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FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

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'The Tories may have the law—but we have the numbers. If 10 million trade unionists move into action the Tories can be defeated'

NO UNION LAWS

by **ROGER PROTZ**

Editor of Socialist Worker

THE VELVET GLOVE IS OFF. To shrieks of delight from the millionaire press, the Tories have put on the knuckleduster in preparation for an all-out attack on Britain's 10 million trade unionists.

The government's proposed anti-union laws face organised workers with their gravest challenge for more than 20 years. The Tory plans add up to a charter for blacklegs. The closed shop will be made illegal, militants will face heavy fines and even prison sentences and sympathy strikes will be outlawed.

As Socialist Worker has said since the Tories returned to office, Heath and company will attempt to make the working class pay for the crisis facing the capitalist system. The Tory offensive will include sweeping attacks on wages, conditions, taxes, housing, education and welfare.

If the Tories are to succeed it is vital that the main opposition—militant shop-floor workers—are weakened and threatened by the full might of the state machine if they attempt to struggle against the present roaring inflation.

OPPOSITION

No one should doubt the seriousness of the Tory challenge. There can be no ifs, buts or maybes about our opposition. We must stand up and declare our total opposition to any attempt to curb the rights of the trade unions.

Yes, trade unions should have special 'rights' and 'privileges'. They should be 'outside the law' when that law is drawn up by the employing class to safeguard their profits.

In a society where 2 per cent of the population owns more than 80 per cent of the wealth, it is essential for ordinary working people to band together and use their collective strength to fight for a bigger share of the wealth they create and which is taken from them as profit every day of their working lives.

In a society where 10 million people earn less than £15 a week, where official figures show that wages are declining as a proportion of the national income and where poverty and malnutrition are on the increase, trade unionists must fight with all their strength to hang onto their basic bargaining rights.

The Tories know they must stop the tremendous surge of militancy that has shaken the bosses this year. Their main concern is not the trade union officials but the shop-floor militants.

MORE POWER

This is why so much emphasis is placed on the law, on registering unions. This means more power for those union officials who are prepared to go along with the Tory proposals.

But 'unofficial' committees such as combine committees, works committees and shop stewards' committees will not be registered. They will be officially outlawed and will suffer fines and jailing if they take militant action.

This is the heart of the Tory plans: to take power away from the shop floor. More than 90 per cent of all strikes start 'unofficially' and this is what Carr and Heath want to stop. The Tory offensive has been

WHAT THE TORIES WANT

1. Make collective agreements legally binding.
2. Force secret ballots before strikes.
3. Outlaw the closed shop.
4. 60 day cooling off period before a strike.
5. Workers will not be forced to join a union.
6. Compliance with an industrial code.
7. Appoint registrar of trade unions to make sure that union rules are 'up to standard'.
8. Strengthen the Commission on Industrial Relations.
9. Set up an Industrial Court (with High Court status) to adjudicate on 'unfair industrial actions'.

carefully prepared. As early as 1963 two right-wing Labour Party members, writing on the need for an incomes policy, said: 'Acceptance of an incomes policy will also have implications for the right to strike. Clearly, to be operable, such a policy cannot have hanging over it the threat of strike by a dissatisfied union.'

And the employers' journal The Economist said in 1965: 'Another weapon against unofficial strikes is that, quite bluntly, blacklegging must become respectable again.'

CLIMATE

But the Tories received their greatest encouragement from the last Labour government that devoted most of its six years to attacking the unions, attempting their own anti-union laws and creating a hysterical climate against militant workers.

Socialist Worker will deal at greater length next week with the full implications of the Tory plans. This week it is vital to begin to map out a campaign of action against them.

Every union branch, works committee and shop stewards' committee should call special meetings to discuss opposition to the Tory laws. We believe that the following demands should form part of a massive, nationwide movement against the government:

A national one-day strike on the day the Bill is introduced into parliament.

A national one-day strike if and when the Bill becomes law.

A declaration by every trade union leader that he will not accept strike ballots, fines, cooling-off periods and legal shackles against blacking goods and calling solidarity strikes.



DENNIS ROYLANCE

A declaration by every trade union leader that he will refuse to accept any jobs on any new committees set up by the Tories to deal with 'industrial relations'. George Woodcock and Will Paynter should be told to resign immediately from the Commission on Industrial Relations.

The important point to stress is that these laws can be smashed—but only by united, mass action. Fighting speeches by union leaders must be translated into official action in every factory, shipyard, mine, dock and office.

In 1968 Australian union leader Clarie O'Shea was jailed by the government's industrial court for not paying fines imposed when he refused to open the union's books for investigation. Giant strikes shook the country. One million workers marched and stopped work.

Clarie O'Shea was released. An 'anonymous donor' paid his fines.

PRESSURE

Rank and file action was responsible for that notable victory. The same can happen here. Only massive pressure from every section of rank and file trade unionists will force their leaders into action.

No time should be lost in setting up combine committees and rank and file committees. And part of the campaign against the Tories must also involve a

struggle for democratic control of the unions themselves, with the annual election of all officials, the right to recall officials, and pay them the average wage for the industry.

But above all, this fight must be a political one. The Tories are attacking the trade unions industrially and politically by threatening the use of the courts.

With the Labour Party reduced to a corpse and its left wing busily attempting to give it the kiss of life, the time is long overdue to begin building a real

mass socialist party that will fight to totally transform society and build a true democracy based on workers' power.

Remember—the Tories may have the law but we have the numbers. If 10 million workers move into action the Tories can and will be defeated.

Faced by this grave challenge from the employers and their politicians, the labour movement must mobilise and use its enormous strength to the full.

No anti-union laws!

DEFEND THE RIGHT TO STRIKE!

Join the Pilkington march Monday 12 October

Assemble 10.30am Queen's Recreation Park, St Helens
March off at 11.30am
Organised by Pilkington Rank and File Committee,
10 Greenfield Road, St Helens, Lancs.

WHEN DID YOU LAST SEE YOUR WIFE?

LYNNE STEVENS works on the 10pm to 6am shift at a light engineering factory in the East Midlands. She has two children, Elaine aged 8 and Mark aged 5.

'It was my idea to go to work. David didn't really want me to, with Mark being so young, but the money situation was serious.

'We dreaded the big bills like electricity and rates. We've just moved into a new house and have HP debts, for a cooker and some furniture. So we agreed I'd work till we got straight.

'It makes me sick when people talk about women only working for 'luxuries'. At our factory, I can tell you, none of us work for the fun of it, it's sheer necessity.'

When I asked her why she chose nightwork, Mrs Stevens said, 'There was no choice. I used to think women who did these jobs must be a bit thick. Now I know that, like me, they're driven to it in desperation.

'I couldn't find anything part-time not in an office or a factory. What they call part-time is something like 10 to 4. That's no good if you've got children.

Valerie Clark speaks to a mother on night work

'And because it's supposed to be a big concession to be part-time, the money is lousy. Eventually I heard about the factory I work in now. I started doing the 7 to 11 evening shift.

'But money was better for the night shift, and we needed the cash so badly that I had to take that.'

The Factories Act was intended to prevent the employment of women at night, but employers can apply for exemption from this provision. The fact that thousands of women night-workers are waitresses, packers, cleaners, workers in engineering or toy factories, shows that it is not too difficult for firms to get round this rule.

BORING JOB

Mrs Stevens described her job on the production line as boring and hard work. There are three breaks during the night, two of 10 minutes and one for half an hour.

The rate is 7s5d an hour (compared with 4s2d on the day shift) but if you slog non-stop you can make

bonus on top of that'. Mrs Stevens' weekly wage for a 40 hour week is £14 including bonus, out of which she pays £1 fares.

Her fellow workers vary in age between 23 and 40, but they all have children.

Nightwork involves domestic re-organisation. 'I get home about half past six in the morning,' she said, 'have a cup of tea with David, then he's off to work. I get Elaine and Mark up and take them to school, do a bit of shopping on the way back, then some things in the house.

'Then I go to bed. I get up about three to get the kids from school, make the dinner and when my husband comes in we all have our meal'. Mr and Mrs Stevens take it in turns to put the children to bed. At 9.15pm she leaves for work.

She felt that one of the worst aspects of nightwork for women is that, whereas men on nightwork can often come home in the morning and go straight to bed, women started to do a 'bit of tidying or washing' and then found they only had time for a few hours sleep.

'I get so tired,' she said, 'and it's hard not to take it out on the children. I catch up at weekends. My husband helps me a lot.'

When I asked if her social life suffered, she pulled a face. 'It's not that it's suffered. I haven't got one! When David's in, I'm out and vice versa.

'I only keep going because I know that once we're straight financially I'm giving it up.' Not so bad for Mrs Stevens perhaps but, as she readily admits, most of her workmates can see no prospect of giving up work.

TAKE ADVANTAGE

What do employers think of the system? Peek Frean, for example, the biscuit makers, who have a late evening shift system, have said it was very popular because it meant women who were tied to the home all day could go to work.

But what it really means is that she spends most of the day on housework, children and cooking, then as soon as her tired husband comes home from work to take over, she goes off to 'enjoy' her work! The idea is popular all right—with the

employers.

Working on this basis, they can take advantage of families in desperate financial difficulties to get the wives to work late hours at low rates. It's sickening that they also have the cheek to persuade women they're doing a favour by arranging flexible hours for them.

But many of them, like Mrs Stevens, aren't fooled. As she said, 'I think it's a disgrace for anybody to have to work nights. It destroys your life.'

'You'll always get the few who like working odd hours, but most people only go on nights because they're forced to one way or another. Only people like nurses and firemen should have to do nights and then get plenty of time off to make up for it.'

She laughed as she continued, 'Instead of going to the moon, you'd think they'd invent machines that didn't need thousands of people working all night to look after them. I thought that was the idea of computers, automation and all that lark!'

'But,' she added thoughtfully, 'I suppose they still find it's cheaper just to use people.'

LETTERS

Unions' key role in combatting race hate

WITHIN our trade unions there are hundreds of immigrant workers who come from every country in the world but mainly from Africa, Pakistan, India and the Caribbean. They are carrying out an essential task for the community.

These men and women are to be found in hospitals, operating as doctors, nurses and dentists and in every branch of industry: transport, engineering and building. There is hardly a section of our industry where their valuable contribution to our economy does not assist the British working class in the widest possible way.

We must examine the circumstances which have brought these men and women into our midst, as well as understanding the social, political and economic events which have brought them so far away from their land of birth. History tells us only too clearly, if one follows the socialist history as a guide, that for more than a century the British capitalist

class developed the extraction of wealth from these countries to an extent never known before.

In those countries they ruthlessly suppressed any attempt to organise by the workers. They created a slave market at the same moment in time in which the British working class were winning new victories in Britain for the advance of working class trade unions and socialism.

It is this difference in historical time which allowed the British working class to gain the experience of the value of trade unions long before our colonial brothers knew what a trade union was. Because the disintegration of the capitalist class is bringing us together the lesson can be learned now at the production front.

There is hardly a dispute nowadays without many of our coloured comrades participating and staunchly assisting on the picket line until the dispute has been won or ended. In this way many of these lads are



POWELL and friends: workers' unity can defeat him

learning the lesson of history, and compressing 100 years of history into 100 days.

But even in victory there lie dangers on the way ahead. I think it is only proper that we should have a look at the weaknesses if we are to see the trade unions as the barricades of the struggle and the schools of advance.

We have to note the serious omission of coloured people from the central bodies associated with the trade unions. One can count the coloured delegates to the Trade Union Congress on one hand.

There are very few delegates who are immigrants on the national conferences of the 256 trade unions, where policies are thrashed out in their absence. In this connection you can move resolutions until the end of time, all of them carried unanimously but they will merely become empty bubbles unless we strengthen the unity of the working class.

We shall find that there is no easy

solution to the question of uniting our people on all issues, until there is a much wider participation by coloured people themselves, side by side with all working people, directly in contact with the mass of trade unionists who are fighting for the same thing as immigrants.

There will never be a situation where preferential treatment for any section of the community will solve problems and of course preferential treatment is not being sought in this situation. The more that Enoch Powell screams and vomits his filth the more we should unite, in the same way as we united against Mosley in the 1930s. - VIC HEATH, Hampstead branch, Amalgamated Union of Building Trade workers.

See back page notices for details of trade union conference against racialism.

Nigerian paper seeks support

THE 'Nigerian Socialist', paper of the Nigerian Labour Party, is under serious attack from the military government. Urgent action is needed to prevent both the permanent closure of the paper and the imprisonment of its editor, Buba Oluwade and other leading militants of the labour movement.

Early last year the paper ran a series of articles on the Nigerian employing class, detailing their grip on the economy of the country and their links with foreign big business. One powerful employer, a millionaire docks contractor, sued the paper for libel and was awarded £2000.

The libel action was a clear move to drive the 'Nigerian Socialist' out of business. The paper has not been able to appear since the court action. It is illegal to launch an appeal in Nigeria and all attempts to collect money from individual supporters and at factory gates have been stopped.

Cash will have to be raised outside Nigeria to prevent the imprisonment of the editor for the non-payment of the fine. The British labour movement and Left can help their Nigerian comrades in their fight to save the 'Nigerian Socialist' by raising the matter in their work places, union branches and left organisations.

Please send donations to me: - TUNJI OSUBU, British representative, Nigerian Labour Party, 192 Stoke Newington High St, London N16.

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CAPITALISM has nothing to offer mankind but exploitation, crises and war. The ruling classes of the world - a tiny minority - subordinate the needs of the vast majority to the blind accumulation of capital in the interests of competitive survival. Imperialism condemns two-thirds of mankind to famine and calls forth movements of national liberation which shake the system and expose its essential barbarism. The constant and mounting preparations for war and the development of weapons of mass destruction place the survival of humanity itself in the balance.

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

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

WHERE WE STAND

production.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Letters must arrive first post Monday. The editor reserves the right to shorten letters for reasons of space

Russia's grip on Mid-East

COMRADE OGDEN criticised what he called the 'anti-Soviet tone' of Stephen Marks' article on the Middle East (26 September).

The fact, however, is that Hussein could not have launched his vicious attacks on the Palestinians without tacit support from Nasser and from the Russians. When the Syrians sent in tanks to blunt the edge of the Royalist onslaught, it was the Russian leaders who assured the Western powers that they were doing their utmost to persuade the Syrians to withdraw.

Jim Ogden says that he is not aware of 'any Russian ownership of oil wells' in the Middle East. But the Russians do have considerable interests they want to preserve.

Firstly, the Russians do actually have interests in oil. The Russians are prospecting for oil in northern Iraq, the Czechoslovaks have contracted to build a refinery producing 1m tons of oil in Syria, for which they are to be paid out of the oil produced, the Rumanians bought 9-12m tons of oil from Saudi Arabia over the last two years.

But these amounts are small compared to the huge amount obtained from the most reactionary regime in the Middle East (and the only one to support Israel) - Iran. One expert has written that 'In 1966 and 1967 exports to Eastern Europe were 30.2 per cent of Iran's total exports. Iran has been granted large credits by the Soviet Union and the East European countries.

Nor are relations between Russia and Iran of a purely commercial character. The Shah's government, which is notorious for the way it arbitrarily imprisons and murders leftist opponents, has received more than \$508m of aid from the USSR and more than \$331m from the states of Eastern Europe.

Secondly, Russian interests are not restricted to oil. For instance, the aid and arms given to Egypt are not free. They have to be paid for in the long term by Egyptian exports.

So 60 per cent of that country's cotton production is mortgaged to the Russians years in advance. This has a similar sort of effect as western domination or the local economy.

In 1966 Nasser asked the western-run International Monetary Fund for funds to finance Egyptian development. As the condition for getting these was to cut down on living standards and slow down economic growth, Nasser turned to the Russians for funds. But they imposed conditions virtually identical to those of the IMF.

Finally, the Russians are increasingly concerned that the Suez canal should be reopened. They feel the need for much easier access to the Indian Ocean.

They have considerable investments to protect there - \$600m of Soviet bloc aid to Indonesia (continued despite the murder by the government of half a million communists), and \$200m to India.

There are conflicts between the interests of the Russians and the Americans in the Middle East. Arab revolutionaries have been quite correct to exploit these so as to obtain arms.

However, the tacit Russian support for Hussein has been no accident. The Russians are as frightened as the Americans that the Middle East revolution will lead to the overthrow of regimes they back - from that of the Shah of Persia to that of Sadat. - CHRIS HARMAN Manchester 21.

Pilkingtons

**'We admit we made mistakes.
We have to learn from them.
The spirit is still high...
the men's ideas are changing'**



Rank and File Committee members (left to right): Jimmy Hevey, Gerry Caughey, George Bibby and Joe Leonard

ST HELENS — the hot pot of Lancashire, a city of glass that was shattered by the first-ever strike at the huge Pilkington glassworks last Easter. Then, burning with enthusiasm, Pilkington workers put St Helens on the map when nearly all the 8800 glass workers came out on strike.

They paraded down the streets in mass demonstrations, held banners on high, called for solidarity for all workers, and held mass meetings where fiery speech was the order of the day. The men were stirred and ready for battle.

Now the temperature is lukewarm. Only the burning embers remain as evidence of what St Helens has been through.

Thirteen militants are left of the once 30-strong rank and file committee, formed to lead the strikers against the management and corrupt union officials.

'The story of what happened at Pilks is well laid down in Colin Barker's pamphlet,' said John Potter, treasurer of the committee. The men, encouraged by successful strikes in other industries, and finding it hard to manage on average take-home pay of £15-16 a week, decided to strike.

An important point to mention as one of the causes behind the strike is that recently there had been a lot of slum clearance in the area and people who had been paying 18s a week rent had to find £4 rent for new council houses. This caused hardship to many. The time was ripe for a strike.

'Men with no experience at all came out, even those who weren't too badly off like the warehousemen. They struck in solidarity with the others.'

'In the struggle we not only took on Lord Harry and his merry men, but also the GMWU officials. Previously, the policy pursued by the union was to stop people from going to meetings. No branch meetings were advertised, and communication between branches is not allowed. If anything was negotiated it was well above the men's heads.'

'Notices were stuck up in the factory to inform the men after the event. Non-participation was fully backed by the GMWU. For example, after a meeting in January of the Joint Industrial Council, it was made known that as from 2 May the basic rate increase for all men over 18 would be 3½d an hour. There was no discussion with workers on the shop floor.'

'People thought the whole thing stank. They thought what the hell can we do with 3½d an hour, but they did not do anything about it, in fact they were discouraged to do anything

JOHN POTTER talking to Ginny West

by the union.

'The local branch of the GMWU is one of the biggest branches in the country. It's disgraceful how the union organised this place. The secretary, Harry Norton, the highest paid union official in Lancashire, wouldn't give his phone number to anyone, just in case there was trouble and someone wanted to phone him up.'

'In my opinion it was the encouragement the workers got when they saw workers in other places like Halewood and Girlings getting rises which was the motivating factor behind the seven week strike. Car workers only 70 miles away were getting wage increases, and the men at Pilks were thinking, well, the cars are no bloody good without the glass to go in them, and yet glass workers were getting low wages. It wasn't right.'

Cut and stitched

Low pay was one thing that the men wanted to change, another thing was the bad conditions of work.

Industrial accidents at Pilkingtons are ten a penny. Men getting cut and having to be stitched up is a normal occurrence.

'Conditions at Cowley Hill where I worked, were deplorable,' said John. 'It is common practice to have sulphur dioxide gas emitted into the atmosphere on the float glass process. This has been going on for some while now. Your eyes, lungs and nose are affected. Your mouth and throat get dry, eyes start to run and you can't catch your breath.'

'Add to this the dirt dust grime and oil, conditions are not pleasant. And protective clothing is not provided for on all jobs.'

The shift system is another vicious thing. A slow process which half kills you. They call it the four set system. That means you work

two days, two afternoons and two nights and get one weekend in eight off.

'Several lessons were learnt from the strike. We made our mistakes, but of course didn't realise until after they were made.'

'We did learn that the police were on the side of the management. We would claim that there was a planned campaign against strikers by the police. We heard from a reporter that the Chief Constable of Lancashire had a meeting with the Pilkington bosses and they arranged to bring in 300 police on the day of one of the big demonstrations during the last week of the strike.'

'The aim was to smash us completely. We really learnt a hard lesson about police brutality. They were not impartial.'

'The sentences given out by the magistrates were vicious. We were picketing peacefully on the gates when once of the scabs butted an elderly chap on the picket line. That's when violence started.'

'The police and magistrates wanted to set an example. Three men were arrested in the morning while the rank and file committee were in Liverpool at a court of inquiry set up by the government. When we got back, the three men without any representation had been sent to prison.'

'Eighteen others had been arrested, and were to be heard at a special court that evening. These men had representation, and were discharged or fined varying amounts. No blackleg at all was arrested, despite the violence shown by them. Police dogs were ready to be used on the strikers alone. We were victimised.'

'The blacklegs were really provoking the men, who were in no mood for it. They came out of the gates patting their back pockets as if to say, We have got money in here which is more than what you've got. And they were giving us the 'V' sign. The magistrates were obviously

Rank and File treasurer Potter: the fire started last April could easily be rekindled

influenced by the events. As Colin Barker says in his pamphlet on the strike, 'The viciousness of the sentences was said by many not to be unconnected with the fact that Lord Harry Pilkington, Mr L H Pilkington and Mr D V Phelps of the board of directors are St Helens magistrates.'

The Tory press was also shown up for what it really is.

'Before the strike,' said John Potter, 'people would use the papers as proof of the truth. Look, they would say, it's in the paper, it's down here in black and white! Well most of the papers printed nothing but lies about us. They took it all from the bosses and printed it.'

After the seven week strike, the men went back to work. 4000 sheets were printed for contracting out of the GMWU.

Problems and pressures

'Ninety per cent of the men felt the union was discredited,' said John Potter. 'We couldn't let militancy die, something had to be done. And so we had these forms printed, and men who wanted to contract out of the GMWU asked the management to stop paying out the 2s6d union dues.'

'We had several alternatives. Either to work from within, try and join another union, or form our own. After much thought, most of the rank and file committee decided on forming a new union, the General Glassworkers Union.'

'At first we thought we had a great deal of support. We really hoped for this to work. We knew there were pitfalls, but we wanted this new union recognised. We admit we made a mistake in doing this.'

'It's all very well dwelling on mistakes, but we have to learn from them. When men put their names to the contracting out forms, the loyal stewards and bosses came round to

men individually and asked them if they put their names to it willingly or if they were forced to.

'Many of the men wavered then. They were under pressure, both financially and personally. Wives had threatened to leave home, some had had nervous breakdowns, and kiddies were actually suffering through their bellies because of the strike.'

'We understand why the men went back to work. Some of course felt they should fight from within and we get information coming out to us on what is going on inside. The men are still seething.'

'The important thing to remember is that the men have changed through the struggle. No longer do they ignore what goes on in the GMWU. Workers in other industries look on the union officials with suspicion. The men have been encouraged to fight at a future time. The spirit is high even now, and the men's consciousness is changing.'

'In some cases, the £3-4 increase which the men got has been completely taken away. For example, at Triplex where Gerry Caughey worked men have been victimised. Gerry himself when he went back for a while was sent to training school at one of the factories and had his wages cut by several pounds.'

'In some places it has been like a minor civil war, where families are divided and brother won't talk with brother. The families of the militants have been treated the worst.'

Fired and blacklisted

John Potter's father was made redundant after 42 years with the firm. His sister also was fired. She was one of the women who pushed fat Matt McGrath, blackleg steward, from the platform during one of the mass meetings.

600 men were fired when the new union was formed. 350 were re-employed with all their privileges cut, like pension rights, contracts of employment and redundancy payment.

Even if the men worked 30 years and were made redundant they would not get a penny. 250 men were fired and blacklisted, including those on the rank and file committee.

The men have organised regional conferences to discuss the struggle with other trade union members. They say if they don't get reinstatement now they will fight on.

The burning embers that now remain of the seven week strike followed by the three day token stoppage could well kindle the fire for future struggle. The Rank and File Committee members I spoke to are convinced the struggle is not over and that something will flare up in the near future.

Feather-man with three faces

'VIC FEATHER spoke the otherday about Robert Carr (the Minister of Employment) having two hats. Well, we would say Feather has two hats and three faces,' said George Bibby, vice-chairman of the Rank and File Committee.

'He came to us with tears in his eyes and when we left he was probably laughing his bloody head off. Feather's name stinks here.'

'He was introduced to the committee once and he knew all our

names. He probably learnt them beforehand. He's a shrewd character.'

'We have written to him saying we want help to get all the men reinstated with full privileges. We don't think he will do anything, but if you can't go to the head of the unions who can you go to?'

'We have learnt some bitter lessons,' said Gerry Caughey. 'One of them was the ballot organised by the local clergy to get the men back to work. We are sure it was rigged.'

'We should have gone back when the £3 increase was agreed on. The clergy backed the management and even prayed for the dispute to be over.'

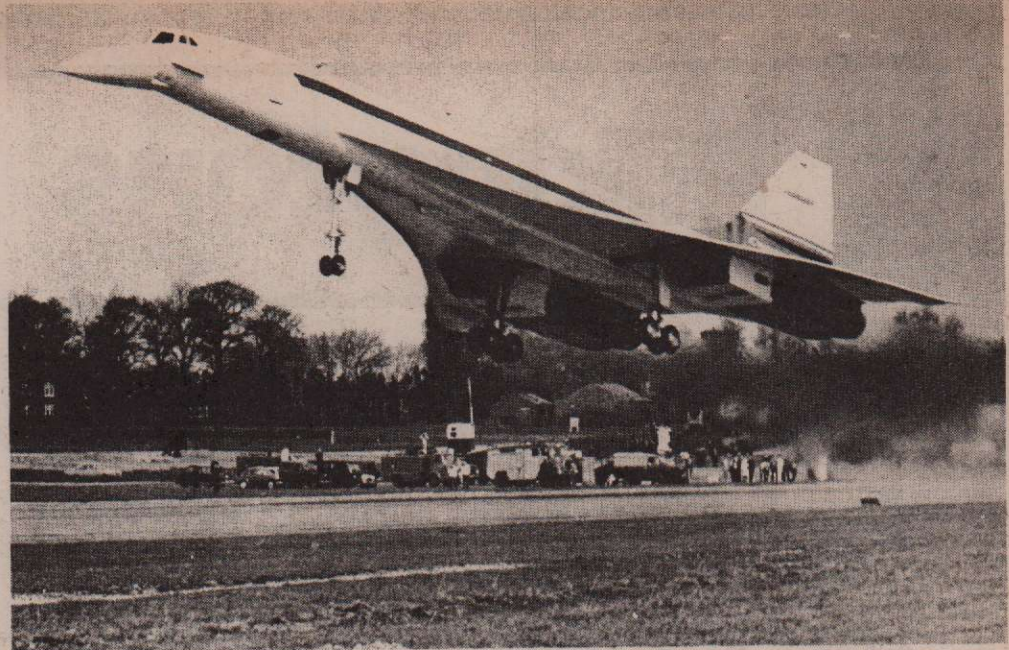
The Committee are organising a demonstration on 12 October, assembly point Queen's Recreation Ground at 11.30am. They hope for a lot of support.

The demonstration is in support of the right to strike and against anti-union laws.

John Potter's last word was: 'What we need in practical terms is money, as much money as possible to pay off our debts. We have a huge bill to pay for legal fees.'

The committee appealed to Socialist Worker readers to raise money and support for the demonstration. Donations should be sent to: Rank and File Committee, 10 Greenfield Rd, St Helens, Lancs. Tel: St Helens 25925.

Concorde: pop-pop (or boom-boom) goes £600 million



Snoopy: breakfast in London, lunch in New York for a cool £1 million a week.

A GREAT SILENCE has fallen on a group of men usually renowned for their chattering: the aviation correspondents. The capacity of this group of experts for independent thought was once summed up in a flash of insight by the Daily Mail Aviation correspondent, Mr Angus Macpherson, who told the audience of Anglia Television last year: 'Not one drop of BAC gin has passed my lips today'.

BAC — the British Aircraft Corporation—are the British manufacturers of the Concorde. For BAC and their journalists September 1970 was to be the most wonderful month since the Tory government of 1962 decided to press ahead with a British-French supersonic jet airliner.

At least 20 supersonic runs were planned for the British Concorde down 'boom alley', which was specially selected to 'interfere' with as few human beings as possible, while still ensuring that the Concorde flew over land.

On 4 September, the aviation correspondents crowded into St David's Cathedral, Pembroke, to listen to the boom from the Concorde's first flight. They were delighted. There was hardly a boom at all.

Gleefully they told their readers through next morning's headlines that the most anyone could expect to hear of the Concorde was, to quote Mr Macpherson again, a Pop, Pop.

Unhappily, however, the Ministry of Technology and BAC knew differently. They knew that the boom had been so great that Concorde had been ordered off its planned course over St David's, and had flown some 15 miles to the east, so as not to let the journalists (or the cathedral) experience the full force of the boom.

Desperately, the experts at Mintech have studied the results of noise tests. No amount of BAC gin

can alter the facts — which most scientific experts knew all along — that the noise is intolerable to human beings, to shipping and to underflying aircraft.

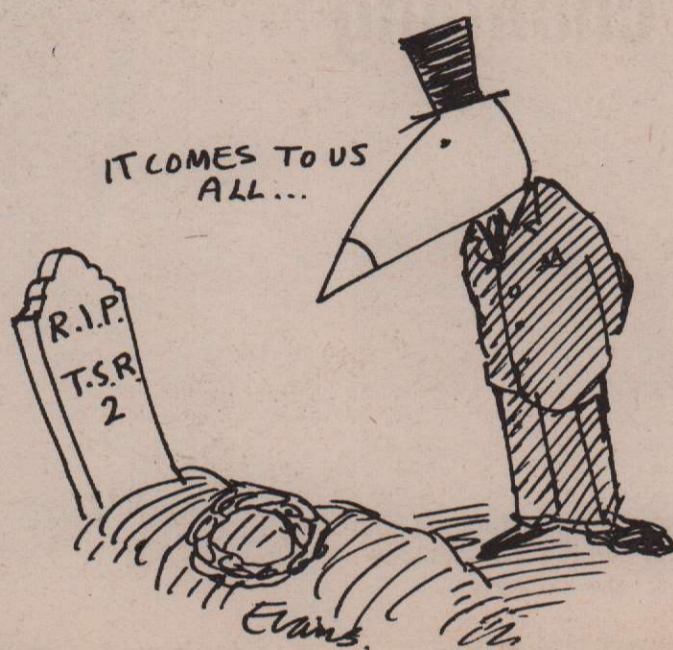
All the ill-researched, unscientific and unscholarly work on the boom previously produced by the BAC and Rolls-Royce-financed university professors has been proved wrong in practice.

Grim facts

Unhappily, the facts and figures also show that the Concorde cannot possibly make money unless it is allowed to fly over land, especially over Britain. Most jets flying the Atlantic from Germany to New York are forced to fly over Britain.

While these grim facts have been worked out at Mintech, BAC has

been forced continually to postpone Concorde's planned supersonic flights over land. A different excuse has been offered each day to cover up the reality from the people who have paid for their incompetence. The Tory government is still in



a dilemma. While it prepared to save a few hundred thousand a year by charging the sick for visits to doctors and hospitals and for prescriptions for medicine, by starving strikers into submission by cutting benefits for their families, it still has not the 'courage' to cut the Concorde, which can never fly, and which is costing the British taxpayer £1m a week (and the French taxpayer another £1m).

White elephant

The total cost of this grotesque white elephant to the British taxpayer will work out at approximately £600 million. It is enough money, for instance, entirely to rebuild the slums of Glasgow and Liverpool—or to do without the present charges on school milk in secondary schools for a hundred years.

For what has all this money been wasted? Even if the Concorde does fly, its fares will be far too high for any but the richest, expense-account tycoons.

This mighty project, exploiting the skills and labour of thousands of Britain's most expert workers, divert-

ing huge rivers of resources from other fields of construction (like housing or transport) and acclaimed by the unanimous press and television companies in unison has been geared to a single motive: the need to get British executives and tycoons from London and New York in time for lunch.

The tragedy is that many trade unionists have defended the Concorde on the grounds that it provides thousands of jobs. Leading the pro-Concorde lobby, at his most benign and ridiculous, has been Mr Clive Jenkins, general secretary of ASTMS.

The Bristol workers who soon will be out of a job because of the cynicism and incompetence of BAC had better realise while they still have the strength that the choices, decisions and priorities made in capitalist society are never made with workers' interest in view.

Just as BAC have persuaded the Bristol workers to 'pull together' with them in the great waste that is the Concorde, so, when the waste is exposed and the project dropped, the workers will be treated with the contempt which the aviation industrialists have always felt for them.

'Roving Report' will appear every fortnight

US GIANT ON THE WARPATH

SW Reporter

THE TAKEOVER of British firms by American monopolies has now become an accepted part of industrial life. Many of the takeovers have resulted in long and bitter strikes that seem out of proportion to the size of the local plants concerned.

The most recent example is the nine weeks' old strike of 200 Engineering Union and 50 Electricians' Union members at the Aluminium Company of America's plant at Waunarlwydd near Swansea.

The strike is spotlighted by the new US parent company's aim to weaken union resistance and militancy by a long dispute, leading to the introduction of a productivity deal and all that entails: Measured Day Work, job evaluation and redundancies.

Alcoa took over the plant completely in May 1969. Industrial relations—described as 'sordid' by one steward—have reached an all-time low since then.

Last December the company launched a management-only enquiry into a mechanical breakdown in the hot mill which stopped production for nearly a month. The enquiry claimed that 'sabotage' was the cause of the breakdown and police were brought onto the shop floor to ask workers for sworn statements.

All this took place without consulting the unions and even now the men have not been told of the results of the police investigation. This, they say, is a slur on all their characters.

The current strike is over the company's refusal to honour an agreement signed in 1966 which gives storekeepers 80 per cent of craftsmen's rates. One member of the personnel department, who was involved in the agreement, admitted during the nine months of negotiations which preceded the dispute that the union's interpretation was correct.

When negotiations broke down, the AEF called out the four storekeepers involved on official strike. They were



Pickets—and police—at the Alcoa works

quickly followed, unofficially, by other AEF and ETU members in the plant. The AEF made their action official after two weeks but the ETU workers have still not received union backing.

The company claims it is losing £50,000 a week. Strikers wonder why, after giving several directors pay rises of £1500 in 1969, it is willing to lose that amount instead of paying the £12 a week it would cost to settle the dispute.

Management conveniently forget to mention that the American owners had a net income of £51 million last year.

Behind the dispute lies the company's wish to site a new strip mill at the Waunarlwydd plant. They want to cover the mill and the rest of the plant with a productivity deal.

Closure threat

The unions and the company have already signed a 'letter of intent' concerning the multi-million pound mill. But when the unions refused to sign a productivity deal that included the suggestion of process workers doing craftsmen's jobs, the company threatened to close the whole plant.

They know that if the strike is successful it will smash their hopes of signing such a deal. They must first make union organisation ineffective in order to force through a productivity deal.

This is the real reason for the company's willingness to accept heavy losses by forcing the men into a long and crippling strike.

The workers are determined to win but are getting very little help from their unions. The ETU members are still on unofficial strike and the AEF, while making it official, marks time over taking steps to further the men's case.

They will not call out AEF foremen who are still working and officials refuse to endorse a levy to help the men pay national insurance stamps that cost £200 a week.

DATA members among the staff have been given full support from their union to stop work if pressure is put on them to do strikers' jobs.

This is an important struggle. The men are in desperate need of financial assistance. This is the weak point, as the company knows.

Donations to the strike fund should be sent to: Bro H W Jenvey, 55 Mynydd-Newydd Rd, Caerithin, Swansea, Glam.

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CRACKDOWN IN ULSTER

- BRITISH LEFT MUST ACT

by **JIMMY GREALY**

THIS WEEKEND the founding conference of the Irish Solidarity Campaign takes place in Birmingham. During the past year groups supporting the struggle for civil rights in Ireland have sprung up in many parts of the country. The Birmingham conference hopes to set up a national organisation which can co-ordinate the work of the various groups.

Representatives will attend from the various solidarity groups in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Coventry, Glasgow, Manchester, Oxford and Stafford. Also invited are delegates from British socialist groups and trade unions.

HIGH PRAISE

The repression is aimed at the militant socialists and left republicans who have moved into the struggle during the past year. The Northern Ireland Unionist Prime Minister, Chichester-Clark, has made this clear.

Speaking recently in Sheffield, he had high praise for the leaders of the moderate opposition in Northern Ireland who were, he said, now satisfied with the 'reforms' already granted. He went on to attack the 'revolutionaries and the left wing' who were the root of the trouble in Ireland.

The full repressive powers of the



British troops in action in Belfast last week: more and more are being used to attack the Left



CHICHESTER-CLARK:
Increasing repression

state are being used against militants. In the past two weeks more than 100 summonses have been issued against the leaders of the People's Democracy in an attempt to smash the organisation by jailing its leaders.

Republicans have been harassed and jailed for selling their paper the United Irishman which is openly on sale in Britain.

In an effort to outlaw any effective action outside parliament, Stormont last July passed a vicious piece of repressive legislation with the encouragement of Home Secretary Maudling and the blessing of moderate leader Gerry Fitt.

This act, the Criminal Justice Act imposes a mandatory sentence of at least six months on anyone convicted of disorderly behaviour, unlawful assembly, taking part in a banned

demonstration, sitting down in the road or in a public building.

Because of the Act, scores of people, most of them young workers, have been sent to jail for six months or more, often on the flimsiest of police or army evidence. Only the left has campaigned against this legislation.

The campaign of repression is designed not only to crush the left but also to reunite the Unionist Party behind Chichester-Clark. The Unionists are in total disagreement on how to deal with the situation.

CRUDE MIXTURE

Only the inability of the opposition on his right to agree on his successor has kept Chichester-Clark in power. A very large section of the party's rank and file has now shifted its allegiance to the Rev Ian Paisley who offers them a crude mixture of populism, near fascism and absolute opposition to any reforms.

Chichester-Clark hopes to sell his minor reforms to the party's extreme right by increasing the repression of the militants.

British socialists must give absolute support to those fighting oppression in Ireland. Most important, they must support the right of the Irish people to self-determination. But they must recognise that only the interests of the Irish working class are directly opposed to imperialism.

It is not in the interest of any section of the Irish ruling class to oppose imperialism. The Irish ruling class has now been incorporated into the British imperial system.

During the past decade, almost the entire developed section of the Irish economy has passed into the

hands of British or foreign capitalists.

With the signing of the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement, the Irish economy became more fully integrated into the British market. Jack Lynch's inability to intervene in the struggle in the North, and his recent statement that 'we can no longer talk of British imperialism in Ireland' is a political recognition of the economic subjugation of Ireland to Britain.

In Ireland only the working class can lead the fight against imperialism. It is imperialism that has divided the working class in the North into two halves and cut the Northern working class off from its brothers in the South by partitioning the island.

Because of a massive wave of strikes over the past three years the working class in the South has wrung substantial wage increases from the bosses. This has cut down the rate of investment from abroad and cut profits.

SMASH UNIONS

To keep international and domestic capital happy, the Irish government has determined to smash the unions with anti-union legislation. It is only by raising the demand for a workers' republic that workers in both parts of Ireland can overthrow the imperial system dominating Ireland and its domestic allies.

British socialists must help in the attempt to build a solidarity campaign here. They can best do that by affiliating to the ISC in Birmingham and by building solidarity groups among Irish and British workers in their locality.

COTTONS COLUMN

THREE WEEKS AGO, Star (Great Britain) Holdings bought the freehold of Pontins department store in Kensington, London, from British Rail for just over £1 million.

Last week it sold one half of the site for £1½ million to the nationalised Irish airline company, Aer Lingus, more than Star paid for the whole site just a fortnight before.

Flying high

SIR LEONARD CROSSLAND, chairman of the Ford Motor company is dissatisfied with his mansion at Witham in Essex. He has bought Abbots Hall, a few miles away at Great Wigborough, for an undisclosed sum.

He has already set the builders to work to restore the 16th century house and grounds and is likely to move in next year. Improvements include a new swimming pool in the 700 acres estate which already has its own landing strip and yachting and shooting facilities.

INTERVIEWER on the BBC's breakfast radio programme Today, speaking to a sewage expert on the press hysteria about dangers to health in London during the council workers' strike: 'I understand that you rather poo-poo the whole thing. . .'

Now then...

SOMEONE should tell the boys in blue in the East London borough of Hackney that we live in a democracy where free speech is a cherished right. (At least, that's what the papers are always telling us and it must be so.)

The heavy squad are visiting schools in Hackney asking teachers to supply them with the names of any children found reading 'subversive' literature, in particular any publications of the Black Panthers. Some teachers have told the guardians of

law and order exactly where to stick their jackboots. . .

Unhabashed

MR IDRIS COX told readers of the Morning Star last week that George Habash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, claims to be a 'Marxist-Leninist' but draws his political inspiration from the Trotskyist ideology of International Socialism. Looks like the Communist Party leaders see Trotskyists under every palm tree as well as every bed.

Low down

MEMO to the 206,000 workers in the English Electric/General Electric combine: your average pay this year will be £1,135 and, in case you don't know it, you're not doing as well as your company chairman, Lord Aldington.

Aldington—formerly Tory MP Toby Low—had his company pay increased from £10,000 a year in 1968 to £19,000 in 1969. Quite a jump, but nothing compared to the increase this year when his rake-off went up to £40,000 or £770 a week.

Nice the way the ruling class sets the pace for 'restraint in the national interest'.

Doing well

ONE SURE SIGN of the growth of the socialist movement is the spreading influence of left-wing newspapers. This was seen a few weeks ago by the startling response to Socialist Worker's appeal for extra funds and our soon-to-appear eight page paper.

Similar developments are taking place in other countries. In Northern Ireland Free Citizen, the lively weekly paper of People's Democracy has just celebrated its first birthday (happy birthday to you). In

the tense atmosphere of Britain's political slum, Free Citizen has achieved a substantial influence for biting attacks on the Unionists, the Paisleyites and the soggy 'moderates', as well as campaigning forthrightly for an all-Ireland workers' republic.

Good news from the United States

too. The International Socialists there have switched production of their newspaper from monthly to bi-weekly and have changed the name to Workers' Power to signify the growing importance of their industrial work.

Both papers can be ordered through IS Book Service.

Join the International Socialists

There are branches in the following areas

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NORTH WEST

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MIDLANDS

Birmingham; Coventry; Northampton; Leicester; Oxford; Potteries.

WALES and SOUTH WEST

Bath; Bristol; Cardiff; Exeter; Swansea

SOUTH

Ashford; Brighton; Crawley; Folkestone; Portsmouth; Southampton.

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Acton; Angel; Camden; Chertsey; Croydon; Dagenham; Deptford; East London; Enfield; Erith; Fulham; Greenford; Hampstead; Harrow; Hemel Hempstead; Hornsey; Ilford; Kilburn; Kingston; Lambeth; Merton; Reading; Richmond; Stoke Newington; Tottenham; Walthamstow; Wandsworth; Watford; Victoria (SW1).



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

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Address _____

Send to IS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

John Dos Passos

IN A WEEK when many people had no newspapers, the death of American writer John Dos Passos passed almost unnoticed. This is a sad but pungent comment on the decline of his literary ability and of his capacity for portraying a society in motion.

Dos Passos was one of that sad but all-too-large breed of men—the socialist who lost his faith and never found anything with which to replace it save the bitch-goddess of fame and money. This was matched by the decline in his writing ability that accompanied the old man's increasingly sterile anti-communism. Born in 1896, John Dos Passos fought in the first World War as a stretcher bearer and later travelled extensively all over the world, including in his travels a trip to the young Soviet republic. Making use of these experiences as soldier, journalist and traveller, he rapidly became one of America's leading young writers.

His one work of major world-wide stature was not published until well into the 1930s when American society was going through the massive social upheaval of the Great Depression. It is for this work, 'USA' (Penguin 21s) that Dos Passos's memory really deserves to outlast his death.

'USA' consists of a trilogy of novels, amounting to over 1000 pages and attempting to paint a panoramic view of 25 years of American history and society. To this stupendous task, Dos Passos rose magnificently to succeed in creating a work unmatched in American fiction.

Sometimes repetitive, pompous and even boring, the book's unity is nevertheless maintained by a proud, surging assertion of belief in the American common man. This link vibrates throughout the whole book, informing the narrative and helping to create the lived-and-fought-for history of the American working class.

Tragically, the effort almost seemed to exhaust Dos Passos's creative potentialities. Under the influence of the Stalinist betrayals, particularly in Spain, Dos Passos swelled the ranks of the 'ex'-socialists.

Dos Passos's life raises the whole problem of the relationship between literature and commitment. Most middle class critics maintain that the necessary accompaniment to commitment is a weakening of literature.

Clearly, there is some strength in this view. The aim of literature is to honestly reflect men in society, interacting with one another as social beings. This must be of primary importance and when such attention to truthfulness is sacrificed to fit a pre-determined pattern, then art is the loser.

However the crudity of the slogan 'Art for art's sake' never has and never can satisfy socialists. We do have an unshakeable conviction that man has an infinite and ever-present potential for building a sane and beautiful society.

Besides mirroring present-day society, the greatest of writers should also be able to picture change and progress. What happens to a great artist when this ability lapses is all too tragically illustrated in the life-work of John Dos Passos. Come to think of it, whatever happened to the 'angry young men' of the 1950s. . . ?

Martin Tomkinson

Socialist Worker

Busmen ban overtime in bid to win a living wage

by Chris Davison

BUS PASSENGERS up and down the country have seen a serious worsening in services in the last month - even compared with the chaotic services that are normal these days.

The reason is that bus men and women employed by local authorities and the National Bus Company are only working 40

hours a week. The overtime ban has been called by the unions - mainly the TGWU - in support of the claim for a £20 minimum basic wage.

To read the comments of local papers you would think it was a terrible crime for men to refuse to

work 60 or 70 hours a week in protest against the failure of the employers to offer a substantial increase despite the present miserable basic of around £15 15s.

Provincial busmen have been chosen as one of the main targets of the government's 'get tough' policy. The employers have been told to stand firm.

It is important that trade unionists in other industries should show common cause with the lower paid workers at present feeling the crunch. It could be your turn next.

Having called the ban the unions seem content to let it drift on. Action must be taken to push beyond the overtime ban.

Joint committees should be set up with other local government workers now in dispute, to get joint action going. Councils should be told that if they persist in denying low paid members of the TGWU real improvements, then other members of the union, such as tanker drivers, will feel forced to black those authorities.

Blackleg firms

By putting on the ban busmen have been able to show how much bus services depend on overtime working. To take home even a living wage, men have had to work 10 or 11 hours a day, six or even seven days a week. Now they are asking for £20 for a five-day, 40-hour week - hardly a wage for high living, just about one tenth of Robert Carr's pay for example.

CAMBRIDGE (Eastern Counties): Despite high local unemployment and low wages, drivers and conductors have been working 60-80 hours a week. The ban is now 100 per cent - in fact our picket line was barely needed and we are now concentrating on checking on the activities of blackleg companies in the area - the Premier Travel Company being a notable example.

Reaction from the public has been variable and the local press is hostile, as always. At the start of the ban the majority of them were very militant.

We now feel that we have been sold down the river by the union but a large number of us are determined to carry on and strengthen it by using such weapons as lightning strikes. BRISTOL: Busmen here have been very doubtful of the effectiveness of an overtime ban and have instead called for a national strike. Only the country section are applying the ban at present.

Starvation wages

In Bristol and Bath guerrilla strikes are preferred - the first in Bath took place last week. While this action is to be welcomed, it seems a pity that there is no co-ordination nationally.

FOLKESTONE (East Kent): The overtime ban is 100 per cent here but with local unemployment so high we have almost no staff shortage - working on the buses at starvation wages is better than no job at all. The effect is small.

There is talk of putting on a work to rule that would seriously disrupt services with all the petty rules in force. The other East Kent depots are operating the ban except for Thanet where the men were told they could keep working as the ban was local and unofficial. We hope to be able to get them to change their minds.

BRIGHTON: The overtime ban got off to a bad start here due to what can only be called sabotage by local branch officers. On the Brighton, Hove and District, where a 50 hour schedule is normally worked, the Branch secretary, without consulting his members or even posting the national circular, announced that the men could still work 50 hours.

Ten hours extra a week seems a very strange overtime ban.

On the Southdown the branch chairman agreed with management that we would work up to 46 hours - even though we normally work a 40 hour schedule. This brought such an angry response that the secretary has now resigned and the agreement thrown out.

At the same time the Worthing and Eastbourne Southdown depots were threatening action if Brighton did not fall in line.

MINERS LEADERS PUT STRIKE ACTION IN JEOPARDY

by John Charlton

IN MID-SEPTEMBER Lord Robens, chairman of the National Coal Board, replied to the miners' 33 per cent pay claim. He insulted them - in his normal fashion - by offering half and saying there was not another penny in the kitty.

The anger, frustration and humiliation of the past 20 years of bullying, work intensification, mass sackings and pit closures welled to the surface. The angry demonstrators received the news in London and demanded action from the union executive.

For the 25 years since nationalisation, the National Union of Mineworkers' executive has acted as the lackey of the NCB and governments, both Tory and Labour, accepting kicks, well-paid jobs and knight-hoods with a gracious smile.

But this time there was a difference. The union leaders were not so confident, not so sure of their ability to sell the lads short.

A year ago there had been a very bitter unofficial strike in Yorkshire, supported by Scotland and Wales. The 1970 annual conference had been tougher to deal with than ever before.

TOUGH TALK

A general mood of aggressiveness was rising in the working class, intensified by the return of a Tory government.

Some display of tough talking and tough action was necessary. The executive deliberated and came up with the decision that there would have to be a nation-wide ballot - in six weeks' time.

A number of rank and file militants protested that this time lag was unnecessary and obviously calculated to weaken the desire to fight. They were advised to shut up in the interests of a united front.

The six-week gap is nearing its end and it has been filled by Lord Robens with twice-weekly TV appearances, courtesy of BBC and ITV and countless interviews in the millionaire press. He has even employed a direct mailing agency to take the bosses' arguments into every miner's home - plugging away at the wife who has to make ends meet from a shrinking purse.

The time was not filled by the NUM leadership to address mass meetings, produce regular bulletins, and chase TV time to present the miners' case. There has been no attempt to equip the members with arguments, confidence and enthusiasm. Just silence.

The executive have a strong 'left' wing representation, including a general secretary Lawrence Daly who has stood shoulder to shoulder with the late Ho Chi Minh. Where has his voice been? Silent, too.

In the interests of some phoney unity - unity on the right wing's terms and, ultimately, on the NCB's terms, too.

If the two-thirds majority is not gained in the ballot because of the leaders' abdication, it will not be a 'victory for democracy' as the right wing will argue. It will be a

NOTICES

LONDON REGION IS conference: Sat 10 Oct, 2.30pm St Bride's Institute, St Bride's Lane, off Fleet St, EC4.

Cde/cdes required share Hornsey flat. Ring 348 7335 eves or weekends.

SW FIGHTING FUND Folk Night Sat 10 Oct, Nag's Head, York Rd, Battersea.

CLIFF/MANDEL Debate: Fri 30 Oct 7.15pm, Friends House, Euston Rd NW1

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Strike pickets in the East London borough of Waltham Forest this week

triumph for the right wing

It is time for the left union leaders to break with this rotten alliance. They must tour round with all haste presenting the case, fighting for their point of view

Miners' pay has fallen increasingly behind that of other groups of workers in the past 10 years. As a result of this financial disadvantage, the changed nature of the job, and the wholesale redundancies which have all taken place without a fight, self-respect has already been lost.

With the rate of redundancy slowing down and with a major fuel shortage inevitable this winter, the miners have never had a more favourable time to win a battle.

MASS MEETINGS

To call for action is not enough. It must be shown how it can succeed.

1. Mass meetings of miners should be called at each pithead and a strike committee elected. The committee must nominate members to serve on an area strike committee - the local branch officers must not be used in this role unless openly elected from mass meetings.

2. The strike committee must organise pickets, regular meetings, campaign bulletins and a team of collectors for other factories and trade union branches.

3. All major decisions must be taken at the mass meetings. The programme should be:

No return to work until the claim is satisfied.

No package deals which tend to be prescriptions for robbing men of the advantages gained in the period following the strike.

Whether or not such action is taken, the militants must get together to form a rank and file organisation that can campaign freely for an agreed programme.

Hospital staff to back council strike

YES, it is disgraceful that major cities are threatened by overflowing sewage. It is disgraceful that garbage is uncollected and children and old people have to go without their meals.

And it is equally disgraceful that council workers who provide these services should be so miserably paid that they are on strike to boost their flat basic wage to £16 10s, which will still be a pitiful amount by today's standards.

Before you join the chorus of abuse against the council strikers from the Tories and their press, just think about who is really to blame for the deplorable state of affairs in which workers can hump stinking dustbins and fork human effluent for less than £15 a week.

The council strikers have a cast-iron case. Hospital staffs and ambulance workers in London are staging a one-day strike on Monday in solidarity with them and six local authorities have decided to pay the strikers' demands to stave off further action.

The rest of the country can be brought into line if the three unions concerned - TGWU, GMWU and NUPE - call a total stoppage instead of isolated local strikes. And if the Tories carry out their threat to use troops to break the strike, the three unions should call out their entire memberships in a massive show of strength.

Engineering plants closed in fight for union rights

STRIKES at the Omes engineering factories at Barnes and Colnbrook have entered their second week, sparked off by the refusal of the Barnes' management to allow the AEF convenor to negotiate for clerical workers.

The major Colnbrook plant came out in solidarity with the Barnes' workers. A procedure has been in operation for eight years under which clerical workers have joined

the AEF and have been represented by that union's works convenor.

Determined to break the united front of white and blue collar workers, the management at both plants have told clerical workers in staff grades that they must join a staff union.

Mass meetings were being called this Friday and it seems likely that the workers will vote overwhelmingly to carry on the struggle to join the

union of their choice.

Donations and messages to the treasurer: Bro J Mahon, 465a Kingston Rd, Wimbledon, SW20.

NEXT WEEK

A report from the United States on the major strike at General Motors