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T.U.C.: ACT NOW!

BACK A.E.W. EXEC'S DEMAND FOR 24 HOUR GENERAL STRIKE
FORCE ELECTION: BRING DOWN TORIES
LABOUR TO POWER ON SOCIALIST PROGRAMME

By JULIAN SILVERMAN (North St. Pancras Lab. Party)

The immense movement of opposition to the Anti-Union Bill has only just started. The new year saw a wave of strikes throughout the Midlands. On Jan 11th. 20,000 Wolverhampton workers marched through the streets during working hours. (Only recently the National Front had attempted to organise a demonstration here in Powell's constituency, and had only succeeded in drawing one or two hundred from the whole country, outside working hours. Enoch Powell has never been able to call a demonstration of any but tiny proportions despite the continuous build-up given him by the millionaire press). The next day, probably 1½ million workers were involved in one way or another in actions against the "Bosses' Charter". The "mass media" once again tried to make out that this was a failure, and preferred to concentrate on the bomb-attack on Robert Carr. (No trade unionist could have been involved in this. It is possible that it was the work of right wing 'provocateurs' to divert attention from the real fight).

T.U.C. SHOULD GIVE LEAD

In fact we are witnessing the beginning of a mass-struggle which will not end until the rule of the monopolies is brought to an end. The bill is not simply the whim of a few idle politicians: it is an essential part of the strategy of the handful of millionaires who run the daily life of the country behind the facade of parliamentary democracy. It is to these people that the Tories hold their allegiance. They have worked out their strategy as a desperate attempt to give new life to an economic system which cannot survive any longer without savage attacks on workers' standards and organisations. They will not listen to tea-break discussions or to suggestions that they trade their bill for an incomes policy nor to arguments from TUC leaders that their bill would lead to higher wages than at present. They do not need to be told how to run the economy they own. Large sections of trade unionists have demanded national industrial action from the TUC: NATSOPA, CEU and now the South Wales Miners, among others. The Tories have shown that they are determined to rush the bill through now. They are even prepared to cut normal Commons debating time to an average of 10 minutes per amendment. It is a scandal that the TUC leaders have not called a recall conference until March. Until now the bosses' national representatives have taken all the initiative, and the bill will whizz through the House (although the bosses will soon find out that it is one thing to have a law on paper and another to operate it).

But they are desperate. Their whole system is at stake. The capitalist system without the profit motive is like a car without petrol. But now the return on investments (10-11%) is no more than the large companies have to pay for long-term finance, according to the Times Business News (20/1/71). Hence the decline in industrial investment: hence nil growth-rate in the U.S.A. and only 2½% here; hence huge unemployment in both countries. The whole system is one "lame duck". (Of course we do not have to be too sorry about the millionaires' problems—they can always invest elsewhere; the crisis has not prevented man like property-speculator Hyams from waking up £10,000 richer every morning for eight years!)

It is all very well for the TUC to demand reflation and a rise in production, but capitalists produce or cut down on production for profit and nothing else. If they can make more by making less and charging more; by speculating in dollars and marks etc. that is what they will do.

FIGHT UNEMPLOYMENT, PRICE INCREASES AND POVERTY

At present, most of the world's capitalists face similar problems. With increasing technological advance, capital costs mount; wage costs mount as capitalists find they are forced to concede rather than waste these costs in drawn-out strikes. It is continually harder to extract sufficient profits to make it worth their while investing in productive industry. And yet they must try to undercut their competitors. They demand of their respective governments that incomes policies or anti-union bills are introduced or actually operated. They compete with one another for world markets. There are comparative booms and recessions but nowhere have they solved the problems. In the U.S.A., for example, even 50 millions at or below the poverty-line, even massively increased unemployment has not curbed inflation (i.e. more "demand" than production). They have not been able to force down the standards of the advanced workers and thus reduce "demand" and bring down prices.

From the capitalists' point of view the chief problem is the strength of the workers, especially at shop-floor-level. In businessmen's clubs, boardrooms university lecture-theatres, everywhere, all kinds of pet projects have been dreamed up of how to deal with this embarrassment. "The Banker" (December 1970) believes in curbing wages and allowing prices to rise. The newly re-appointed chairman of the Bank of England has come out for a return to an



Postal workers demonstrate in London

incomes policy. Some are for trying to persuade union chiefs to hold back the demands of their members—some are for cutting down the supply of money (Powell is one of these) and deliberately pushing up unemployment so as to reduce the price of labour power. The Government has declared its support for none of these things, but is floundering between all of them. Their "squeeze" has produced the highest general trend of unemployment for a generation at 700,000, but this will not improve the bosses' bargaining position with the unions here, any more than it did in Canada (say), where even 50% wage increases have been granted. On the contrary, this is inflaming the workers all the more. Nor is the government's policy of attempting to "stop the rot" with its own workers, helping. The paint-workers and the Chrysler workers in Linwood have each been granted justified demands for 18%. The huge companies, which trade internationally, find that they can lose less by conceding than by facing a strike. The 1/5th. of the workforce on under £15 a week, the women and young workers, the previously badly organised workers and white-collar workers will not tolerate Victorian wages in this "technological society" and workers in the great industrial unions are refusing to have their lives and futures dictated by the supposed needs of the 1% of the population, who possess 93% of the income from property. They are showing their union leaders what a mighty potential the labour movement has, and thus reaching out to the workers as a whole. This is what is bothering the capitalists. Their system cannot contain such a powerful trade-union movement: the germs of a new social system.

80 FIRMS DOMINATE THE ECONOMY

Once this energy is directed into clear political channels, nothing will stop it. This means demanding that the TUC put up a real fight against the monstrous welfare cuts and against the bill, including, for a start, a token one-day official strike, as a warning. But even this, in itself, is nothing. We must demand that the TUC abandons its political neutrality, that they call for a general election and for the return of a Labour government. But it was the cowardly policies of the last Labour government which lost them the election and left the monopolists stronger than ever. The unions must sweep into the Labour Party, their only mass political organisation, and demand: NO MORE CONCILIATION WITH BIG BUSINESS. They cannot be reasoned with. Each concession builds their selfconfidence and increases their stranglehold on the working population. TAKE OVER THE 80 TOP INDUSTRIAL FIRMS, THE BANKS AND INSURANCE COMPANIES, AND HARNESS THE NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR THE NEEDS OF THE WORKERS, NOT WASTE THEM FOR THE PROFIT OF THE FEW.

"VIETNAMISATION" IN RUINS

By PETER TAAFFE

The attack by Cambodian guerrilla's on the main airport on January 12th. reduced to ashes the claim of the Nixon government and his top generals that their invasion last year had made Cambodia "safe" for landlordism and capitalism. With one blow the indiginous Cambodian liberation forces completely smashed the tiny air force of the rotten Lon Nol regime. It served to demonstrate that but for the massive air cover given by U.S. Imperialism in the battle for the strategic Highway 4 the liberation forces, if they desired, would already be installed in the capital Phnom Penh. Thus the Vietnam War has extended to the rest of former Indo-China with a vengeance.

HOOLIGAN RAMPAGE

At the same time all the ulcers in Cambodian society have been revealed. While the peasants strain under the massive inflation, conservatively put at 20%, "defence" expenditure has increased four-fold. The price of rice, the basic food of the Cambodian workers and peasants, had increased catastrophically, and the main export industries, rice and rubber, have been ruined by the war. Only the doleing out of a minimum 70 millions dollars, (this is apart from the "free" military aid), has staved off the complete collapse of the economy and the regime. It is, in miniature, a mirror of Vietnam itself.

And it is only now that the full horror of U.S. Imperialism's plunder of Vietnam is revealed in every gory detail. Eleven years after the intervention of the American ruling class 53,000 American dead have been officially admitted. Well over a million South Vietnamese peasants and workers have perished, quite apart from the millions of disabled and wounded. At the same time the American military glutting their desire to "search and destroy" have devastated whole areas of the Vietnamese

countryside. Thus a group of American scientists have reported that "America's military use of herbicides, has devastated about 20% of the forest lands which are the country's richest resource. It has destroyed enough crops to feed 600,000 people for a year and done such damage... that it will take decades and possibly centuries to recover. It could also be the cause of an unexplained increase in stillbirths" OBSERVER 3/1/71. In a grisly comment on the hooligan rampage of American Imperialism they sarcastically comment that "there would have to be 16 million enemy soldiers in the central highlands by the quantity of the crops they have sprayed". The total population is only 18 million! And yet U.S. Imperialism is unable to win the war or make it safe for their stooge Thieu to carry on. The opposition of practically the whole population has time and again been demonstrated. The trial of Calley, one of the main perpetrators of the My Lai massacre, has only served to underline this. The soldier who actually first revealed the massacre admitted that he had shot young babies... "Where you afraid they would attack you? ... 'Yes I was' ... The babies?" 'Yes' Mr Meadlo snapped back! They might have been loaded with grenades or anything their mothers could put on them"!! TIMES 13/1/71. His testimony revealed both the brutallising effect of the Vietnam war on American troops, where some small sections have been reduced to the level of SS troops, and the impossibility of holding down a whole people under imperialist domination.

Not only in the villages but increasingly in the cities the mood of opposition is gathering... "South Vietnam's towns once considered "secure" are beginning to look about as safe as a stack of dynamite". OBSERVER 10/1/71. It is the econ-

omic situation, which was temporarily papered over by the pumping in of enormous U.S. aid, which has fuelled this discontent. Thus in Da Nang, Vietnam's second largest city with a population of 360,000 there is no sewerage system, the water system serves only 7% of the population and the electricity system only 10%! In addition only half of its school children attend school.

But adding to the difficulties of the American ruling class is the demoralisation and open rebellion increasingly revealed in the ranks of the U.S. Army itself. Thus an official U.S. Defence Department investigation has shown that fully 60% of the troops use hard drugs or marijuana "for more of an escape from reality". Sickened and demoralised by the war the rank and file soldier has begun to hit back at those he holds responsible for the mess... "The most extreme consequence of this generation gap(?) in Vietnam has been the rise in "fragging"—the lobbing of grenades at an unpopular officer or NCO"! TIMES 5/1/71.

"DECLARE VICTORY AND COME HOME"

This above all has determined the opposition of the more far sighted section of the American ruling class to the continuation of what they now consider is an unwinnable war. It has already set alight all the inflammable material within American society. The massive expenditure of more than £15,000 million has together with other factors produced the biggest increase in the cost of living for 20 years, a spiralling upwards of unemployment to 5 million and propelled into opposition to the system a whole generation of young people. Even the working class "hard hats" so beloved of Agnew, showed their opposition to the rise in unemployment and the undermining of their standards in the recent elections. In the car state of Michigan alone there are ½ million out of work. It is these factors which have determined the policy advocated by the main spokesmen of the ruling class "DECLARE VICTORY AND COME HOME", which even Nixon has come to real-

ise is the only way out.

The hollow claims for the "Vietnamisation" of the war will be revealed for what they are worth as soon as the last U.S. troops leave. Thieu and his cronies realise the writing is on the wall by the secret purchase of villas in Switzerland! A coalition government including the NLF would only serve to temporarily screen the defeat of American Imperialism. At a strategic moment the "allies" would be ousted, and an openly NLF government installed. It would mean the end of landlordism and capitalism in Vietnam and give a mighty impetus to the struggles of the Cambodian, Laotian and Thai workers and peasants. In terms of the development of the economy, the land to the peasants and unification with North Vietnam, the revolution would be an enormous step forward for the peoples of Vietnam and the whole of S.E. Asia. But given the isolation of the revolution, its mass peasant basis and the nationalist limitations of the leadership only a regime similar to North Vietnam could result; a planned nationalised economy, but with a totalitarian one party regime. Only the establishment of workers democracy in either the advanced capitalist countries or the overthrowing of the Stalinist elites could cut across this perspective. Nevertheless the Vietnamese revolution will advance the revolution by seven league boots throughout Asia. American Imperialism will never again be able to directly intervene on the Asian mainland, the movement will be unleashed in the whole of S.E. Asia and in India also. It is the responsibility of the Labour Movement in Britain to step up the campaign for the immediate withdrawal of Imperialism from Vietnam and the backing of all goods and aid, which the Tories have increased in the past few months, going to assist the Thieu regime. Above all the struggle to end Toryism and capitalism here is the best aid to the workers and peasants of Vietnam to free themselves from the age old poverty, disease, blood and filth which Imperialist domination has meant to them.

POLAND: "Communist" Party in turmoil

By ROGER SILVERMAN (Fulham Labour Party)

Last December, the workers of Poland began an inspiring movement of revolt against intolerable attacks on their living standards. A spontaneous rising in the key North-Western shipyards was supported by workers all over the country (see MILITANT January 1971). Within days the Gomulka leadership was removed, and a frightened Government granted some limited reforms, e.g. raising the minimum wage to £17 a month.

These have not been enough to pacify the workers. Emboldened by their new-found sense of power, they are fighting for real changes in their miserable conditions. On 14th January, there was a strike in Elblag. On the 16th, another in Gdansk. On the 18th, at least 6000 shipyard workers struck again in Gdansk, and on the 19th this spread to the tram and bus workers. There was another dock strike on the 21st. The strikes are for higher wages, shorter hours, better conditions, genuine trade unions, and some control over the state apparatus. Workers were enraged by the replacement of Gomulka's appointed "trade-union" boss by Kruczek, a diehard Stalinist. They were also demonstrating against top politicians, including Cyrankiewicz, Moczar, and Kociolk. The latter (a prominent "Technocrat"), is hated in Gdynia, where workers responding to his appeal on 15th December to return to work were shot down by the militia. On 23rd January, another conservative, Szlachcic, was appointed Minister of the Interior. On the 24th, more big strikes paralysed Szczecin, after threatened cuts in earnings. Neither machine-guns nor trivial

reforms, nor threats can break the workers' spirit. But their heroic defiance poses a challenge to others, besides the Polish Government. It is a source of considerable embarrassment to the spokesmen for Stalinism in the West.

"MORNING STAR"

The British C.P. daily, the "Morning Star" resorted to time-honoured clichés in calling the developments "tragic" and adding non-committally; "many will conclude that errors were made" (18/12/70). It approved stringent repression of "looting and stealing"—crimes invented by the police to justify murderous attacks on the strikers—but also called for "urgent steps to examine legitimate grievances of the workers".

After Gomulka's downfall it attempted a more political statement (22/12). The problems facing Poland and the other "Socialist" states, it declared, "cannot be solved without the full participation of the working people." It condemned "paternalistic methods of leadership", and added: "The process of extending Socialist democracy has still not been carried forward with sufficient energy and vigour." Quoting Gierk's shameless admission that the Polish "United Workers' Party" had "lost a common language with the working people", it stated: "When that link and common language are lost, explosions occur." Next day it quoted without comment the blunt confession by "Zycie Warszawy" (22/12): "We must admit it plainly: arbitrariness and autocracy were quite frequent... Uni-

lateral decisions were often taken in a very narrow circle."

In the ranks of the Communist Party stand many dedicated militants. We ask them: has a Marxist explanation been provided?

Certainly, the C.P. leaders have moved a long way since Stalin's day, when talk of "fuller participation" or criticism of "paternalism" were punishable by outright expulsion. Certainly, the Polish workers of 1970 are not smeared as "Fascists", like the Hungarian workers of 1956. Up to 1956, the very idea that Stalin or his puppets could make the smallest error was unthinkable. Now, on the contrary, everything from the purgatorial frame-ups, to the persecution of the Crimean Tartars, to the arrests of writers, to the invasion of Czechoslovakia, is called—a "mistake".

That is not Marxism. If there was paternalism, lack of democracy, remoteness from the workers, arbitrariness and autocracy, it was because the interests of the ruling circles dictated that it should be so. The new concern of the "Morning Star" for democratic rights would be more convincing if it had been voiced before the "expulsion". Evidently the leaders' only "error" was that they failed to avert a workers' revolt. Similarly, no hint of criticism can be found in the back copies of any C.P. publications of Stalin, Beria, Rakosi, Novotny, or any other Stalinist despot—until they had already been safely deposed and become convenient scapegoats.

If the "Morning Star" was right in saying (22/12) that "socialism and democracy are inseparable", and yet

that Poland was ruled by "paternalism", then how can it justify its continued description of such regimes as "Socialist states"? Would it not be more accurate to call them workers' states that are deformed and distorted by bureaucratism, in the interests of the "narrow circles" at the top? And instead of merely assuring its readers that "a Socialist Britain must ensure freedom of speech, the right to demonstrate and strike, a powerful and independent trade union movement, industrial democracy and free creative artistic activity" (22/12), should it not also demand the guarantee of these rights in Russia, Eastern Europe and China?

Its correspondence columns are ringing with crucial question. A Bridgend reader (28/12) wrote: "Until Socialists begin to offer a mature explanation for such contradictions, many people... will feel alienated." A London reader (31/12) asked: "The question is, what basic elementary rights have the Polish workers got to organise, demonstrate, or strike? (The riots) could not have occurred if Party theory or practice had been carried out." Another Londoner (5/1) asked: "We now find widespread dissatisfaction in Eastern European states after ½-century of Socialist planning. What has gone wrong?" A Cardiff correspondent (8/1) wrote: "We must face the unpleasant fact that a narrow, pragmatic expediency is often the basis of many decisions... Why shouldn't people be allowed to disagree openly with the top Government leaders in the Socialist countries?... In raising these questions I do so as a Communist... We must tackle the problems of Socialist democracy. If we don't, we are contributing in hampering the development of the world."

The last reader hits the nail on the head. Anyone calling himself a

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Militant

Business manager:
Sheila Coxhead (E. Islington Labour Party)
Correspondence: 375 Cambridge Heath
Road, E.C.1. Tel.: 739 7176
Editor:
Peter Taaffe, (Hackney Centr. Lab. Party)
Lillie Rd., London, S.W.6. Tel.: 01-385 8637

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Big Steps Forward for "Militant"

This month has seen a big step forward for the supporters of MILITANT. We have moved into our new premises at 375, Cambridge Heath Rd., London, E.C.1. This has only been made possible by the devoted and strenuous efforts of our supporters in carrying out massive improvements and repairs to the building. We would like to thank all those many comrades who have worked to get our premises in working order. Their efforts will be rewarded by a more regular press, a bigger editorial staff and a greater production of special leaflets and pamphlets to supplement the work of MILITANT in the next few months.

The wherewithal needed to carry out these improvements would have been impossible without the magnificent response of our supporters to our financial appeals. A great number of donations have been received in the past six months since we have launched our special appeal. In the last month outstanding amongst many donations was a magnificent £60 from two supporters in Bristol. But we need to keep up the pressure. The need for MILITANT has never been more obvious than at the present time. The movement of the power workers, the postmen and the looming battles on the railways and engineering industries indicate the mood of opposition to the Tories' attempt to cut the living standards of the workers. Our coverage of these events and the linking up of these industrial struggles with the need for a Marxist programme has received a more and more eager response from workers. In January despite an extra printing, compared to our previous month, we had exhausted our stock by the middle of the month.

On the January 12th. demonstrations against the Tory Government's anti-union Bill our sellers rapidly exhausted their supplies of papers. Everywhere the response was similar to that which was reported by our Swansea supporters... "The paper has gone very well, as have the leaflets... everyone (on another demo in Ammanford) took a paper—they were very keen to buy; almost queuing up with sixpences... as soon as the workers saw the headlines 'Down With Businessmen's govt. they reached for their money!'"

Similar reactions were reported from Liverpool, Manchester, Coventry and wherever there were big demonstrations. This response to our ideas should spur on every supporter of the paper to increase both the circulation in the next few months in preparation for a fortnightly and eventually a weekly later this year. Every penny counts. Collect even shillings on a regular weekly basis. We would appeal to every trade unionist, Labour Party member and Young Socialist to build the MILITANT fighting fund. Take out a regular subscription and get your organisation to take a regular order. Above all rush us your donation, big and small, so that we can speed up our date for going over to a fortnightly and rapidly increase our circulation. In this way we will be able to take the case of Marxism to an ever wider and more responsive layer of workers in the Labour Movement and so step up the fight for the adoption of a real fighting programme to defeat the Tory offensive and bring Labour to Power on a socialist programme.

Communist has a duty to his class to face up to unpalatable facts and explain them truthfully. By evasive double-talk, the C.P. is neglecting this responsibility.

INTERNATIONALISM

Soon equivocation will be impossible. Against the official jargon, the Polish workers are counterposing the real dynamic language of Marxism. Gomulka's broken promises have taught them a bitter lesson. Never again can they be diverted along nationalistic lines from their political mission. That is why they shouted: "NO DUBCEK FOR POLAND!" In reply to the stale official slanders, their banners proclaimed: "WE ARE WORKERS, NOT HOOLIGANS. LONG LIVE THE WORKERS' STATE!" They dispelled any doubts of their political loyalties with the slogan: "STALIN FOR BUREAUCRATS, LENIN FOR WORKERS!", and suspicion of chauvinism was countered by a fine expression of internationalism and optimism: "LENIN IS IN MOSCOW—BUT NOT IN THE KREMLIN!" Faced with such slogans, it is not surprising that the soldiers fraternised. Such ideas could sweep across Eastern Europe and Russia like wildfire. But crowning all the others in revolutionary spirit is the slogan seen in the strikebound docks of Szczecin:—"RUSSIA 1905=HUNGARY AND POLAND 1956. "RUSSIA 1917=POLAND AND THE WORLD 1971!"

As in Hungary, the demand for elementary rights can only lead to a regeneration of the revolution, the programme for the workers to manage their state directly. The Bolsheviks' measures against bureaucracy will be rediscovered (Soviet power, an armed people, no privileges for the officials, participation by all in the

tasks of administration). As in 1917, creation of a healthy workers' state will have world-shaking repercussions.

Members of the Communist Party: Who continues the traditions of the October revolution? The hacks who yesterday defended Stalin's crimes, denounced Old Bolsheviks as imperialist agents, and today mouth platitudes about "mistakes"? Or the dockers of Szczecin and Gdansk, the miners of Katowice, the engineering workers of Warsaw, fighting against terrible odds under slogans like those quoted above, fighting in the long run for a return to Soviet power as it was in October 1917?

It is your duty as Communists to face this question and fight for real Marxist policies.

Support Mexican Prisoners

By ELIZABETH KNIGHT (Hackney Central L.P.)

In Mexico the trials have begun of the political prisoners arrested after the mass student movement of 1968, which culminated in the massacre of over 300 peaceful demonstrators by the army and police.

The first 68 of these prisoners have just received sentences ranging from 6 to 17 years. They have also been collectively fined about £66,000.

The savagery of the sentences indicates once and for all what are the real intentions of the new government and the Mexican ruling class, and the methods by which they intend to carry them out. Like all the regimes in Latin America which continue to prop up capitalism and imperialism, the Mexican Government must be worried

RAILWAYMEN: FULL 25%!

By A GATESHEAD RAILWAY WORKER

After the power workers and postmen it is the railwaymen's turn to do battle with the Tory Government. Even before it has come to a crunch the Tories and their mouthpieces in the press have been denouncing our claim for 25% as ludicrous and "impossible" in the present situation. Before the bosses have the opportunity to whip up a wave of hysteria it is as well that the active sections of the unions should be able to answer them with the facts.

Despite the wildly exaggerated stories of massive wages for some railway workers it is a fact that the highest paid railwayman is a Top Driver, who picks up a basic £22.4.3d. per week for round the clock shifts! This is the "reward" for a gruelling working day and the enormous responsibility sometimes for hundreds of peoples' lives. Go further down the scale and you will find the vast majority eke out an existence on a mere pittance; in fact they are amongst the lowest of the low paid. Thus railmen, office men, ratings on board the British Rail Ships, fire brigade men, bill posters, hostel attendants get a miserable £15.4.0d basic per week. Is it little wonder that we have put in the claim for 25%? But even if the claim is conceded the lowest grades will still be earning less than £19 per week!

But the unanswerable case made out by the National Union of Railwaymen is being attacked by the management by pointing to possible earnings of the workers. Apart from the fact that the majority have no opportunity for overtime and mileage allowances or for bonus schemes, why the hell should we be forced to work all the hours under the sun to get a living wage? But even where overtime working exists it is only paid at time and $\frac{1}{4}$ to time and $\frac{1}{2}$ with time and $\frac{3}{4}$ on a Sunday for most. No strongly organised body of workers should be prepared to accept such paltry rewards for giving up their hard earned leisure time. The fact that many do is itself an indication of the scandalous basic rate. We are determined to put an end to this poverty wage scale. At the same time we should draw the attention of the whole Labour Movement to the pennypinching attitude of the management of British Rail and their Tory backers compared to the lavish "compensation" which they have given to the former owners who reduced the industry to ruination levels.

Thus they will sometimes start shifts at 12.01 am on a Monday to avoid payment of Sunday overtime rates. There is for instance no

shift allowance. Compare this to the policy of handing over the rich pickings within the industry back to private industry. The Tories have already indicated that they are intending to hive off a number of sections. The denationalisation of the Carlisle pubs is an indication of the direction in which they are moving. British Railways will not escape the Tory butchers' knife. Thus the enormously profitable Freightliners could be sold together with British Railways hotels and National Carriers Limited. The railway workshops also have reached the position of competing on a world scale, and the Tories will see this as a means of their rich friends stepping in to get some of the gravy. In this way a lifeless corpse would be left. The arms, the legs, all the vital parts of the industry will be chopped off and then the Tories can point the finger and say "Look we told you nationalisation doesn't work". That is if we, the railwaymen and every section of the Labour Movement, let them get away with it! And we must make sure that they don't.

The first task must be to ensure that the full 25% be obtained. It is only the first step in ensuring that decent standards exist for all railway workers. At the same time we must demand an end to the intervention of the private spivs in the transport industry. Transport should be free. It could be free if the nationalised sections were extended instead of contracted as is the Tories intention. Instead of running the service in the interests of the handful of 'Inter City' businessmen, it could be geared to the peoples' needs, with the appropriate forms of transport in each locality determined by the workers themselves. A nationalised transport system as part of the taking over of the commanding heights of the economy democratically controlled by the working class, is the only answer to the chaos, mismanagement and decay which transport has fallen into in the hands of private industry. The struggle to achieve this is bound up with the fight to achieve the full 25%.

The Union should be carrying out a campaign now, not waiting until the 11th. hour. We should learn from the recent tactics of the Tories and their press. Mass meetings in every locality should be organised now! Not one union member should be left in any confusion over our claim. The union representatives at local level must draw in all the workers in every stage of the fight. Only by the full use of the power of the union organisation can we win. And we must win this vital battle.

by the recent mass movements of workers and students in Chile and Bolivia and is hoping now to be able to forstall the development of any such movements in Mexico. The vicious sentences on the political prisoners come just after the introduction of new repressive laws against workers' and students' right to organise or demonstrate.

The active support and solidarity of the Labour and trade union movement in Britain and internationally is more important than ever at this critical time for those struggling for basic democratic rights in Mexico, Brazil and in the other repressive states in Latin America, as the first step in the fight for socialism.

The European Committee for the Defence of Mexican Political Prisoners is working to support the prisoners and to help expose internationally the real nature of the regime in Mexico. The Committee is also concerned with the prisoners in Brazil and other Latin American countries.

Please send letters and resolutions demanding amnesty through your organisation or individually to the Mexican Embassy (48 Belgrave Square S.W.1), to the Committee and to the press. If you could send a donation or help in any way, the Committee would like to hear from you. Speakers will gladly come to Labour Party, Young Socialist or other meetings.

375, Cambridge Heath Rd., E.C.1.

T.U.s Back Postal Workers

By A POST OFFICE WORKER

205,000 post office workers are the latest to come under the Tory Government's axe. Despite the massive distortions of the press and mass media the vast majority (97%) of the post-men, telephonists and counter clerks represented by the Union of Post Office Workers have come out on strike. It is a magnificent response to the official call for action by layers of workers who are participating without strike pay for the first time in strike action. This is the first time also that the union has called for a national strike, which in itself is an indication of the seething indignation felt by the workers at the rejection of their claim by the Post Office.

Their claim for an increase of 15% at all points with a minimum of £3 a week at the maximum is modest, when taken against the miserable wages of the workers, and the massive increase in the cost of living. Even the OBSERVER which has backed to the hilt the Tory Government's assault on the unions was forced to admit... "An 8% wage rise (the Post Office offer) merely covers last years price rises. A 10% increase covers last year's price rises and the additional taxes that most workers will have to pay on their higher earnings. It makes no provision for the additional price rises in the pipeline for this year or for the share in the growth of national output." The UPW has in its official strike bulletin "NO ALTERNATIVE" pointed out that if the union were to accept the 8% offer of the Post Office it would mean a worsening of every worker's wages by 1/- in the £... "the Postman... a deficiency of 16/6... the Telephonist... a deficiency of 18/6 etc." For many this would reduce even further the near starvation wages they now "enjoy". Thus a male cleaner can sometimes take home £12 a week; there are men with families to keep amongst this section! For post men the present rate is £18.8.0 a week. For a telephonist at 15 it is a scandalous £6.10.0 a week! In addition the Post Office continues the archaic and Victorian "age based" scales which results in fully qualified young workers doing the same job as older workers they work alongside and getting £3.13.6 a week less.

It was a revolt against these conditions which led to the strike. As an answer to the lies of the capitalist press and the refusal of the Post Office to meet the claim it was the young and old women telephonists in particular who have demonstrated tremendous elan and fighting spirit on the massive Post Office workers demonstrations. With their slogans "Our rise went Chataway" they showed that they understood that it was the Tory Government which has stiffened the opposition of the Post Office to their demands. It is the Tories who are attempting to unload the responsibility for the disease of the economy onto the backs of the Post Office and other workers. If they were to lift one finger Ryland the Post Office chief would increase his offer. Instead Chataway on £170 a week and egged on by Carr and the Cabinet can contemptuously spurn the very modest demands of the Post Office workers. It was therefore wrong of Tom Jackson, leader of the UPW to praise Carr for having supposedly "worked to produce circumstances in which a settlement could be reached" (TIMES 20/1/70). This is not the way to show every Postal worker and indeed the wider Labour Movement who the real enemy is. A firm attack should be launched against Carr, the Tory Government and the CBI who they represent, not just their Post Office stooges. The public "wringing of hands" by Carr only serves to cover up the vicious attack on the workers standards which he and his cronies have launched. A mass campaign of explanation not just to the Post Office workers (the lack of a real propaganda campaign for six months before the strike was the main reason why some small sections did not respond to the strike call), but aimed at every worker is the only guarantee of success in this struggle.

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

Already many unions have passed resolutions, offered and sent money to assist the Post Office workers. The London press branch of the electricians, who have seen the role played by their employers during the power workers dispute immediately came to the defence of the Post Office workers by offering money and demanding solidarity action from the Executive Committee of their union. Similar support has come from railwaymen offering to stop the pirate mail services and the Post Office Engineers. It is imperative that this fund of good will towards the post workers

should be translated into action particularly to stop the blacklegging which is given every encouragement by the Post Office tops. The Post Office Engineering Union alone could by solidarity action rapidly smash the Post Office blacklegging plans.

Instinctively, Post Office workers internationally, in Norway, France, Australia, America and many other countries, have come to the assistance of their British brothers. It has vividly illustrated the enormous power of the working class on a world scale and given just one glimpse of what real internationalism means; active support of the working class of one country by another when faced by an attack from the bosses. The French Post Office workers are themselves preparing to strike on February 4th and 5th, to prevent creeping denationalisation. The French bosses have plans similar to the Tories "DIAL ENTERPRISE" for the hiving off of the most profitable and lucrative sections of the industry.

In this dispute, as with the dockers, miners, and power workers the ruling class have demonstrated that they are prepared to engage in a trial of strength with the Labour Movement. Behind the Tories, the Confederation of British Industries is urging similar resistance as the Post Office by "private industry". Every weapon in their vast arsenal has been employed to beat back workers demanding a living wage. A vile press campaign, similar to the one used against the power workers, as far as they dare, has been launched against the Post Office workers. The press has weeped crocodile tears about the "poor old age pensioners", but when volunteer strikers turned out to pay the pensioners the Post Office insisted on the use of blacklegs as well. It was only then that some of the workers refused to work. The responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of the Post Office tops and the Tory Government that pensioners and others have gone without payment in the past few weeks.

Every section of the Labour Movement must actively campaign for the Post Office workers. They are in the front line at the moment, but it is the whole of the working class which is under attack. The living standards of every worker are at stake. Not only resolutions but money and action should be given by every union branch, every ward and Management Committee of the Labour Party to the Post Office workers to ensure complete victory in their fight.

FORDS: PARITY NOW!

By ALBERT ROSSER (T&GWU, Fords, Swansea)

Recently the mass media have painted a picture of Ford's workers as a wealthy, pampered lot whose exorbitant wage demands are motivated by anti-social greed. This pernicious myth has at last been nailed by a document submitted by the union to the employers, setting forth the case for parity, backed up with a thorough analysis of the company's financial situation. This shows in black and white that Ford's employees are working at rates well below workers in other car firms. It also demonstrates irrefutably that Ford's good performance in the market is due entirely to the low wages paid to its employees.

In 1969, sales per employee for the Big Four companies were as follows:

Ford:	£8,300
Chrysler:	£6,000
Vauxhall:	£5,800
B.L.M.C.:	£5,000

In the period 1967-69, productivity per worker at Fords rose by about 20 percent. Between 1968-69, gross trading profits per employee at Ford's were in excess of £1,000. This astonishing figure compares with an average of £400 for the three main British-based rivals.

INTOLERABLE SITUATION

Nor is there any indication that Ford's enormous profit margins have gone towards re-investment for new plant, modernisation etc. On the contrary. For the last three years for which no accounts are available, Ford's received no less than £98 millions free handout from the State in investment grants and other allowances. This figure exceeds the total capital investment spending for the same period by some £6 millions!

At present, Ford's workers receive an hourly rate of around 12/6d. Yet despite Fords favourable performance, due to the high productivity of the workers, equivalent grades in BLMC (Midlands) get an average wage which is 5/- to 8/- higher. International companies are even more damning. According to a 1969 statement of General Motors, labour costs (including benefits) of Fords workers in Britain are only 50 percent of the German level and 33 percent of the US level! In fact, assuming we obtain our full demands, a "B" grade worker would still be 14 percent below the rate in Cologne.

The situation is intolerable. The figures in the document speak for themselves. It is no use management trying to fob us off with another small wage increase. This is an issue of principle. We must cease being "the price-cutters of the British and European labour market."

Let us be absolutely clear what this demand for parity means. We want equality with the best rates in the industry. We want an across-the-board increase for ALL grades—with no differentials involved.

It is vital that every Ford's worker grasps these demands. Already management is attempting to sidestep the issue of parity with the offer of a so-called "S" grading. This would mean an extra 7d an hour after four years, on condition of "greater mobility" and workers performing extra jobs (e.g. demonstrations to new employees etc). This is a productivity deal, which has nothing to do with the question at issue, namely parity. Furthermore, it is a blatant attempt to split our ranks. For since grades "A", "D" and "E" cannot be involved in the productivity agreement, the brunt of the extra work and responsibilities would fall on grades "B" and "C", thus opening

up the possibility of sectional divisions and splits.

No-one should fall for this manoeuvre. The basic issue is parity. It is not a question of haggling over a few pennies. The full claim can be met, and must be met. We have proved that Fords have the money. The onus is on them to prove otherwise. If they claim our figures wrong, let them throw open their books for the inspection of trade unionists.

The employers dare not reveal the true state of their finances to the unions. They know that our case is unanswerable. We should go forward in the confidence that our case is the strongest case ever presented to any management. If our reasonable demands are not met in full on the first asking, we should be prepared to take action. FORDS MUST BE MADE TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE MEAN BUSINESS.

This is a time for the unity of all Fords workers. Don't forget that if we accept something less than our demands, Fords will be able to turn round in future and say "What are you moaning about, you've got parity!" If we don't go forward now for our rights, we might as well forget about parity and let Fords rule the roost.

CAMPAIGN NEEDED

A grave responsibility lies on the shoulders of the union leadership and especially the shop stewards. Ours is the first case of workers in the private sector coming into collision with the Government and its 10% "norm". We can expect a rough ride from the Tory controlled mass media. It is vital that our members are prepared to answer the lies and distortion which we will experience. We must be armed with the true facts. It is significant that the press and TV have remained silent about the contents of the document prepared by the union. We must remedy this. The document has had too limited a circulation to date. It should be printed in full and distributed to all Fords workers, to the Labour Movement and the public generally.

If there are any among us who still doubt the justice of our case, they must be convinced by patient discussion and argument. Now is the time for the maximum contact between the men and their elected representatives. Solidarity must be built up from the shop-floor upwards. At every stage, those responsible for negotiating should consult their members. Armed with a sound case, and united in action, we will carry the day.

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