

The TUC leaders are like condemned men crouching in their cells, not seeking to break down the prison walls but negotiating with the hangman about the quality of the rope

THIS FARCICAL, SHAMEFUL RETREAT



SCANLON Almost invisible

'WE WELCOME the fact' said Harold Wilson last week at a dinner in Manchester's Piccadilly Hotel, 'that in this past month, the TUC have moved further forward than in the last 40 years.'

He and his henchmen are delighted with the successful blackmail which has driven the executives of the trade unions into the Fairfields Hall at Croydon, there to carry out one of the most farcical and shameful retreats in the history of the Trades Union Congress.

Perhaps the most pathetic figure at the Congress is Hugh Scanlon, President of the Amalgamated Engineering and Foundry Workers' Union, still breathless from his rip-roaring speech last Sunday in Birmingham Town Hall.

He brought 1000 delegates to their feet in a standing ovation with promises of 'opposition in active form' if the Government bring in their Bill to discipline unofficial strikers.



COUSINS 'Higher productivity'

FLOOD

The last few months have brought forth a flood of rhetoric from Scanlon, Jack Jones of the TGWU and other 'left-wing' trade union leaders in opposition to the government's proposed Bill. But hardly are the words out of their mouths than they are signing documents and passing resolutions pledging themselves to shackle the very forces which they threaten to unleash against the government.

When an engineering strike loomed last autumn, Scanlon was prepared to fight the employers to the death, and said so until he was voted down by right-wingers on his national committee.

At Ford earlier this year he persuaded workers to accept watered-down penalty clauses. At a workers' control seminar he vigorously attacked the government's proposals for trade union 'reform'.

At the AEF National Committee six weeks ago



JONES New 'firebrand'

THAT OLD MILLIONAIRE press story about the 'over paid' British worker quietly rolled over and passed away last week.

Figures published by the Employment and Productivity Gazette show that roughly half the male workers in Britain earn less than £24 a week and more than half the women

EDITORIAL

the same Scanlon urged delegates to beware of 'irresponsible elements'. A few days later he voted against his right-wingers in favour of the TUC strike-breaking document, Programme for Action.

He is turning to face different directions so fast that he is almost invisible, and his colleagues on the 'left' of the trade union movement are keeping pace with him.

The confusion and double-talk of the trade union leaders at Croydon, symbolised by Scanlon, is a far cry from the 'comfortable' years of the mid-fifties and early 1960s when the union leaders discovered in relief that capitalism had changed.

The 'dark days' of the 1930s had passed. The twin spectres which had haunted their predecessors - mass unemployment on the one hand, revolution on the other - appeared to have vanished.

Capitalism, they deduced, could be reformed. And a close reading of the works of John Strachey taught them that they themselves had reformed it.

It was, wrote Strachey, the strength of the trade unions and the wisdom of their leaders which had banished unemployment and the poverty of pre-war capitalism. It followed that the task of the trade union leaders was to apply themselves rigorously to ensuring that their members enjoyed their 'just desserts' from the fruits of an ever-expanding, ever-booming capitalism.

INDECENT

'The class war', as a former AEU President, William Carron, told his members in 1963, 'can be relegated to the era of the stage-coach'. Talk of 'class struggle' was indecent, almost lavatorial.

The very notion that the union membership should be mobilised in struggle was repugnant to even the most left-wing trade union leader,

and they became, on left and right, unashamed elitists. They, who had tamed the tiger of capitalism, could now seek to guide it to their members' advantages not, as George Woodcock put it, in Trafalgar Square, but in the committee rooms.

With the first serious post-war recession in 1961, as the lights started to flicker in the committee rooms, the trade union leaders, left and right, swivelled towards a new saviour: the Labour Party. The Labour Party, they declared at conference after conference, would solve the problems which the beastly Tories had started to impose.

Had not Harold Wilson written in the Daily Herald of 2nd February 1962: 'We shall not be deterred by any one from springing to the support of unions who find their wages and conditions prejudiced and their negotiation and arbitration machinery set aside by the diktat of a government department'?

SLOGANS

And yet, as soon as Labour was elected, the language began to change. First Ray Gunter, then George Brown, then Wilson himself began to mutter the old Tory slogans about wreckers in the docks and politically motivated men on the high seas.

A split developed in the unions. Frank Cousins, general secretary of the TGWU, who had sat in the cabinet throughout the seamen's strike without a word in support of the seamen, resigned in protest at the first Prices and Incomes Bill.

The answer, he declared, was not legislation but 'higher productivity'.

Disillusioned with government policy, more and more 'left' trade union leaders drifted away from wholesale support for Labour.

Surely, they argued, with Scanlon just elected and with Cousins giving way to Jack Jones, an even more revolution-

to back page

Pay myth exploded

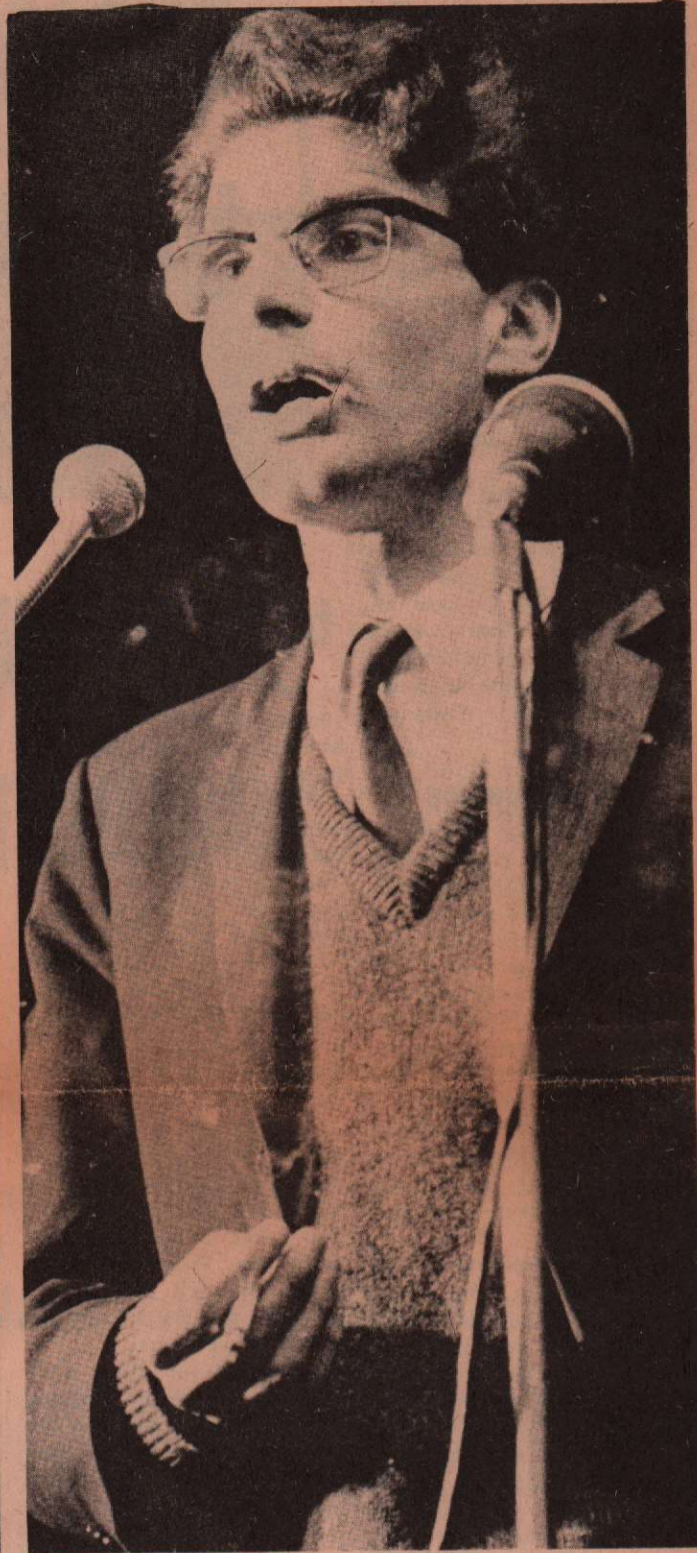
workers less than £13. One in every 12 male workers earns less than £15 a week and about a quarter of women workers less than £10

IMPRESSION

Remember the impression from the press that every other worker except yourself was clocking up more than £30

a week? In fact, only a quarter of male workers earn in excess of £30. And just over a quarter of women workers earn £16 or more.

So next time the managing director winds down the window of his Rolls and tells you you're over-paid and under worked, you know what to tell him...



Alain Krivine pictured at a meeting in London last Saturday. Picture by Jeff Pick

France -200,000 vote for workers' control

IN THE FIRST ROUND of the French elections the Trotskyist candidate, Alain Krivine, received more than 230,000 votes.

Not much, it might be thought, compared with the massive right-wing groupings which the joint Pompidou-Pohor total of 17 million odd votes represents. Not much compared with Jacques Duclos the Communist candidate, who got almost five million votes.

Except for one thing. Only Krivine stood for the abolition of the sham system of parliamentary democracy, for workers' power as the alternative to capitalism.

Unfortunately Krivine was not the candidate of a united revolutionary Left. The Ligue Communiste did not consult the other most important grouping, Lutte Ouvriere, with a view to jointly sponsoring a candidate. But LO, in a completely non-sectarian spirit, threw themselves wholeheartedly behind Krivine. The campaign was a tremendous opportunity for

using the machinery of the capitalist state in order to expose it. Krivine appeared on television with as much time as every other candidate - and hammered the need for revolution. His election address was delivered to every voter at the state's expense.

Parliamentary strait-jacket

Lutte Ouvriere distributed 200,000 propaganda leaflets through their factory militants and contacts. They tried to show how the line of the Communist Party is doomed to imprison workers within the strait-jacket of the parliamentary system.

It is not Krivine's vote that matters, except as a sign of progress towards unity of the French revolutionaries. Sections of the revolutionary Left were able to co-operate in united action and to put forward socialist propaganda.

Printworkers must break down old inter-union divisions and unite as bosses look to the regions for cheaper labour to solve their problems

Press Barons' quest for profits threatens jobs in Fleet Street

by SEAN GERAGHTY and PAUL FOOT

up some of their tax liability and to meet some of the overheads of the more profitable papers.

But in the lean years, when competition ripens, they will close their loss-makers down. The closure habit is catching, and the newspapers close down like falling dominoes.

At the top of this rickety structure is the Sun, whose circulation still drops, though losses have been cut by drastic "reorganisation", accepted by the unions.

The Sun is produced and printed with the People, in profitable property in Long Acre. The IPC bosses would dearly like to close the Sun, move the People to other presses and sell the property to cover the Sun's losses for the last five years.

Unhappily for Hugh Cudlipp and co. there are at present no other presses available for the People, so the Sun may teeter on for a few more months.

But Mr. Robert Maxwell's offer to "buy" the Sun may offer the IPC a heaven-sent opportunity to get rid of their cross.

Maxwell, incidentally, wants to run a Labour paper, and therefore, logically, he plans

to sack a third of the work force and enter into an "arrangement" with the trade unions to cut wages, raise hours and lower standards under threat of total closure.

The Daily Mail and the Daily Sketch, both owned by Lord Rothermere's Associated Newspapers, are both making losses.

Associated Newspapers, of course, make a fat profit, but this comes from their other assets, which include several profitable docks and wharves in the Port of London.

Drastic nature

In the other combines one profitable newspaper subsidises another which is much less profitable. In all these cases, rationalisation of a drastic nature is being seriously discussed.

In Beaverbrook's Express, there is talk of closing down the London Evening Standard building, merging the production process of both papers and "reorganising" hundreds out of their jobs.

Lord Thomson, as soon as his commitments to print the Observer in Printing House Square and the Guardian at Grays Inn Road are fulfilled, plans to move the Times into

Thomson House and establish what he once called "a cool climate" for the Observer and the Guardian.

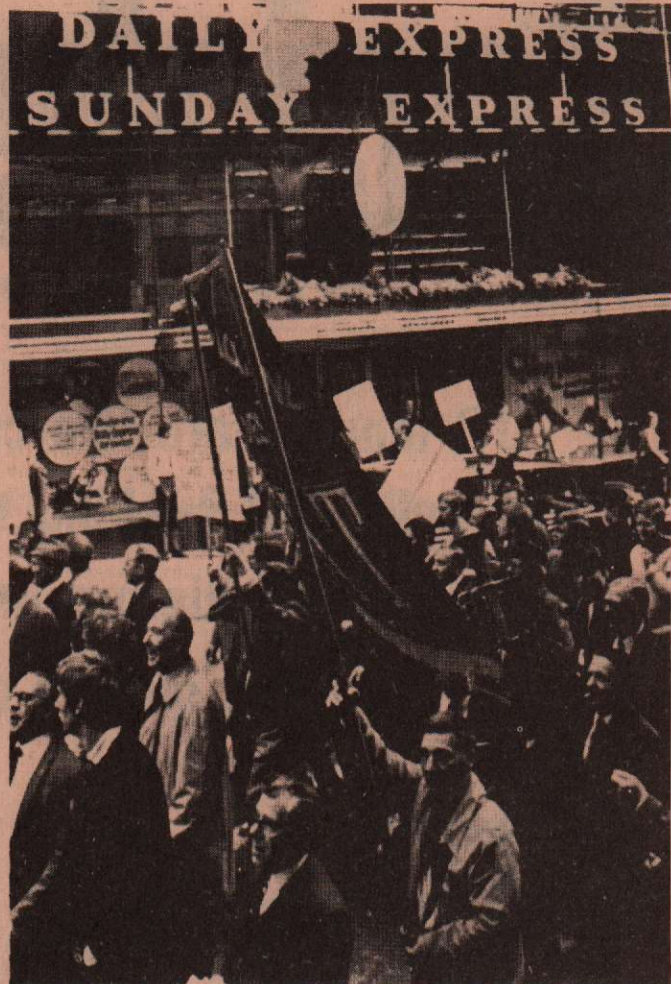
Such moves and climates will not take place without a vigorous effort by Thomson to save some of his investment costs by redundancy and cuts in bonuses on the shop floor.

But behind all these obvious dangers looms the threat of "regionalisation". Two years ago, the Daily Mirror started printing a separate edition in Belfast on web-off-set, with splashes of colour.

The edition has been a glorious success for the bosses. Daily circulation, which extends to parts of Scotland and Eire, is in the region of 750,000. More important, the labour costs compared with a similar effort in England are absurdly small, for the simple reason that less workers are employed for less money.

Regionalisation means setting up 15 or 20 operations similar to Belfast in England and Scotland and introducing mass cuts in labour costs in each new regional centre.

The added advantage for the bosses of such regionalisation is the big potential in local advertising which is denied the national papers. As the regional editions of the nationals soak up the local advertising, there will be a



May Day: printworkers march past Beaverbrook HQ

series of closures of local daily papers, some of which, notably the Glasgow Herald and the Northern Echo, are already unprofitable.

But the real advantage for the bosses lies in the hope that they will once and for all escape the firm grip in which the print unions have held them for the last 15 years. Newspaper profits are singularly susceptible to unofficial strike action and in the fat years the bosses have been happier to satisfy demands rather than confront the unions

Advance plans

Such "generosity" is ebbing. And although the bosses are terrified of the huge investment and the class confrontation involved, "regionalisation" will occupy more and more of their advance plans.

The danger for the print workers is that they will meet this challenge on the defensive, with compromises "taking into account" the profitability of this paper or that, or the rate of unemployment in different regions, or the maintenance of craft traditions.

Union sectarianism is a real and particular threat in the printing industry where the National Graphical Association boasts control of the machines in almost all the major newspapers and the

Society of Graphical and Allied Trades boasts the strength of greater numbers and where both unions are easily sidetracked into inter-union squabbles.

By contrast, the success of the Liaison Committee at Odhams, where the Sun and People are printed, in countering the traditional animosity between maintenance trades show how much can be achieved by worker cooperation.

If the print workers are to avoid serious defeats and redundancies in the near future they will have to organise now to turn the fight outwards against the bosses:

To demand cast-iron no-redundancy guarantees;

To form more liaison committees in the printing houses;

To put real life into the Federated Chapels;

To refuse to negotiate under threat or blackmail;

And to demonstrate in defence of these demands that they are capable of far more solidarity and militancy than the reactionary and disreputable newspaper proprietors can muster.

Sean Geraghty, who writes in his personal capacity, is secretary of Odhams Press Liaison Committee. Paul Foot is a member of the National Union of Journalists.

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This frustrat ers' planning their profit m

Socialist Worker

6 Cottons Gardens London E2 01-739 1878

Editor Roger Protz
Editorial Committee Paul Foot Richard Kuper Laurie Flynn Sabby Sagall
Business Manager Barry Hugill

WHERE WE STAND

mand of no victimisation of trade unionists. Redundancy should be opposed with the demand: five days work or five days pay. Shop stewards organisations should strengthen and extend their in-

fluence by linking up on an industrial and ultimately a national basis.

We are opposed to racial discrimination, a weapon used by the ruling class to divide the labour movement. Immigration control must be ended, ensuring the free movement of peoples regardless of race and colour. Black and white workers must unite and form their own defence organisations to fight fascism and racialism. The labour movement must demand the immediate recall of British troops from abroad as the first step towards ending colonial exploitation.

The task of revolutionary socialists is to join workers in their struggles with socialist ideas that will link up the various sections of the labour movement and help create a force that will lead on to workers' power and international socialism.

How the cuts have hit the

LETTERS

YOUR FRONT PAGE article on 8 May gave a totally inadequate picture of the recent cuts in the education programme.

The real damage to children in schools was nothing to do with the school leaving age or school milk. It was hidden in the cut in government grants to local authorities, so that in every locality enormous cuts had to be made in the schools bill. Cheshire cut its education spending by £1m, Warwickshire has cut £378,000 on further education alone.

The government has noted that the education bill has been rising fast, and has imposed a ceiling of 3 per cent on the rise it will allow. Unfortunately they can't legislate away the ever increasing number of children.

The result has been a devastating reduction in children's conditions.

In London there are 1200 children too many for the places available. By 1971-72 they expect it will be 4000 too many.

Coventry, Glamorganshire, Nottingham are only three of

the areas which have totally dispensed with part-time teachers. Suffolk has saved £5000 on teachers' salaries; Nottingham (with 60 classes of over 40 children already) has employed 50 teachers less than it was entitled to.

It is difficult for a non-teacher to realise this, but when there are more than 30 children in a class it becomes impossible for even the most gifted teacher to cope. Some children in every class will be neglected, all will suffer from the effects of strain on the teacher.

The list of cuts is endless. The comment of the Nottingham director of education is significant though. "I give additional buildings and the maintaining of books, stationery stocks and science equipment to meet the examination requirements. My emphasis is on the employment of 30 additional teachers."

He is faced with a terrible dilemma, this is a

choice to give examination pupils a priority over the rest must be a typical one. As always in our society, the requirements of industry come first, the basic needs of children to develop, to become full human beings comes last in the line.

The cuts in the building programme have the same effect. London's programme was cut from £7m to £3.4m, Lancashire's from £13.2m to £5.7m

In Oldham there is a primary school where a child was hit by falling plaster from the ceiling and where bowls are put on the floor to catch the drips every time it rains. When cuts are made the examination firms get by somehow the have-cuts are permitted to get again.

What can be done? We can all do something. We can all do something. We can all do something. We can all do something.

teachers have b the full quota Parents should support them. many children your child's cla In the long no problem. Bri standards is a All it needs is ary working-cla to direct resou where they are EWA WIDOWSON IS.

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THE FRONT-I in your issue 'Police terror in signed by Eam and Sean Reed.

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THE BATTLE FOR SHOP FLOOR CONTROL

PART ONE

stability of the British economy that was in the post-war period created near-full employment to a degree unknown before in peace time. This was a strong, confident working class, born in 1926. To the employers, now facing the collapse of an economy stabilised by the vast profits and sharpening competition from modern industry, the strength of the working class poses a major threat. The workers must be contained if British capitalism is to survive. The oldest industrial ruling class is sapping the strength of the shop floor before it can tackle, through the next Tory government, the working class as a whole. Productivity studies of the methods they have chosen in this war, running in many instances antiquated machinery based on 'jobs for the boys' style of management, will rationalise and face the 1970s without the markets they once enjoyed. To the capitalist class, life or death struggle and they know it. Because of fragmentation of their class and the brainwashing of the capitalist class, they are unable to generalise the problems they face. The product of the combination of fragmentation and the capitalist class is a constant barrier to understanding the productivity deals. Many workers are attracted to the 'efficiency', 'modernisation' etc, which the press puts out each day. 'What's good for the goose is good for the gander' some think. They are encouraged to look at AEI Woolwich and their attention to the efficiency of the German workers and the 'lazy' strike-workers. The Daily Mirror with its Andy and the Daily Sketch's Wack reinforce this in a fashion. Goebbels was an amateur in tactics and strategy can begin to be examined to examine what productivity deals who benefits from them.



The fruits of 'modernisation' and 'efficiency' - thousands made jobless at AEI Woolwich

Socialists in their approach to productivity deals must pose the question, increased production for what? Extra profit for whom?

The myth of the so-called national interest must be exposed. How many extra houses, hospitals and schools are related to the increased profits of big business?

Workers must realise that it is they who will be forced to pay for any increase in wages - not only in terms of extra output but in reduced status. Demarcation will be under attack in the guise of flexibility and skills will be eroded as a result.

A complete 'proletarianisation' will level down sections formerly considered to be beyond such indignities as work study. Shop floor organisation, however strong, will give way if the present separation continues between trade union militancy and the politics of the struggle.

In the coming battle, one after another, the reformist tendencies will be exposed to the workers - the 'Left' Labour MPs and the Communist Party, whose political perspectives hinge upon a 'Left' Labour government.

It is in this situation that the role of the revolutionary organisation must be seen - to assist in the exposure of the reformists, to generalise the struggle of the class and to build a new revolutionary socialist party.

NEXT WEEK

What must be done

Salvaging the economy - at expense of workers' pay and conditions

by
TOM HILLIER
AEF shop steward
CAV/Lucas combine

...SING growth capitalism has scale amalgamations. The mask of must be drop-ast attitude working class ly docile in strength of organisation the boom scarcity of labour. 1950s some workers made gains in wage treated control deciding on s manning of

...they want is to be able to stabilise labour costs in order to forecast future business prospects. The other problem is that the machinery the employers use is not the type needed to compete with overseas factories. The engineering industry in Britain was built around the No 2 Herbert capstan and many factories still use these outdated machines.

...Outdated equipment, although largely the result of inefficient management, is closely linked to the existence of a strong rank and file organisation on the shop floor. The workers have often successfully held back modernisation of plant by putting up defensive bars to the introduction of machines that would increase production at the expense of jobs.

...The wage drift must be controlled if the capitalists and the Labour government are to succeed in salvaging the economy. The government White Paper In Place of Strife seeks to put total control of the factory in the hands of the employers and use the union officials as trouble-shooters and policemen.

...This is the political prong of the attack. The social and industrial attack comes under the heading of productivity deals.

Reprinted again!

ROSA LUXEMBURG

a critical study by Tony Cliff

5s6d inc post

IS Book Service

90 Mountview Road London N4

The government has outlined some revealing guidelines to the employers. They should be studied closely. There are six in the booklet aptly called Help Yourself.

1. No productivity deal is complete without forecasts of increased efficiency. Such forecasts should be based on proper work standards - for example, a careful assessment of the time in which a job can be done by a competent worker.

2. The gains and costs should be accurately calculated. Normally the net sum should show a reduction in the total cost per unit of the finished product, taking into account the effect of the agreement on capital as well as labour employed.

3. Both sides of industry should see to it that the targets are achieved by introducing effective controls that link pay increases to actual changes in working practices which bring about a planned increase in productivity.

'Stable prices'

4. Part of the benefit should go to the consumer. Firms should be ready to show clearly that the consumer is in fact benefiting through the agreement's contribution to stable prices.

5. The cost of justifiable increases to other workers in the same undertaking should be met out of the agreement.

6. Negotiators should always be careful of settling such big increases that they provoke resentment outside the plant.

These guides from the government are not Whitehall inspired but are the fruits of existing agreements, such as those pioneered by the Esso Petroleum Co and Alcan Industries. They drastically slashed operating costs and reduced personnel, thus boosting profits and increasing their control over the labour force.

1. makes it clear that no increase can be made prior to some sort of study being made, until management have a clear picture of the kind of return they can expect from a deal. The initial cost of the work-study team has to be recovered from any yield gained after the agreement is signed.

2. A pious hope that accurate calculations will result in cost reduction to the consumer is proposed, rather than specific instructions as to the actual rate of price reduction - a contrast to the following guideline. Note that no mention is made of price control.

3. The principle laid down here is that 'both sides (union and management) must build in effective controls that link pay increases to actual changes in working practices.' In other words, union officials are expected to police the workers to ensure that they actually carry out their side of the agreement.

This, of course, leads to the acceptance of penalty clauses such as those introduced at Ford. The so-called 'Left' union officials have long ago made their acceptance of this principle abundantly clear.

Consumer conned

4. This is another get-out. The consumer may enjoy a reduction in the price of certain commodities but he will be conned into believing that he is benefiting by the 'general stabilisation' of prices. Undoubtedly the bulk of savings will go to the employers and their shareholders.

5. 'The cost of "justifiable" consequential increases to other workers are to come out of the agreement.' This vague statement could mean that workers not included in the study will be granted increases from the yield to avoid party claims and strikes.

In this way, the increase due to the workers who undertook the work measurement will in fact be reduced. The boss will have creamed off his share intact. This seemingly egalitarian gesture is a subtle ruse which characterises these deals and enables them to be accepted.

Party to robbery

6. is the most revealing statement of all. It is obviously directed to the union side of the table, for no employer needs lectures on the merits of low wages!

The concept that union officials should endeavour to obtain the best possible wages and conditions for their members is clearly seen as not being in the 'national interest'. This particular guideline is particularly nauseating when one recognises that a) the proportion of savings due to the worker will be artificially reduced if considered 'too high' and b) that union negotiators are to be a party to this robbery.

It becomes evident that productivity deals in whatever form they take are designed to increase output more efficiently - that is, more cheaply and quickly.

In order that this can proceed without interruption, the normal type of agreement is inadequate. The employers need more than written or verbal guarantees - they want complete control of the

productive forces. Wage drift must be eliminated and the threat of strikes must vanish.

They are prepared to take trade union stooges on their boards ('workers' participation') and will concede quite large increases sometimes in order to regain mastery of the shop floor.

The initial heavy outlay will come back later through increased profits.

Join the International Socialists

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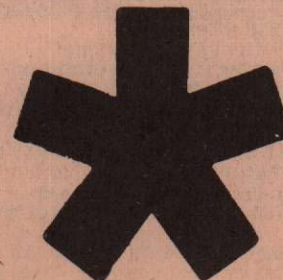
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Please send further details of the meetings and activities of the international socialists to

Name

Address





Bernadette Devlin answering a question at Last week's Dagenham meeting. Picture by Jeff Pick

Ford workers hear Bernadette

BERNADETTE DEVLIN, independent MP for Mid-Ulster, spoke to a packed meeting in Leys Hall, Dagenham, last Thursday in the heart of Ford's motor empire. Large numbers of car workers were in the audience to hear Miss Devlin put the case for solidarity with the struggle in Northern Ireland against the Tory-Unionist police state. The meeting was organised by the Irish Civil Rights Solidarity Campaign and 20 members of the audience said they were willing to participate in the campaign which is organising a series of meetings for Miss Devlin at building sites and factory gates. The ICRSC plans to hold a conference in the near future to discuss its work and to elect a representative council. Readers who would like Bernadette Devlin to speak at their places of work should contact Pat Denny at 01-485 0476.

We've moved ...
SOCIALIST WORKER has moved to its new editorial and printing premises. All correspondence must be sent to the new address: 6 Cottons Gardens London E2, tel: 91-739 1878. Correspondence sent to the old address will be subject to delay.

...with problems
DUE TO production difficulties we have not been able to include as much material as usual in this issue and some of our typesetting is rather unorthodox. We hope to be back to normal next week.

Leyland strikers determined to stick out for victory

THE STRIKE at British Leyland's five Lancashire bus and truck plants is now in its third week. The spirit of the picket line is as strong as ever and no one has tried to scab.

More than 8500 workers are on strike and only five raised their hands at a mass meeting at Leyland last week against continuing the strike. The local press have naturally turned the five into local heroes. A Wigan paper, the Evening Post-Chronicle, has even tried to link the strike with the sad death of a motor cyclist apprentice who would normally have been at work when the accident took place.

Close the gap
The strikers are demanding £24 a week for skilled piece workers, parity of bonus for women workers and £18.10s for new starters. The average wage for a skilled worker at present is less than £14 a week and the strikers are determined to close the gap with Midlands Leyland wage rates.

Jaguar's Midlands plant and the Albion works in Glasgow have had to close down through lack of supplies from Leyland's. At last week's mass meeting, convenor Arthur Harper of Tractors and Transmission, Birmingham, brought a promise

SW Reporter

of support for the strike fund and made a fighting speech calling for militant action. The convenor and deputy convenor from Albion also brought a message of support.

Leyland convenor, Len Brindle, organised a deputation to attend Sunday's conference against union laws in Birmingham. Afterwards, a delegation of 24 shop stewards and strike committee members held a private meeting with AEF president, Hugh Scanlon. On Monday talks between the union and the Engineering Employers' Federation broke down but further talks took place yesterday at the Department of Employment and Productivity. The AEF has not yet declared the strike official but the workers are receiving strike pay.

Contributions are urgently needed. Send to Leyland Motors Emergency Fund, c/o Treasurer J. Catterall, 94 Shevington Moor, Standish, Wigan, Lancs.

Hogarth says NUS may discipline seamen

THE THREE British seamen arrested in Athens last Saturday for giving out 'communist' leaflets were flown home on Tuesday. One remarkable side to the episode was the attitude of the men's union, the National Union of Seamen. Inter-viewed on the radio on Monday, NUS secretary Bill Hogarth expressed concern at the men's activities and said his executive might consider taking disciplinary action against them.

NOTICES

MARRIED COUPLE need accommodation. Ring 01-363 7216 after six.
IS discussion meeting: perspectives for revolutionaries. 1-5pm, New Theatre London School of Economics Saturday, June 14.
RUSSIA - state capitalist or degenerated workers' state? Debate between Richard Kirkwood and Sean Magamm Sunday June 8, 12.30pm at Crown and Sugarloaf, Garlick Hill, London EC4.

This farcical, shameful retreat

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ionary firebrand, it was possible for the trade unions to hivel off on their own, to retreat into themselves away from politics and continue their committee room work without the help of Harold Wilson.

This futile strategy ended at Croydon. The newly-independent generals of the trade unions have been humbled by a few sharp threats in that most glamorous of committee rooms, 10 Downing Street.

In a last desperate attempt to stay in the committee rooms they are seeking in the Fairfields Hall to prove to Harold Wilson that they can discipline their militants as fiercely as ever he could. They are like condemned men crouching in their cells, not seeking to break down the prison walls but negotiating with the hangman about the quality of the rope.

The hopelessness of their position is not due to lack of strength. Represented at Croydon were some 10 million workers, the largest organised group of workers in the world. But these men and women are seen by the trade union leaders not as a powerful army to be deployed against the enemy, but as 'personnel' seeking a wage rise, 'workpeople' claiming industrial injury benefit or a better pension scheme.

RELEVANT

There is, however, a more relevant way of describing them. Among them are thousands of men who spent years building the QE2, in which they will never afford to sail; further thousands who are building the Concorde aeroplane at fantastic expense in the certainty that the most any of them will ever hear of it when it leaves the factory is the boom which breaks their windows.

Millions of others are employed in the 'defence' industries, making weapons and warships which they hope will never be used.

Among them are some of the 625,000 who will be unemployed this winter, many more who will be forced to stay in slums because of the cuts in the government housing programme.

More still whose children will be taught in hopelessly overcrowded conditions because of the cuts in school building.

All of them are told by the newspapers and television that none of this matters because fewer black people came into the country last year than in any other year since the war, and because the Financial Times profits index records an increase in profits in the first five months of this year of 18.1 per cent.

Decisions about the work, the lives and the environment of every one of those ten million are taken, not in their interests, but in order to maintain the privileges and class

control of an unelected, wealthy and privileged few. These few are concerned not only to maintain this control, but also to accumulate more and more surpluses to beat their competitors abroad.

In the fat years of the 1950s and early 1960s, as millions were invested in the building up of the Japanese and German economies (and millions more in armaments), they were prepared to concede to wage and bonus demands provided they did not affect the balance of class forces.

Now they are tightening their belts in an atmosphere of ever-increasing competition and ever-more expensive technology. They are seeking more effective ways of getting more work from the workers and paying them less for it

USELESS

In these circumstances the silken phrases of good negotiators and experienced committee men in the trade unions are worse than useless. As long as the trade union leaders seek to remain in the committee rooms, the more they will become not equal adversaries in 'collective bargaining', but servants waiting for orders. However sincere their beliefs, however solid their roots in trade union tradition, they will find themselves sucked closer and closer into the values and disciplines of capitalism.

Harold Wilson is right. The TUC has moved further in a month than in 40 years. Further back. Right back, in fact, to where they started.

And the time has come now for the workers they represent to challenge not the personal integrity or the rhetorical fervour of their leaders, but their commitment to a system based on worker-exploitation.

Trade unionism, if it is to prosper must break out of its reformist shackles and become not merely a means of negotiating more out of employers who cannot and will not give, not merely a defence mechanism against employers' attacks but a consistent, relentless and uncompromising mobilisation of workers against the system which has embroiled and confused their leaders.

REPLACE

The millions of workers represented at Croydon, if so mobilised, have more than enough strength to break that system and to replace the distortions, ugliness and absurdities of their lives with a planned system where work and production are harnessed to what the workers want and need.

If they do not mobilise for struggle, however, if they look for solutions to their problems in the vacillations and compromises of their leaders who seek only to work within the system, they condemn themselves to permanent impotence and humiliation.

GOOD EVANS!



White-collar lockout at giant GEC plant

DESPITE RECENT redundancies with promises of more to come, the militancy of the unions at the GEC/AEI works in Trafford Park, Manchester, has been very low.

But this does not apply to the staff unions, DATA (draughtsmen) and ASTMS (technicians) both of whom are currently involved in industrial action in the works.

DATA members have been locked out and ASTMS members are on strike.

Basically their demands are the same - the rejection of the merit award system (whereby salary rates are fixed according to 'quality' of work done - 'quality' being determined by the management according to their rules) to be replaced by the system of collective bargaining with all-round rises.

The ASTMS members started negotiations in June last year and after complete rejection of their claims by the management, the members in the Tool and Manufacturing Engineering department (where tapes are made for automated machine tools) came out on strike on April 28th.

To back up their own claim the DATA members started a

Ken Green

work-to-rule a couple of months ago and as a result at the end of April, 160 of them were locked out. Now 243 DATA members from five drawing offices have been locked out.

After five weeks of the lock-out and the strike, the effects are beginning to be felt in the work. Militancy among the strikers is high. Lorries have been turned away, and the

picket lines, at lunch times, have been swollen by members of other unions.

But with GEC boss Weinstock's new 'rationalisation' plans coming up at the end of June it will need more than just the actions of DATA and ASTMS to save the jobs of other workers.

As an ASTMS leaflet puts it: 'You can't go it alone in a company such as ours. So you have a choice - keep divided: and they will pick you off at will. Unite: and you will survive!'

TENANTS MARCH ON LANDLORD

ABERDEEN - The Holland and Hutcheon Street Tenants' Association has had 100 per cent success in getting rents lowered by the Rents Tribunal for nine of their members living in small furnished tenement flats.

The landlady, Furnished Homes (Aberdeen) Ltd, immediately hit back by serving a notice to quit on a woman living alone with two babies who was not protected by the Tribunal.

The tenants are resisting this victimisation.

A few hours after the notice was served, men, women and children were ready with home-made banners to make their first protest. Along with sympathisers, 60 marched to the spacious west end home of the property agent.

Further demonstrations and a rent strike are threatened to stop the eviction and to compel the landlady to carry out necessary repairs.

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