp (Railway Workers) countered by attacking the whole concept of mass industrial action, in a speech which has a strangely modern flavour. 'I know there were honest men who for a long time urged the idea of more power to the General Council in order that there might at some time be a general strike. They were living in the days of Robert Owen; their ideas are antiquated; we have long gone past the stage when that might be effective, and you have to realise that alongside with your industrial movement you must get hold of the machinery of government.'

But belief in constitutional reform was not the only reason for the General Council's ending of the strike, as a speaker from the General and Municipal Workers' union made clear: 'Every day that the strike proceeded the control and the authority of that dispute was passing out of the hands of responsible executives into the hands of men who had no authority, no control, no responsibility, and was wrecking the movement from one end to the other.'

For the miners, one Peter Chambers summed up the fears of the General Council: 'Now the majority of the General Council—not all of them, but the majority—never wanted a general strike. For what

Mr E. Bevin and Mr W. Citrine, General Council spokesmen



reason? Because they believed that in a general strike there lay the germs of a revolution, and they had not the courage to face it'.

The final, and most disgraceful, speech was made by a Labour MP, J.R.Clynes. He had the cheek first to congratulate the TUC (and himself) on the conduct of the strike, then to accuse the miners of being out of step.

The delegates should '...look back upon the general strike as the greatest and in some sense the most glorious effort in our history, and look forward to the time when...the miners will be united with the rest of the movement in carrying the rank and file forward to that point of power where they should not have to resort again to such a venture as a general strike...'

The report of the TUC General Council was accepted by 2,840,000 votes to 1,095,000, to the great relief of the 'responsible executives'. The working class as a whole, however, voted with its feet.

Union membership fell off after the strike, and numbers affiliated to the TUC declined even more sharply. The government took advantage of the disillusion in unionism caused by the betrayal to pass the 1927 Trades Disputes and Trade Union Act, which made sympathetic strikes and 'political' use of union funds illegal (until its repeal in 1946).

The miners had lost over £60 million in wages and continued to provide 42 per cent of all industrial strikers up to 1945, although they made up only 6 per cent of the industrial workforce.

Perhaps the most interesting thing to emerge from reading the little-known conference report is the way in which the same arguments were advanced by the TUC leadership as then as we hear from Vic Feather and co, today. The emphasis upon keeping the movement 'respectable' has a particularly modern ring to it.

And the way in which the capitalist state was carefully prepared for a struggle, (whereas the labour movement was not.) should hold a lesson for the TUC as it is confronted with the Industrial Relations Bill.

Perhaps the miners of 1926, deserted by the rest of the labour movement and left to go down to humiliating defeat, have a parallel in 1971 in the shape of the postal workers?

COVENTRY ENGINEERS TO DEFEND THEIR PAY AGREEMENT

SW Reporter

EIGHT THOUSAND workers walked out of engineering plants throughout the Coventry area last Thursday in a massive demonstration against the proposed abolition of the Coventry Tool Room Agreement.

At a meeting held in the town centre shopping precinct they approved unanimously a plan of action put forward by the District Committee of the Engineering Union to include:

1. Total ban on overtime in all tool rooms
2. No factory to negotiate separate agreements
3. Non-co-operation with management on other issues until a satisfactory agreement is reached.

The agreement was signed in 1941 by the union on behalf of a number of tool room workers. It tied the earnings of the tool room to the district piecework average calculated every month.

Bargaining

Since it began, the wages of all tool men have risen regularly over the years. Government wage freezes have had no effect.

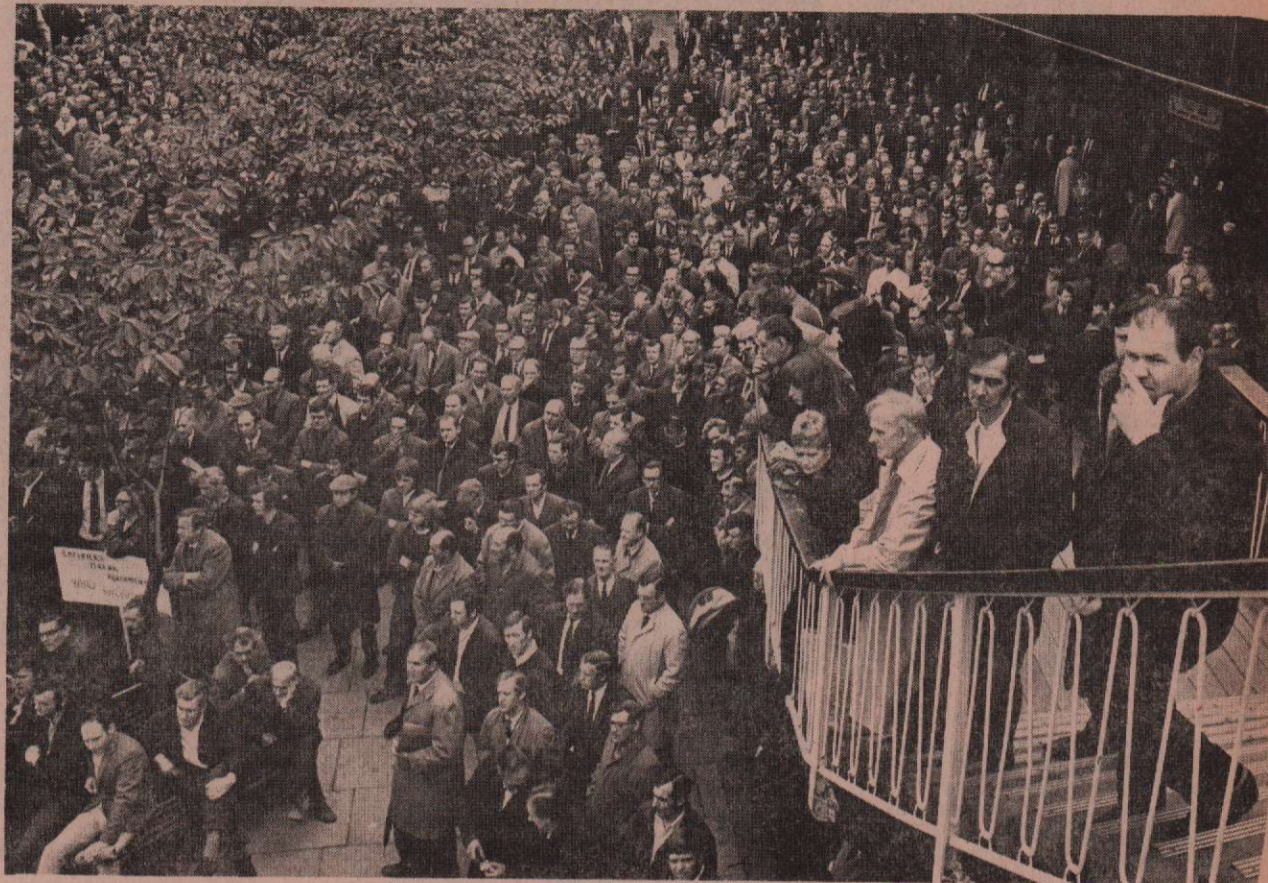
For example, since 1966/7 the rate has risen by 35 per cent. The rises have come as a direct result of the strong rank and file bargaining of the piecework shop stewards for semi-skilled workers.

In Coventry it is not only the tool men who depend on the monthly average rate. 8000 to 10,000 ancillary workers are also tied to it.

It means that workers in small factories whose bargaining power may be weak, use the strength of the best organisation in the area to get their own monthly increase.

At the moment British Leyland are trying to force through a Measured Day Work scheme. This means that they don't want to be in the same position as Chrysler, where the tool men are tied to the district rate and the rest of the factory are on a productivity deal in which their rates are re-negotiated once a year.

British Leyland wants all its work-



Section of the 8000 crowd of engineering workers at the Coventry meeting

ers on one agreement. This is what Ford won in 1964 and now they have the lowest paid car workers in Europe.

If the whole city were on Measured Day Work there would be no monthly increases. There would be no piecework average rate to compare with, instead only annual negotiations.

This will be equivalent to a wage freeze in Coventry and District. In addition it will be a major step towards freezing wages in the engineering industry as a whole.

So the employers have given their

notice without prior discussion or consultation that the agreement is to be abolished. They want to throw it out because, they say, it is inflationary, and they have the Tory government on their side.

Freeze wages

It is no accident that the attack comes at a time when unemployment, particularly among tool men in Coventry, is higher than at any time since the war.

The government wants to freeze wages in the motor industry to

10 per cent rises as it has with the post office workers. The tool room average rate represents to the whole country and to the rest of Europe what the most organised workers can achieve.

£40 for 40 hours in Coventry compared with a national average of £27 is the measure of that achievement. If the Tories can get rid of this symbol of a strong trade union organisation it will be a victory for them and a defeat for all organised workers.

Facts not enough to fight the Tories

THE massive swing against the Tories in the council elections has shown the depth of feeling against rising prices and unemployment. Labour Research's new pamphlet* is a timely addition to the mounting criticism.

It contains useful facts that effectively destroy the government's daily propaganda of blaming workers for all the known ills in our society. Wage increases are shown to be a minor part in price rises and in no way related to unemployment.

In fact, real wages—what the take home pay will actually buy—have practically stood still since the mid-1960s. One paragraph proves that a 15 per cent wage increase is needed to keep pace with rising prices and increased national output.

The government campaign to restrict wage increases to 9 per cent means a wage cut of nearly 2 per cent for a married man with two children. And this assumes he gets an increase every 12 months.

But having correctly pinpointed the Tories and their method of operation, the concluding sections of the pamphlet are a disappointment. We are told who is to blame, but the equally important questions of Why? and What should be done? remain unanswered.

No answer

We are told that lack of 'economic growth' is the reason why and expansion of the economy is the solution to the problem.

This is no answer at all. A thorough socialist analysis would show the worldwide capitalist system facing the age-old problems of overproduction, sharpening trade conflicts and declining profit rates.

Bosses make workers pay for efficiency campaigns, economic pressure forces politicians to cut back on workers' living standards and the working class is forced to defend itself by increasingly sharp clashes with the state machine.

In the absence of such an analysis the Tories are painted in the pamphlet as blinkered and obstinate, refusing to expand the economy by financial regulation, interest rates, and HP terms. This is a full-scale retreat from socialism, in which the orthodox economic solutions are substituted for the activity of the workers in winning reforms where possible and finally establishing their power in place of the capitalist state.

Workers who merely echo the bosses' watchword are weakening their own organisation. Wages can be improved during growth, it is true, but when any economic decline sets in the case for improvement is lost if it has always been based on a surplus made available by growth.

Crumbles

And the ease of winning cash that there was there all the time does not build workers' organisations, awareness or solidarity. It results in a movement that appears stronger than it is and crumbles under the pressure of real conflict.

In its demand for expansion, the pamphlet quotes frequently from the TUC Economic Review of 1971. Indeed, it could almost be regarded as a supplement to the TUC's publication, for there is nothing here that Vic Feather would disapprove of.

Neither is there much that Harold Wilson would dislike. The Labour government gets only one mention—and that is mildly critical.

Ignoring Wilson's open collaboration with big business is no service to workers. Nor does proposing policies that are identical to the TUC's, a body that has devoted itself for the last 30 years to restraining wages and preventing strikes.

The only basis for the advance of the working class is by its own activity, not by financial juggling.

The pamphlet is a lapse from the usual service provided by Labour Research, but its publication must raise the question of the job of research organisations. How long can industrial researchers remain separate from a political organisation geared to the struggle for socialism?

Prolonging the artificial division of economics (factory) and politics (ballot box) has no place in the conflicts ahead. Somebody somewhere needs a re-think.

Alan Woodward

*Inflation and Unemployment: Who is to Blame? Tip from Labour Research Department, 78 Backfins Road, London SE1.

IDEAS IN SOCIETY

DUNCAN HALLAS

How 'law and order' aids the rich and powerful

IN THIS COUNTRY we live, we are told, under 'the rule of law'. We have rules or laws that are binding on all alike and policemen, judges and prison officers to enforce them. These laws are in the interests of everyone. Without them we would be at each others throats all the time. We would have what the philosopher Hobbes called 'the war of all against each' and life under these conditions, 'the state of nature' as he called it, would be 'nasty, brutish and short'.

Most people don't take this quite at its face value. They know well enough that, 'equality before the law' notwithstanding, it helps to be rich enough to employ expensive lawyers if you are in trouble. It even helps to talk with the same kind of accent as the magistrate or judge, to have been to the 'right' kind of school, to live at a 'good' address and so on. Most people, in short, accept the liberal criticism of the legal system, that it has a bias against the poor, the ignorant and the coloured.

The socialist criticism goes much deeper. There can be no such thing as 'the rule of law'. Only people can rule other people and any legal system is a means of upholding the rule of one class over other classes. There have been markedly different forms of class rule corresponding to different stages of economic development.

In Marx's words 'legal relations as well as forms of state...are rooted in the material conditions of life...Legislation, whether political or civil never does more than proclaim the will of economic relations.'

The modern British legal system is a set of rules for running a capitalist society, for maintaining capitalist class rule. The bias and abuse are only surface effects. The essence of the thing is the preservation of the exploitation of working people by capitalists.

Law is concerned essentially with property: civil law is broadly concerned with the settlement of disputes between property owners,

criminal law is broadly concerned with the protection of property rights. Both developed as classes developed and both, in their present forms, will be superseded in a classless society.

This is a hard idea to accept at first sight. Isn't there something in what Hobbes—and many others—have said? As a matter of fact the 'state of nature'—i.e., a society before well developed classes have emerged—is a very different thing from the 'war of all against each'.

Growing inequality

A good example is early English society. It was a society based on kinship. There was no state, no policemen, no professional judges, no prisons. Social inequality existed and was growing, a feudal ruling class was slowly emerging and as it emerged law developed. What was it mainly concerned with? King Alfred's laws, made between 871 and 899 declared that for treachery to a lord there could be no compensation and no mercy' (Harding, Social History of English Law).

The point about compensation is the key. In earlier times a man belonged to a kinship group that was collectively responsible for all he did. If he injured a member of another group compensation, according to a traditionally recognised tariff, had to be paid by his kin. The alternative was a feud and that in turn would have to be settled, sooner or later, by compensation. There is no need to idealise this tribal society. It was certainly not composed of happy bands of 'noble savages'.

The fact remains that the evolution out of it of a legal system with professional 'enforcers' was part and parcel of the growth of class rule, in this case the growth of a feudal ruling class. Punishment replaced compensation as the class struggle developed. It was, and is, a weapon of the ruling class.

Alfred's laws were intended to strengthen the position of the 'lords' in a society that was still half tribal. Law and order—that is the subordination of the peasants to chiefs who were becoming landlords—was to replace the old kinship system which was based on common rights in land.

So it is with every set of laws. Some class interest or other is being served. There can never be a neutral system of law because the central core of any legal system—property rights—is concerned with the right of some to exploit others in various ways. The recognition of the right of private ownership of industry, for example, is the recognition of the right of a privileged group to live off the labour of others. When people talk about 'the rule of law' or 'law and order' they are really talking about the defence of a particularly system of exploitation.

But even if this is true, what about the thug who beats up an old woman? Surely even a socialist community has to have rules and people who enforce them. Certainly it has to have rules but they are rules based on voluntary co-operation and enforcement is the job of the community as a whole.

NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN! NOW THEN!



A great peg for a cheap novel

IT is the role of great literature to honestly reflect the state of society of the writer's time in artistic form. The tensions, divisions, values and emotions of the particular epoch are the raw material out of which a novelist moulds his art.

Times of great revolutionary change present the writer with enormous possibilities and with the greatest challenge of all—to portray a complex society undergoing radical transformation.

In this context it is obviously an event of great interest when a major American writer chooses to write a novel centred around the May events of 1968 when the whole French capitalist structure was so nearly brought crashing to the ground. Here is an opportunity to artistically represent these changes and to underscore the unbridgeable conflict of values that the events pointed up.

Unfortunately, James Jones (author of the bestseller *From Here to Eternity*) fails almost totally to rise to this fascinating challenge. His new book, *The Merry Month of May* (Collins, £2), is set within the compass of the student revolt centring around Nanterre and the Sorbonne and is written from the vantage point of an expatriate American author, James Hartley.

Favourite standby

Hartley watches the unfolding rebellion with an aspect of detached and somewhat condescending sympathy until it encroaches on that favourite old standby of American sociologists, the 'generation gap'. The medium Jones uses is an amoral, sexually voracious black American woman who in succession seduces his best friend, Gallagher, Gallagher's wife and then his 18 year old son.

The result is a farce. On the one hand is a nation in revolt, questioning its values, doubting its accepted leaders and forming new social institutions and on the other hand is a sorry, turgid tale of a middle-aged man's desperate attempts to recreate his long-lost virility.

This is all that May 1968 seems to signify for Jones, a continuation of the universal struggle between father and son for the same woman. That's the way it always has been and that's the way it's always going to be, folks.

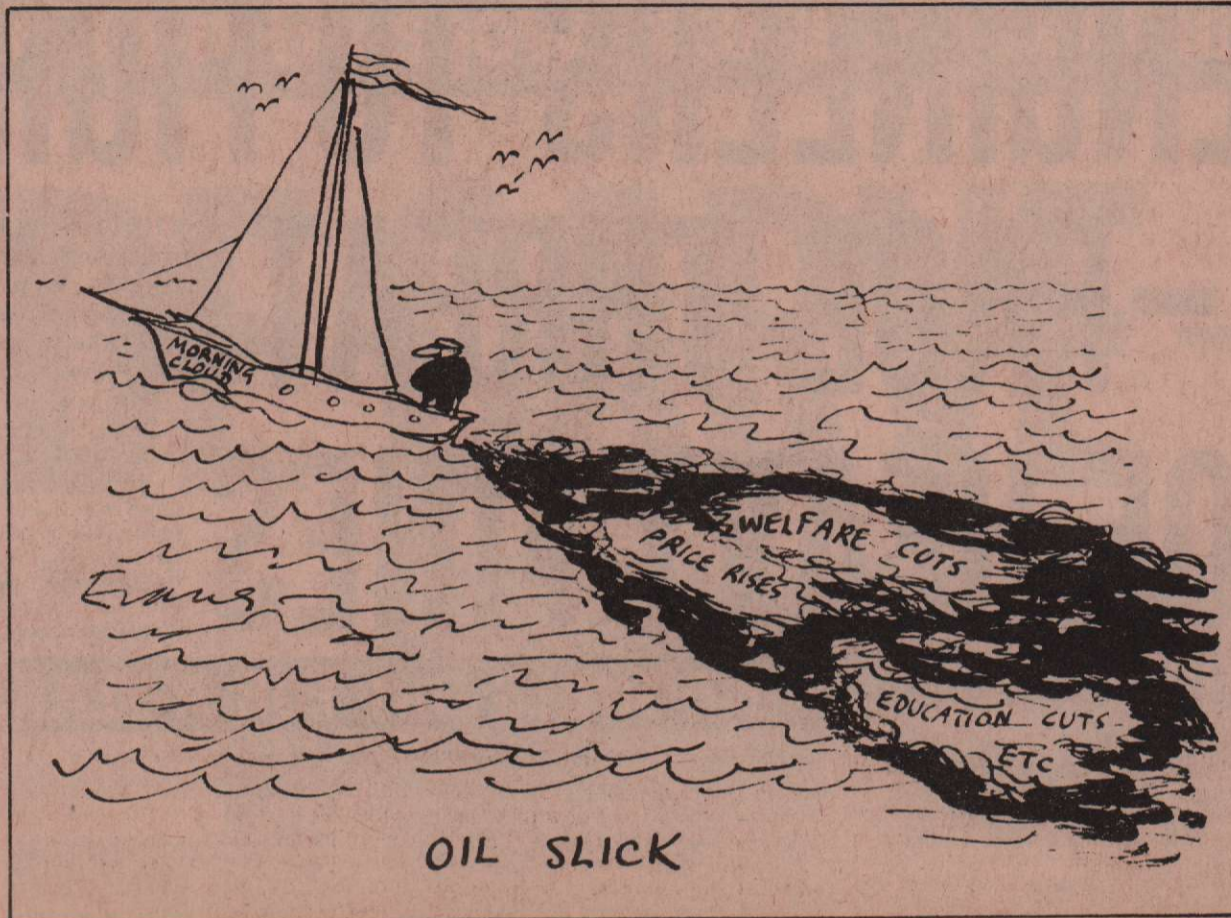
In the end, the reader is left with the nasty suspicion that this is simply a piece of gross opportunism. The magnificent struggles of the French workers and students have been used as a pale and implausible artificial background against which Jones can weave a very thin, totally conventional plot of sexual gymnastics.

The result is an abortion which cannot even be saved by the fairly vivid journalistic accounts of the occupied Sorbonne and Odeon with which Jones peppers *The Merry Month of May*.

When Jones wrote *From Here to Eternity* he had a sure grasp of his material and also of his own limitations. His latest book illustrates the pitfalls that even a technically competent writer can fall into when using material he does not understand and has no real enthusiasm for.

The flowering of hope that accompanied the upheavals of May 1968 deserves a far better literary chronicler than this and it is to be hoped that we will get such a work before long.

Martin Tomkinson



COTTONS COLUMN

BERNADETTE DEVLIN has the happy knack of upsetting the establishment of any country she visits. A Congressional hearing in Washington last week questioned the dreadful J. Edgar Hoover, boss of the FBI, about her visit to the United States earlier this year.

Said 'I beat up as I clean up' Hoover: 'I do not know why the State Department granted the visa for her to come over here, but it did. She has been in the country collecting large sums of money for her cause in Northern Ireland. She speaks in a very violent manner.'

And John Rooney, chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee, told the sad tale of what happened to a police spy assigned to one of Bernadette's meetings: 'She spoke so eloquently with regard to Angela Davis and Bobby Seale that my friend Mike Dowd, who used to be assigned here in Congress by the metropolitan police, had a heart attack and died listening to her.'

Organisers of Bernadette's meetings in Britain are thought to be demanding maximum police attendance from now on.

IT may be totally unconnected with Chinese government support for Yahya Khan and Mrs Bandaranaike, but at least one London bookshop is selling off posters of Chairman Mao at half price. Red hands have less pulling power than red thoughts.

Up in arms

GUERRILLA warfare comes to deepest Essex. Residents of the village of Fingringhoe and the nearby town of Colchester have got an unexpected taste of British Army tactics in Northern Ireland.

Fingringhoeans were startled to find the village plastered with IRA posters declaring 'Desert now and bring your weapons to us' and railing against the 'imperial fascist dogs' at



Devlin: cop's heart stood still

Westminster. The posters were the work of the Second Battalion of the Light Infantry, who are being sent to help defend the Ulster régime next month.

'We want them to get used to this kind of literature,' an Army spokesman explained. But what they lack in literary know-how, the Light Infantry make up for in strong-arm behaviour.

Colchester citizens have complained that the troops were 'excessively enthusiastic' after asking pub drinkers to help them in a mock riot. It turned into a real punch-up, with one civilian needing stitches.

Sean Turnip, our man on the spot, reports that trench-coated figures are training at night to form the Essex Republican Army and are plastering the area with 'go home, Tommy' posters. UDI is not ruled out.

Pay off

FURTHER progress report on the bosses' life and hard times: Last year two managing directors of Associated Portland Cement, Geoffrey Davis and Victor Ellison, resigned to 'facilitate reorganisation of the top management of the company'. It has just been revealed that they were paid £110,000 between them as compensation for loss of office.

Meanwhile, Jim Slater, founder with Environment Minister Peter Walker of Slater Walker Securities (advisors to international swindler

Bernie Cornfeld) has insured his life through the company for £10 million. He's either expecting social revolution or he thinks Bernie wasn't too impressed with that advice.

APARTHEID spells fat profits for oil tycoons. British Petroleum has invested £58 million in South Africa. BP's newly appointed SA executive Denys Milne, says that at the end of 1969 investment in South Africa, SW Africa and the former protectorates was valued at £50 million and the group has been investing an average of £7 million annually in the area.

Milne adds that in 1969 BP sales in the area came to £64 million and rose strongly in 1970.

From the heart

THE LAW versus the poor. A homeless family who squatted in empty council property in Southwark, south London, were dragged before the court. They pleaded necessity.

Dismissing the plea, Lord Denning said: 'When a man who is starving enters a house and takes food in order to keep himself alive, our English law does not admit the defence of necessity. It holds him guilty of larceny.'

'The reason is because, if hunger were once allowed to be an excuse for stealing, it would open a way through which all kinds of disorder and lawlessness would pass. So here, if homelessness were once admitted as a defence to trespass no one's house would be safe. Necessity would open a door which no man could shut.'

'So the Courts must for the sake of law and order take a firm stand. They must refuse to admit the plea of necessity to the hungry and homeless and trust that their distress will be relieved by the charitable and the good. So far as these courts are concerned, we must, in the interest of law and order itself, uphold the title to these properties.'

TV

DENNIS POTTER has, on balance, given me more pleasure over the years than any other television dramatist. His *Stand Up*, Nigel Barton and *Vote, Vote, Vote* for Nigel Barton remain two of the great landmarks in telly drama and he has the ability, rare among 'left-wing' writers, to underscore his contempt for society with a magnificent humour.

But reviewing his play *Paper Roses* (ITV, Sunday) is a difficult task. It was about newspapers and journalists are such a tight in-group with their own special language, that much of the significance of the play may have been lost on the ordinary viewer.

It would be tragic if only journalists enjoyed the play and its subtle undertones, for I thought it a memorable production, particularly because of Potter's eagerness to use the medium to the full. So much television drama is just scaled-down theatre but conventions were swept aside in *Paper Roses* by the use of repeated newspaper headlines and the neat idea of having a television critic actually watching the play with us and writing his review of it at the end.

Clarence Hubbard, the central character, is a once-famous 'scoop' reporter of the thirties and forties on a brash, sensational daily paper. Locked in the style and attitudes of his days of fame, he is a pathetic has-been, boring his young colleagues with his reminiscences. Aware of his failure, his last day in journalism begins with him locking his wife in a cupboard at home and ends with his fatal plunge down the lift-shaft at the office.

The journalists who share Hubbard's office are openly contemptuous of him. Nobody writes like that any more, they say as he recalls his 'great' stories—the evicted dog and the one-armed, legless table tennis player. The flashbacks to the young Hubbard telephoning his scoops to the paper were a marvellous evocation of a style and time long gone.

The message, or the point or the truth—call it what you like—was that the younger journalists, despite their mocking of Hubbard, were prisoners on the same treadmill. Only the style had changed—they too were writing trash, careful not to offend the advertisers, churning out the new clichés centred now on sex and titillation rather than 'warm human interest'.

We may no longer suffer headlines that shout 'WHEE', 'GOSH!' and 'Who will save this dog?' but newspapers are still produced to suit the demands of the advertisers by people cynical about the intelligence and understanding of the readers.

I hope viewing journalists were not so carried away with Potter's accurate portrayal of a newspaper office to miss the warning that Hubbard's lift-shaft yawns for them, too.

Special praise for Bill Maynard as Hubbard. I hope we will see the once-famous comedian again in worthwhile television drama.

MEANWHILE, back among the froth, Paul Temple has been given the kiss of life yet again by the BBC barons. As I have been pretty rude about this series before, let me say that the first of the new run (last Wednesday, BBC1) was excellent entertainment thanks to the injection of some decent writing and, above all, some real acting as distinct from the usual sleep-walking apology for it.

Kenneth Griffith as a smarmy, double-crossing Russian diplomat was wonderfully funny, backed by the dependable John le Mesurier as a Special Branch cop. What a lift real talent gives to even the most tired and jaded series. If we must have froth, let it be good froth.

David East

Socialist Worker

Ford men walk out to back steward

By Steve Emms

LIVERPOOL:-1300 Ford workers walked out of the Halewood site on Monday when a shop steward was sacked. The Paint, Trim and Assembly plant has been at a standstill since then.

Behind the dispute lies the mounting management offensive against the shop floor. Halewood produces Escorts and Capris—popular cars until new models appeared from both Ford and rival firms.

Now the Halewood car board is getting bare. Orders are down, the production lines are half empty and management have stepped into the ring for what they predict will be the last and final round with the shop floor.

Their organisation now runs like a military machine. Within an hour, foremen have a printed newsheet detailing any dispute that arises. Their orders are clear: sack first and ask questions after.

Since the end of the nine-week strike, serious attempts have been made to reduce manning in the Paint Shop. This has led to frequent walkouts and men being laid off. Now management have turned their attention to the whole PTA division.

Called to plant

Last Friday, foremen tried to reduce manning on one operation to two men, making the job extremely unsafe. The steward, John Dillon, told management that the men were not prepared to accept the decision and argued that at least five men should be employed on the job.

On Monday he was called to the plant 'to look at the new arrangements' but he was sacked when he arrived at the factory. This led to the walk out by 1300 workers.

Since the national strike, the all-important Transmission Plant has received the kid-glove treatment and is unaffected by disputes in other parts of Halewood. But as it produces gear boxes for the whole Ford range its strength is much greater than the other plants.

Unless Transmission can be called out to support the battered Body and PTA sections, the fight to reinstate John Dillon will prove more difficult. The joint shop stewards committee at Halewood has met only once since the strike and must be rebuilt to show shop floor workers that there is an answer to the present strength of the Ford bosses.

Backing from Transmissions

AT A mass meeting on Wednesday, workers from the Transmission plant at Halewood voted to join the strike to reinstate shop steward John Dillon. This support from the key plant could bring victory swiftly unless the management are prepared to face a rapid nation-wide shutdown.

IPC journalists vote to strike

SW Reporter

NEARLY 1500 magazine journalists employed by the International Publishing Corporation—the Mirror group—voted on Monday to strike from 27 June in support of a pay claim. It was the biggest meeting ever held in the history of the National Union of Journalists and represented almost the entire 1800 IPC magazines' staff.

The original NUJ claim was for £465 a year all-round to give a new qualified minimum of £2050. In talks

last Friday the NUJ reduced the claim first to £415, then to £364 but there was still an unbridgeable gap with IPC's 'final' offer of £175.

Secret plan

The mass meeting voted by 994 to 505 to go ahead with their strike. Grand Father (convenor) of IPC Chapels, Eric Winter, commented later, with a dig at the Industrial Relations Bill: 'If we'd been forced to hold a secret ballot, do they think 1600 would have filled them in?'

The NUJ has a secret plan of action to pull out journalists on selected and most profitable magazines. But IPC has declared that all 1800 will be removed from the payrolls—in other words, a lock-out.

After the mass meeting, the 4000 strong Magazine and Book Branch of the union voted unanimously to back their IPC colleagues and called for solidarity action from other printing unions to black IPC—the biggest magazine publishers in the world—if the strike and lock-out takes place.

ENGINEERS TO FIGHT BILL —FACE THREAT OF HEAVY FINES

THE BATTLE against the Tories' Industrial Relations Bill sharpened this week with the decisive vote of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers' conference to withdraw from the register of trade unions and to fight to make the law unworkable.

The vote, by 68 votes to one abstention, came on Tuesday at Torquay. The union represents nearly 1½ million workers.

President Hugh Scanlon told the delegates that his mind was made up that the remaining act of defiance that could be offered to the government was by deciding not to register. He warned that the AUEW would lose tax benefits and would be open to claims for unlimited damages through the industrial courts for 'unfair' industrial action.

But he added: 'I have committed myself and I have done so in the knowledge of these things. But I think all of us would be much happier if others would speak out and say they are willing to take the political act which the situation demands.'

'We should issue a clarion call to them to do likewise. The absolute unity of all workers would be the greatest single act towards making the Bill become inoperable.'

ALTER RULES

The AUEW and its four sections—engineers, foundry workers, construction engineers and technicians and draughtsmen—will have to alter their rules to carry out the policy. The general secretaries of all sections supported the decision.

The vote is a crucial one. If the AUEW is joined by the other major union, the Transport Workers, in an industrial campaign to defy the new legislation it could quickly be made unworkable.

The key to that success is the translation of the Torquay vote into positive action involving the rank and file. Too often the verbal anger of 'left' union leaders is in sharp contrast to their timid day-to-day policies.

AUEW members and branches should now demand from Scanlon and his executive that from now on:

All strikes will be declared official as soon as they start to defend their members against the laws, and

The closed shop, sympathy strikes and blacking of goods will be defended by industrial action.

OMINOUS CONTRAST

The GKN strike at Cardiff (reported on this page), is the type of dispute that would open local strike leaders to heavy legal and financial attack under the new laws. The failure of the AUEW leaders to make it official is an ominous contrast to Scanlon's fine words at the union conference.

A successful fight against the new laws demands maximum unity of all trade unionists at shop floor level. The need for Councils of Action in every area to spearhead the fight becomes more vital, not less, following the Torquay decision.

NOTICES

IS Conference on Women 26/27 June 1971 Central London Polytechnic Marylebone Road NW1. Sessions on Economic Roots of Women's Liberation, Women's Liberation and the Revolutionary Party, Women in Industry. Open to ALL IS members. Observers credentials and further information from Valerie Clark, 18 Dickinson Road, London N8. Refreshments, facilities for children available.

MANCHESTER & SALFORD IS public mtng: Steve Emms on Modern Imperialism. The Cotton Tree, Great Ancoats, Thursday 24 June, 8pm.

MANCHESTER: demonstrate against the Tory Immigration Bill Saturday 3 July, 1.30pm, Alexandra Park Gate, Alexandra Rd South, Moss Side.

HULL IS public mtng: Thursday 24 June, 8pm, the Millionaire Press, Speaker Roger Protz, editor Socialist Worker. Windmill Hotel, Witham, upstairs room.

HUDDERSFIELD IS public mtng: Friday 25 June, 7.30pm: The Millionaire Press. Spkr. Roger Protz, The Plough, Westgate.

CAMDEN NO 3 AUEW Meeting on Unemployment. Camden No 3 AUEW calls upon Camden/Islington trade unionists, unemployed workers, claimants unions and members of labour movement to support a mtng on unemployment. Thursday 24 June 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road. Admission Free.

SOUTHAMPTON IS public meeting: Bernadette Devlin MP and Duncan Hallas IS on How to Fight the Tories. St Marks Hall, Archers Rd, Thursday 24 June, 7.45pm.

GKN craftsmen out 10 weeks in pay battle

CARDIFF:-Maintenance craftsmen at two GKN plants have been on strike for 10 weeks in a tough wages battle with management.

GKN has refused to operate a national pay agreement negotiated by the Steel Employers' Association and craftsmen at the Cardiff Castle and Tremorfa works earn £2.50 less than tradesmen doing the same job at local British Steel Corporation plants.

The GKN men are working at plants that have nearly doubled profits in the last three years but where management declared their intention just before the strike started to cut wages by £1.50 a week.

The strike is backed by the District Committee of the AUEW but it has not been declared official by the national executive. The angry strikers refused to meet AUEW executive member John Boyd when he came to Cardiff and Boyd made a vicious public attack on the stewards.

Boyd's attitude plus the use of blackleg labour at the plants have made the men even more determined to win. They will seek support from other GKN plants in Britain.

The importance of solidarity action is underlined by a management statement that all the strikers will be sacked this week unless they return to work and sign a 'conditions of employment' form.

Donations and messages to: Bro J.P. Kelly, 18 Gaer Castell Place, Rumney, Cardiff.

CAMDEN IS public mtng: Paul Foot on the Immigration Bill. Wednesday 23 June, 8pm, Foresters Hall, Kentish Town Rd (near Kentish Town tube).

RANK and FILE Teachers' public meeting: Friday 25 June, 7.45pm. Michael Duane on The Tory attack on Education. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

NEW pamphlet Workers' Councils vs Parliament—two previously untranslated articles from Il Manifesto, Italy. 10p post paid from Socialist Education Project, 11 Dale Street, Leamington Spa, Warwick.

NEW DATE for Duncan Hallas series Introduction to Marxism, Sunday 27 July: Capitalism, Imperialism and Third World since end of World War II. 6 Cottons Gdns, E2, 7.30pm.

FINE TUBES OUT FOR A YEAR



STRIKERS at the Fine Tubes factory in Plymouth, Devon 'celebrated' one year of their fight for decent wages and trade union rights this year. In the last 12 months members of the strike committee have toured the country to win backing of goods to the American-owned factory. Picture shows pickets with TGWU secretary Jack Jones when he visited them. More vigorous support nationally from the TGWU and AUEW could have brought victory months before.

KENT CALL FOR ACTION COUNCIL TO TACKLE BILL

by JOHN FIELD

MORE THAN 200 shop stewards, rank and file trade unionists and socialists attended a conference on the Industrial Relations Bill organised by the Kent Federation of Trades Councils in Canterbury last weekend.

Eric Heffer MP said the Bill was part of a Tory attack on the entire working class, including the Social Security Bill, unemployment, the hiving-off nationalised industries and the Common Market. He did not mention the Immigration Bill and was taken up on this by questioners.

Heffer said he was in favour of some curbs on immigration because letting 'foreigners' into the country would only worsen the lot of those who already live in slums. He underlined the bankruptcy of the Labour left by claiming that the parliamentary struggle against the Bill was of primary importance. Criticism of this view by a full-time NUPE organiser was, according to Heffer, the result of 'isolation from the labour movement.'

Lawrence Daly, Miners' general secretary, pointed out the need for the unions to support their members when they came into conflict with the Bill. Lawyer Paul O'Higgins outlined the repressive nature of the Bill and gave instances of the loopholes that it leaves for both

employers and employees.

For example, if building workers strike against their employers, quite legally, the boss can form a new company under another name, which will take over work on the site. If workers continue to black work on the site, they will be breaking the law, even though they are still up against the same boss.

The Sunday session was taken up with a discussion on the need for a Council of Action that would represent trade union branches, shop stewards committees and other sections of the local labour movement in a united struggle against the IRB and the government. The organisers of the conference were instructed to look into the possibilities of forming a Council of Action.

Many speakers from the floor argued that the contributions of Daly and Heffer on the Saturday had shown that it was not enough to rely on the Labour Party and the union leaders to fight the Tories but was up to rank and file. Trades councils and other local organisations of the working class were urged to lead the struggle.

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