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WORKERS TO RUN PLANTS IN BID TO STOP SACKINGS

Sabby Sagall

LIVERPOOL:- Stewards representing 12,000 workers at the GEC-EE combine on Merseyside are planning a take-over by the workers on September 19 of the company's three factories at Fazakerley and Netherton.

This unique step of an indefinite occupation is a powerful attempt to force the company to withdraw its proposals to sack 3000 Merseyside workers as part of its 'rationalisation' scheme. The Napier diesel-engine plant employing 1200 is to be shut down completely and the labour force at the Netherton plant is to be slashed from about 1500 to a few hundred.

The plan to occupy the factories was unanimously approved at a recent factory gate meeting attended by several thousand workers.

The Action Committee's plan is for workers to enter the factories and take over from the management complete control of production. They will run the factories themselves and will attempt to organise their own market distribution.

THREAT

The redundancies are a threat to the jobs and living standards of all Merseyside workers, since the sacked GEC workers will enlarge the existing pool of unemployed (24,66) and undermine the workers' capacity to fight for improved wages and conditions.

The stewards and other militants realised that something more than strike action was necessary in order to defeat GEC.

An isolated withdrawal of labour in a plant threatened with redundancy cannot succeed because the management are planning to transfer the work to other plants. Unless simultaneous sympathetic action is taken by workers in the rest of the combine, those threatened with the sack quickly become demoralised.

By revealing their clear determination to keep the factories open, the militants hope that sympathetic action against the company will be sparked off throughout the combine. A militant stand by one section of the workers will inspire the rest with the confidence that the present and future redundancies can be defeated, but only on condition that the struggle is a united one.

BAIT

Unfortunately, a certain number of workers at Liverpool have allowed themselves to be deceived by the bait of a few hundred pounds' worth of redundancy pay. The management also tried to forestall retaliatory action by promising that 5000 new jobs would be created at their Lincoln and Colchester plants but it turned out that only 200 or so new jobs were being transferred.

The initiative of the Merseyside workers underlines their determination to rely on rank and file strength. Leaders of the principal unions involved, such as Hugh Scanlon of the Engineers have not developed any fighting strategy to oppose the sackings.

And union officials on the National Joint Consultative Council have urged the stewards on the Action Committee to give up the occupation in case it jeopardises the redundancy payments!

If GEC succeed at Liverpool, thousands of other workers in the combine could have the threat of the sack hanging over them. Because GEC is not a local firm but a national monopoly with a national strategy, the only way Merseyside militants can ensure success is to oppose the management with their own nation-wide strategy.

Unless the unofficial combine committee is able to develop such a strategy, GEC will defeat the Liverpool workers and thousands of others by picking them off slowly, section by section.

* Weinstock's Empire - p2

Callaghan: soft-soap but no real action

LABOUR BACKS POLICE REGIME AT STORMONT

EDITORIAL

FOLLOWING CALLAGHAN'S VISIT to Northern Ireland, the British press has given the impression that the problems of the Orange police state are being solved. Smiling Jim, it seems, made a swift tour of trouble spots, took a few decisive actions and set the province on the road to peace and prosperity.

Now it is said, if only 'men of good will on both sides come together to remove the barricades in the streets and the barricades in men's minds' all will be well.

But what has really been changed by Callaghan's visit and the 'decisive actions' of the British government? In reality very little.

Three weeks ago eight people were killed in Belfast and hundreds wounded when RUC, B-Specials and armed Orange mobs attacked the population of the Catholic ghettos.

Only desperate fighting from behind hastily-erected barricades prevented further murder. Fighting only ended when the British government, fearing popular reaction, particularly in Southern Ireland, surrounded the ghetto areas with troops.

But the basic problems that produced the explosion have hardly been touched.

Behind the lines of British troops, the repressive apparatus of the Stormont regime remains. The Special Powers Act, which permits imprisonment without trial at the whim of the government, has not been revoked.

UNCHANGED

The RUC is still armed. Although it is now under the overall command of the army, its personnel remain unchanged.

The B-Specials also retain their guns. In Derry and Belfast the guns are stored centrally, although no-one knows how to ensure that all the arms are handed in.

Nothing is being done at all to solve the social problems at the root of the crisis. With or without the RUC patrolling the streets of Bogside, a fifth of the male population still have to eke out a miserable existence on the dole.

Promised house building targets will not even keep up with the population increase and if the experience of the Labour government in Britain is anything to go by, such promises mean nothing.

Any attempt to introduce real reforms would weaken the control of the Orange rulers.

Although two thirds of the adult population of Northern Ireland are Protestant and vote for the Unionists, the majority of children in schools are Catholic. Given present social conditions, they will never become a voting majority because huge numbers are forced to emigrate to find jobs.

Any improvement in the conditions of Catholic workers would encourage them to stay in Ulster where they would

Basic problems untouched

undermine the built-in Unionist majority.

Northern Ireland cannot change while the Stormont regime lasts. The Unionist rulers can only keep the Six Counties as their private statelet, artificially cut off from the rest of Ireland, through systematically encouraging religious bigotry and hatred, by discriminating against and terrorising one third of the population and by letting whole areas rot economically.

As Callaghan made clear in a speech in Derry, the Labour government will not get rid of the Stormont regime.

The Catholic workers in Northern Ireland are keeping their barricades up. They can put no trust in any promises until Stormont is removed.

But to achieve that they will have to develop a strategy that is not merely defensive. Both to come to terms with their own problems and to encourage Protestant workers to follow their lead, they would have to attack not only immediate discrimination but its sources: the ownership of Northern Ireland's economic resources by the Orange ruling class and its English friends and the existence of the border that cuts Ireland into two statelets, each forced into a position of subordination to British imperialism.

The only way out is to fight for a united workers' republic.

Our task in Britain must be to campaign for the minimal demands:-

Disbanding of the B-Specials, disarming of the RUC, abolition of the Special Powers Act - and to expose the hypocrisy of Callaghan and Wilson.

Two nights of terror in Belfast

On the back page our Belfast correspondent, whose home and office were both burnt down during the Orange raids, tells what really happened in the Catholic areas.



BELFAST: a burnt-out Catholic area after the raids by armed Orange gangs. These threats will remain until the Stormont police regime is ended.

TUC rule changes are threat to rank and file

Nat Soper

PORTSMOUTH:- The annual Trades Union Congress is the trade union and labour bureaucracy at prayer. Sometimes one hears the discordant voice of an ordinary member from factory or mine or even, God help us, a shop steward, but the devotional atmosphere is seldom disturbed for long and the vapourings of the high priests of the General Council hang heavy on the air like incense.

Since the Special Congress at Croydon in March, when

they persuaded the unions that self-administered castration was preferable to swallowing Barbara Wilson's pill, the General Council have been preparing the patient for the operation.

Now they are ready to cut and they are spending this week at Portsmouth assuring the patient that the operation will be painless, that he will not lose any blood and that there will not even be any marked rise in the register of his voice.

The tools with which the operation is to be performed are revealed as a couple of sharp meat choppers in the form of amendments to Rules 11 and 12 of Congress Rules and Standing Orders.

The present Rule 11 requires affiliated organisations to keep the General Council informed on matters

arising with employers or with other unions. The obligation is now to be extended to cover unauthorised or unconstitutional stoppages of work - in short, unions are to clamp down on all spontaneous workshop action.

Under this same rule, the General Council may, in case of dispute, offer advice, but there is at present no specified penalty for disregarding this advice, beyond a report of the facts by the General Council to the next Congress. It is now proposed that any union, in circumstances as outlined, then refusing advice or the assistance offered, shall be reported to Congress or (most ominous) be dealt with by the General Council.

Clearly, this rule change effectively shifts authority from the individual union to the General Council, who will be in a position to suspend or expel the offending union from TUC membership.

to back page

In the space of a few years the General Electric Company has swallowed AEI and English Electric to become one of the most powerful monopolies in Britain. Under the dynamic lead of its managing director, Arnold Weinstock, GEC has brought into effect many of the cherished ideas of the Labour government - increased profits, rationalisation, closure of factories and the loss of thousands of jobs. The government has aided this process by generous donations to aid GEC's take-overs. As GEC workers in Liverpool plan a factory take-over from September 19 to stop further sackings, Socialist Worker begins a two-part analysis of the Weinstock Empire...



GEC-EE, the company formed in the past two years by the merger of the General Electric Company, Associated Electrical Industries and English Electric is extremely large.

In Britain, only ICI, Unilever, Shell and BP are larger, if we take annual sales as the yardstick. In terms of numbers employed, GEC-EE, with its 250,000 employees, is the largest in Britain.

On a world scale, it ranks among the top eight electrical companies, alongside such giants as General Electric (no connection with the Weinstock company) and IT & T of the US, Philips of Holland and Siemens of Germany. Its profits are enormous: in the year ending March 1969 the total pre-tax profit was more than £56 millions.

For next year £70 millions are predicted. This will work out, if it is achieved, at £4 per GEC worker per week.

But this £70 million profit will only be achieved by a complete re-organisation (usually called 'rationalisation') of the GEC, AEI and EE factories. This means more work studies, more speed-ups and more redundancies.

Weinstock wields the jobs axe, with the government at his elbow

by our Manchester industrial reporter

the mergers and their results, is built around the activities of Arnold Weinstock because, as the press have continually emphasised, he is the brains behind the creation of the largest electrical group in Britain.

In 1961, the year Arnold Weinstock joined its board of directors, GEC's profits were a mere £3½ million. In 1966 they were £19 million and GEC had been transformed, in the words of the Sunday Times, from a 'dying duck into the second most profitable electrical giant in the world'.

The Sunday Times - and every other paper for that matter - was convinced that this was all due to the new management methods of Arnold Weinstock.

In 1961 GEC took over Radio and Allied for a modest £8½ million. Weinstock, who was on the board of R & A, joined the GEC board and was put in charge of the company's radio, TV and domestic equipment activities. In 1963 he became managing director of GEC.

GEC was re-organised into definite divisions, each with its own chief who was directly responsible to Weinstock and was expected to ensure that a profit was made in that division. If the divisional managers didn't produce the goods, in other words the profits, then they received the order of the boot.

GEC boomed in the years

after Weinstock's appointment as managing director. Small companies on the periphery of GEC's activities, like Woods of Colchester, were completely absorbed.

Agreements were made with other firms like C A Parsons for participation in common areas. 'Rationalisation' led to the closure of three plants in the Midlands, while the Woods purchase had made 300 workers redundant at Witton, Birmingham.

But GEC and Arnold Weinstock had their eyes on higher and bigger things. Under capitalism, the rules of the game demand that a growing firm (growing in terms of profits) must continue to grow. But this was getting difficult for GEC. Because the British national market was not big enough, GEC would have to become more international if growth was to continue.

ADVANTAGES

Weinstock saw two possibilities: either a link with an overseas firm (such as the American IT & T) or a merger with a large British firm. The latter choice was preferable, and not only for patriotic reasons.

There could be great advantages in the amalgamation and rationalisation of research and development efforts and also in increasing their share in the British market in certain areas.

Which firm should GEC link up with? It was obvious - AEI. AEI was a bigger company than GEC. While GEC's sales just bubbled under £200 millions, AEI's were over £250 millions. However, in 1967

AEI's profits only came to £9.2 millions (about half of GEC's).

AEI's profits had been much the same since 1961 despite the fact that from 1964 reorganisation was being carried out on much the same lines as in GEC.

As far as GEC could see, the take-over would be a walk-over.

At government level, the atmosphere was also very favourable. Orders for power stations from the Central Electricity Generating Board were expected to drop off after 1969 and the government departments involved were keen for a re-organisation of the heavy electrical industry before this. So the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation was told to investigate all the possibilities for 'rationalisation'.

The IRC was set up by the government in 1966 to encourage mergers which would make British industry more competitive abroad. To oil the wheels of mergers the IRC is permitted to give cash in return for shares in the new company and very often it gets a place on the board, too.

Just like any other company the IRC is expected to show a profit on the £150 million the government gave it when it was formed. And it does quite nicely. English Electric received £25 million as an encouragement to merge and they were very grateful.

The board of the IRC consists mainly of high-level industrialists and at the time of the GEC-AEI merger, Sir Frank Kearton (chairman of Courtaulds) and Ronald Grierson (now head of the international division of GEC-EE) were the two leading lights. The IRC is one of the clearest examples of the way government and big business have come together in the interests of big business.

OPINION

When the IRC was given the job of investigating possible mergers in the electrical industry, Kearton and Grierson visited the big firms and sounded out their opinions. The opinion of GEC was given and to the point - Weinstock suggested a merger with AEI.

The IRC offered £25 million to help it along. But AEI were not so keen. In fact, AEI's head, Sir Joseph Latham, informed the IRC that AEI would accept any solution except a merger with GEC. All this was in July 1967.

Weinstock was not to be put off and, after getting IRC backing, GEC offered to take over AEI on 29 September 1967. The terms were generous. For every eight ordinary shares of AEI, GEC offered five of its own plus £10 in cash. The bid was worth a total of £120 million.

AEI's directors urged their shareholders to reject the bid. They promised higher dividends plus profits and co-operation deals with Thorn Electrical and the American Standard Telephone. AEI's directors also pointed to their rationalisation programme which had yet to bear monetary fruit: factories or sections closed at Nelson, Bristol and Coventry with nine more to



WEINSTOCK 'Sense of responsibility'

follow, 1700 made redundant, with another 7000 to be 'phased out'.

AEI predicted its profits for 1968 at £16 million and for 1969 at £20 million, on condition they weren't taken over. This was enough to swing a number of the larger shareholders over to their side. Imagine their annoyance when AEI's 1968 profits were announced - instead of a profit of £16 million, AEI lost £4 million!

GEC were forced to raise their bid twice: on 30 October to £150 million and on 2 November to £160 million.

REASON

By 10 November the battle was over and AEI surrendered. The Church Commissioners, with 858,000 shares in AEI and the same number in GEC, led the way, and the insurance companies and small shareholders followed this religious lead.

The basic reason for this merger, or any merger, is higher profits. The misery of the workers made redundant is unfortunate but necessary for the good of the shareholders.

In spite of the fact that in fields such as GPO contracts, the GEC-AEI combine would have nearly 50 per cent of the market, the merger was not referred to the Monopolies Commission. The marriage-broking of the IRC, it was decided, was not to be spoiled by the trust-busting of the Monopolies Commission.

As soon as the take-over was certain, the first rationalisation plan was announced. 500 employees at the AEI headquarters were to be out of a job by the following March.

And, with brilliant timing two days before Christmas, it was announced that the process control department of AEI at Harlow was to close and the work transferred to Leicester, putting more than 300 out of work. The Weinstock axe had made its first chop.

On 2 January 1968 Harlow workers declared an overtime ban and a meeting of 600 deplored the closure. Workers at

Leicester were asked to black any work transferred there and on 13 January a protest march was held in Harlow New Town. But the Harlow workers were defeated.

The axe was now to take a larger swipe. It had been obvious that telecommunication was the area where rationalisation was most to be expected. The plan was to get 50 per cent more output in AEI's telecommunication plants with 5000 fewer workers.

On 3 February the plans were announced. 6100 were to be sacked, all of them in London. The Woolwich telephone exchange plant (5500 workers) and the Sydenham telephone plant (400 workers) were to close along with two research labs employing a total of 200.

In parallel with the closures in the South, expansion was announced for the telecommunication plants in the development areas. Up to 4000 new jobs would be created in Scotland, the North East and South Wales.

For this service to the development areas GEC would get 30 bob a week per worker for a period up to two years, under the government's Development Grants scheme - a handout worth £400,000. In addition, the government would pay out £5 a week for each person being trained by GEC in the new job.

The response of the Woolwich workers was immediate. On February 8 there was a mass walk-out from the factory, followed by a protest march which ended at a local cinema. The meeting voted not to accept the closure even if new jobs were made available elsewhere.

Although GEC still declared that their decision was irrevocable, the actions of the Woolwich workers through pressure on their MPs and the Greater London Council brought about an air of reconciliation. GEC promised to halt dismissals for a month while a new tenant for the factory was being found.

LOBBY

The shortage of telephones at the time led the Woolwich stewards to suggest that the GPO should buy the factory to make their own, but this was not taken up.

Union representatives met government leaders and asked for industry to be brought to the Woolwich/Greenwich area. On 12 March there was a mass lobby of MPs. During all this time the main impetus of the campaign had been provided by the Woolwich workers themselves. The union leaders had, from the start, tried to get the workers to accept the closure.

The split between the wor-

8 February 1968 workers at AEI Woolwich staged a mass walk-out from the factory in protest at GEC plan to shut it. They waged a campaign but received little help from union officials and the plant closed at the end of the year.

kers and their came to a head when it became new tenant had the factory. workers defied and voted to keep open.

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SOCIALIST WORKER is the paper of International Socialism, a movement of revolutionary socialists who believe that the present form of society, with its blatant inequalities, its periodic crises, wars and racialist hysteria must be replaced by one based on a planned economy under full workers' control; those who produce the wealth should own and control the means of production. International Socialism is opposed to any incomes policy that seeks to restrict the wages of the workers in order to boost the profits of the employers. We unconditionally support all shop stewards and rank and file trade union members in their struggles for better wages and conditions and oppose all reactionary laws that threaten the liberties of the labour movement. We support all strikes in defence of workers' interests with the de-

WHERE WE STAND

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

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

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

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

NEXT WEEK
The lights go out at English Electric

Ceylon's LSSP — tea and too much sympathy?

WHAT CAN A revolutionary socialist do in a country like Ceylon? Such is the theme of Michael Kidron (July 3). Unfortunately he fails to go on and answer the question. Lanka Sama Samaj Party is called Ceylon's 'Trotskyist' party (without the inverted commas). Is Kidron ignorant of the fact that the LSSP, having gained a dominant influence in the Ceylonese working class, had already before 1963 become part of a 'United Left Front' which included the Ceylonese Communist Party and a middle-class grouping the MEP? This is a classic type of Popular Front — similar to a National Liberation Front or anti-Fascist Front — that is to say an alliance with bourgeois parties which have or

claim to have an influence on the working class or peasantry. Let us remember that the policy of the Bolsheviks and the Communist International was to create revolutionary alliances of the working class and middle class layers but under working-class leadership against the capitalists, its state and all its representatives. Does not Kidron know that the LSSP at the end of 1964 entered the coalition government of the SLFP-ULF under its prime minister Mrs Bandaranaike? What they intend to do now is not merely a repetition of the betrayals of 1964, which came after many years of reformism, among other things supporting the government of Mrs Bandaran-

LETTER

aike in 1956 and the budget and government programme in 1969. They intend to control tightly, if not take over, the largely foreign-run tea industry. They intend to do the same for foreign trade. In order to do these things they will have to purge the administration, the police, the judiciary and the army and to clamp down severe restrictions on travel by the local rich. Having described the perspectives of the LSSP, a reformist party which has no more to do with Bolshevism than H. Wilson has with

Socialism. Kidron's only comment on all this is an astonishing 'so far—so good'. In the underdeveloped world, as in the metropolitan countries, the task of a communist party is not to democratise or make the state behave more decently. The working class must destroy the capitalist state. It is Utopian to hope to cancel out more than a century of imperialist pillage by using the theory of primitive accumulation against the workers as one must in the limited context of the national state. We should leave this to the middle-class leaderships of the Castro-Mao type. In any case, labour productivity in Ceylon will stay weaker than in developed countries

Let us take the example of an exchange of two objects of equal usefulness — the product of Ceylon will represent many more hours of work than the one from Britain. Any economic exchange negotiated in the context of the world imperialist market, even if one considers the case of pseudo-economic independence as in China or Cuba, will be a loss of labour value for the ex-colony. If the Ceylonese produce the tea, the British will drink it! The problem for Ceylonese marxists is not to run away from imperialism on their own but to do everything possible so that the proletariat, and above all the proletariat of the advanced imperialist countries, will destroy this

system of exploitation. According to Kidron the LSSP is a 'working class party in theory'. What does this mean? The class struggle, even in the tropics, does not take place in theory with a workers' party in theory, which also makes mistakes in theory. A flesh and blood LSSP exists and the Ceylonese workers have been betrayed by this police force, which is hardly theoretical. The Ceylonese 'marxists' may very well prostrate themselves before Buddha but Kidron also prostrates himself before the LSSP, when he makes all possible excuses for their betrayals while expressing his deep regret. — V. B., Paris.

Illusions and utopianism on the 'Irish question'

ULSTER'S JACKBOOT TYRANNY — WHY THE BRITISH LEFT MUST BACK CATHOLIC WORKERS

by SEAN TREACY

THE GROWTH of the civil rights movement and the resistance to the Unionist regime in Northern Ireland has placed on revolutionary socialists in Britain both an immense responsibility and great opportunities. But it has also put to the test the relevance of their marxism.

It was inevitable that the capitalist press and the political establishment would present the struggle in Northern Ireland as essentially one of religion. This attitude is essential if the ruling class is to attempt to preserve the status quo in Ulster. Within such an analysis it is possible to present both sides in the fighting as 'equally irresponsible and sectarian.'

Needless to say, the Green Tories in Ireland have been prepared to add their mite to this distortion. Lynch and the Fianna Fail party in the South are willing to make propaganda capital out of the opposition of the Catholic workers to Unionism. They then suggest that the northern workers aspire to join the southern regime as the legitimate heirs of the struggles for national independence.

Socialists who oppose calls on the Free State to arm the northern workers have to understand the relationship of their regime to the independence struggle. Unfortunately the Left in Britain has not been unaffected by ruling-class propaganda. We have seen in recent weeks so-called Trotskyist journals like The Newsletter and The Militant resort to the most banal analyses of the Ulster struggle, which suggest that the class struggle is in some mysterious way quite unconnected with the battle of the republican workers against Orange unionism.

Political trap

It is this 'very British' lack of understanding of the national question in the Irish struggle which makes these Left wingers fall into the political trap set by the British ruling class. Thus The Newsletter bemoans the fact that the authorities want 'to take away the right to demonstrate of both Catholics and Protestants.'

No socialist can equate the right of the civil rights movement to march in protest against the jackboot tyranny of Unionism with the 'right' of Paisley fascists to mobilise for onslaughts on the Catholic community.

This same reasoning leads these Left wingers to sing the praises of interdenominational vigilante committees set up to 'establish peace, law and order.' By so doing they refuse to declare their solidarity with the fighting organisations of the anti-Unionist resistance movement.

The so-called vigilante committees are nothing more than a middle-class attempt to protect the property of the factory owners and traders. Yet The Newsletter backs this touching Quaker-like attempt at 'community reconciliation' rather than those who are fighting in the objective interests of both Catholic and Protestant workers — the civil rights and socialist republican groups.

The basic mistake made by these ultra lefts (who have a habit of ending up with such right-wing conclusions) is to confuse economics and politi-

ics. Of course, the objective class position of Protestant and Catholic workers is the same, even though Protestant workers are relatively privileged.

But in assessing any political situation marxists cannot ignore the subjective factors of political ideology. The false consciousness of large numbers of Protestant workers places them on the side of reaction, as it does with many white workers in the United States.

Revolutionary socialists cannot rest only to abstract propaganda or a utopian hope that before workers move into conflict with capitalism they will all have the same level of consciousness. Indeed, refusal by revolutionary socialists to back Catholic workers in Derry — even within the terms of the present struggles — is to retard the political evolution of Protestant workers.

In Ireland the urgent need now is the establishment of a revolutionary socialist political centre. Thousands of militant republican workers who are in the forefront of the anti-Unionist resistance are moving left.

The marxists can accelerate this process by having a clear, distinctive political identity. It is their duty to give the political lead which can help turn the struggle from a defensive one against extreme reaction to an offensive one against the bastions of capitalist power — north and south.

Irish marxists cannot therefore stand on the side lines of this so-called 'communalist' struggle. They have to be unconditionally republican. At the same time they have to draw the lessons from the political attitudes of the utterly discredited official middle-class republican movement.

The leadership of the IRA have been unable to back their militant sounding words with action. It is the duty of marxists working with republicans to make absolutely clear their marxist perspectives — even if this leads to an initial distance from the body of republican sympathisers. They have to work through the mass movements being set up in the north and the south (such as the trade-union based Citizens' Committees) for the opening up of a second front in the south.

Unity in action

The defeat of southern Green Toryism (including the seizure of British factories and estates in ransom against Irish lives in the north) would enable the beleaguered republican communities to break out of their political ghettos.

In Britain, marxists have a duty to be the most consistent supporters of solidarity action at all levels. This involves clarity of political line combined with persistent efforts for unity in action.

The Irish Civil Rights Solidarity Campaign is right to expose all those who would place the northern resistance movement into the hands of its 'friends' in Westminster.

Organisations like the Connolly Association and its first cousin, the British Communist Party, peddle illusions in the willingness and ability of the British Labour government to effectively remove the source of oppression and discrimination in Ulster — Unionist political power.

While there is a basis for a mass campaign for direct solidarity with the Northern Ireland civil rights movement (including the possibility of widespread industrial action) the Connolly Association parody Connolly's own political method in an attempt to channel this movement towards parliament. The CP's friends in the parliamentary Labour Party have taken little

interest in Irish matters until they saw the possibility of votes in it.

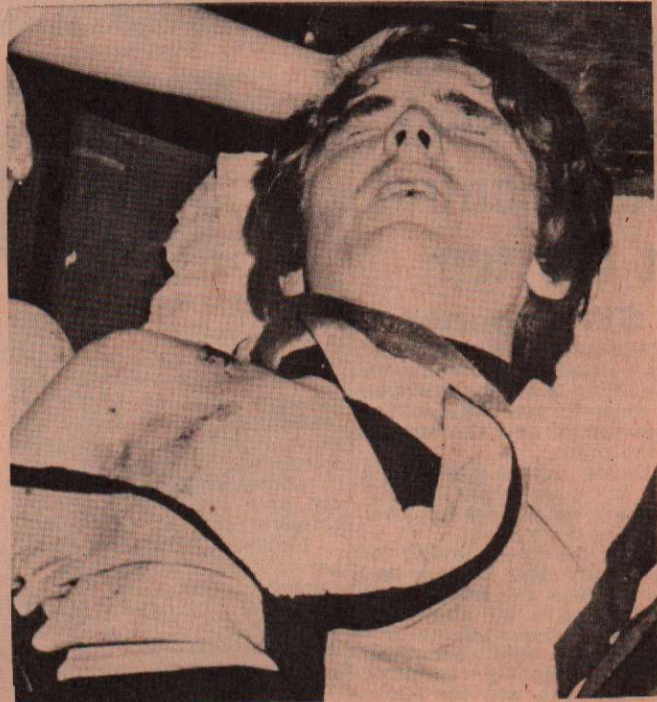
Most of the other Irish organisations in Britain either back the Southern Tory regime or the CP strategy for winning friends and influencing people in Wilson's cabinet — or both. The London branch of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association has managed to adopt

bits of republicanism (the least political bits), bits of the Irish club Fianna Fail strategy and bits of the CP parliamentary strategy.

Socialists and the ICRSC must not add to the political confusion which these groups have sown in Britain. They must press all sections of the British socialist and labour movement and all sect-

ions of the Irish civil rights movement to take an attitude to a united campaign, based on the organised strength of the British and Irish workers, to back the resistance movement in Northern Ireland.

This is an integral part of the struggle in Ireland to regroup revolutionaries in the fight for a Socialist Workers' Republic.



Shot in Derry — a victim of the RUC

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- DONCASTER George Yarrow 39 Jossey Lane Scawthorpe
- DURHAM Pam Law 16 Hartfield View
- EAST LONDON Bob Light 2 Oster Tee Southcoote Rd E17
- EDINBURGH Brian Lavery 41 East London Street
- ENFIELD Ian Birchall 109 Croyland Rd N9
- FULHAM Brian Rose 49 Schubert Road SW15
- GLASGOW North Ian Mooney 4 Dalcross Passage W1: South-S. Morris 4 Elphinstone St Glasgow SW1:

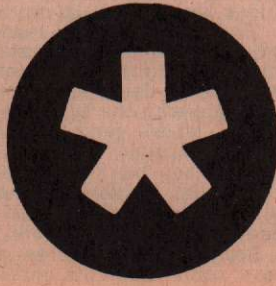
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- STOKE NEWINGTON Mike McGrath 28 Manor Road N15
- SWANSEA Dick Jones 19 Woodlands Tee
- TEESSIDE Phil Semp 72 Mersy Rd Redcar: Rob Clay 38 Pasture Lane Lazenby Teesside
- TOTTENHAM Laurie Flynn 374 High Road N17
- WANDSWORTH Mark Hutton 87 Broderick Road Wandsworth Common SW17
- WATFORD Paul Russell 61 Carpenders Avenue Carpenders Park
- WIGAN Ray Challinor 34 Whiteside Ave Hindley
- YORK Bob Looker 22 Hobgate
- VICTORIA Tony Dunne 14 Carlisle Mansions Carlisle Place SW1

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

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Send to 6 Cottons Gardens London E2



SUPPORT GROWS FOR MERSEY LAGGERS' STRIKE

SW Reporter

THE STRIKE of Merseyside thermal insulating engineers is now into its fourth month. The dispute centres round a claim by the lagggers for parity of rates with mechanical trades on all building site agreements.

An additional claim is for fair negotiated bonus schemes to be introduced on the basis of work-study measurement.

Sparks' union bosses seek more control at the top

SW Reporter

LEADERS of the Electricians' and Plumbers' Union are attempting to change the rules in order to give head office more control over the running of the union.

Ballot papers have gone out to more than 300,000 members which seek approval to amend three rules:

1. That the rule allowing for the appointment of rank and file trustees be dropped and the executive be allowed to nominate just one trustee.
2. That the rule concerning the final appeals committee be withdrawn and one allowing an appeals committee made up of members of the executive be inserted.
3. That all rules concerning the election of full-time officials be withdrawn so that in future all such officials should be appointed by the executive.

At the recent union conference, the delegates overwhelmingly rejected the rule change concerning trustees. And after they had tested the feelings of the conference on the appeals committee, the executive withdrew the proposed changes and said they would put all the amendments to a national ballot.

VIEWS

Only the views of the executive appear on the ballot papers. The opposing ideas heard at conference have not been put to the members.

But the executive's reasons for the amendments will not convince active union members. The leaders say the change on trustees is necessary in order to allow for the transfer of union funds and property — but surely this is an area where rank and file control would be welcome?

On the appeals committee, the executive wishes to appear as prosecutor, judge and jury. They want the right to appoint full-time officers because, they say, they are better able to decide who should represent the members.

But it is clear that appointed officials would owe their loyalty to the executive, not to the rank and file, who would have no control over them.

All EETU/PTU members who are concerned about union democracy and control by the rank and file should vote against the changes.

NOTICES

ISLINGTON ICRSC election fund-raising social. Duke of Wellington Balls Pond Rd 8 - 11 p.m. Booze, singing and dancing. (Buses 30, 277, 38).

IS STUDENT conference, 8 Cottons Gardens, E2 Friday Sept 5.

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The basic rate at the time when the dispute arose — 7s 10½d per hour — is certainly nothing to write home about, especially when combined with the 'stint' system of work.

Under this system, a man is given a set price for a section of work irrespective of adverse weather conditions, damaged materials or difficult access to the job. The wage taken home often bears no relationship to the effort put in by the worker.

The job is also dangerous to health, since breathing the asbestos dust is likely to lead to the illness known as asbestosis. Some managements are disgracefully lax in taking safety precautions and even fail to provide the obligatory medical check-ups.

In the past, bonus schemes have varied from employer to employer, and seem to be related to the prices tendered by them for the job contract. In other words, the workers are expected to subsidise their employers.

Cheap labour

And when employers plead poverty, an examination of the rates offered by them to other trades is sometimes revealing. Kitson's Insulation is currently advertising for sheet-metal workers at 12s an hour!

Another black mark against the employers is their misuse of apprentice lagggers, some of whom are not indentured. During the dispute they have been sent out to work, unsupervised, for the princely sum of 1s an hour.

If they refuse, the meagre carrot is replaced by the stick and threats are made to send them out of town. They are a source of super-cheap labour.

In past years gains of up to 9d an hour have been made on individual jobs by the lagggers. But managements have consistently failed to honour their promises to take these into consideration in future site agreements.

Old trick

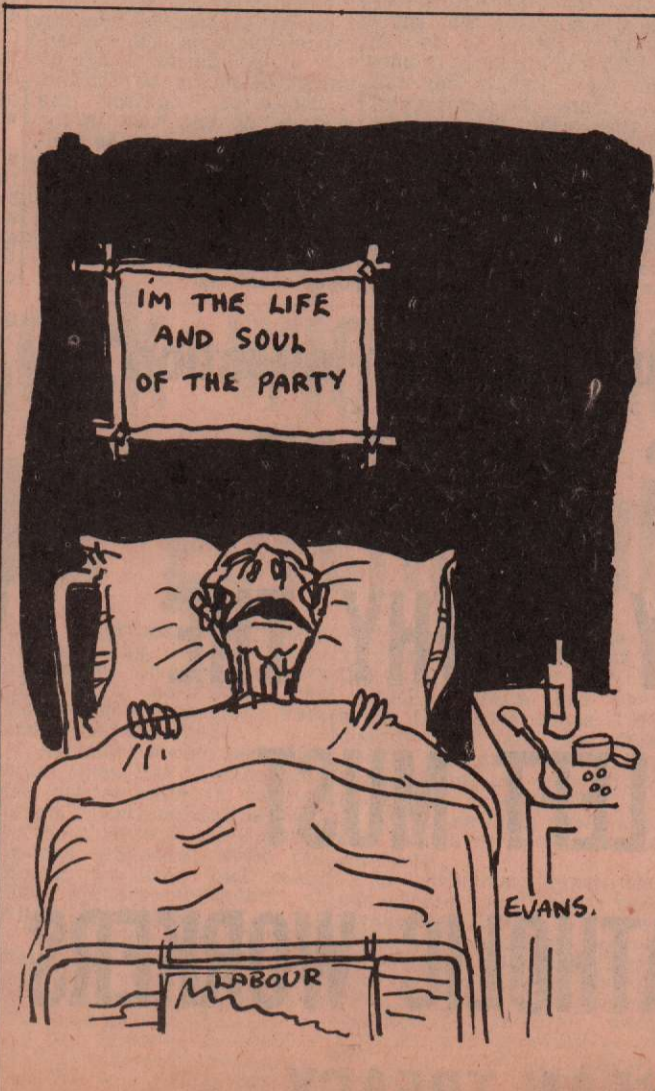
The employers are making much of the fact that lagggers, by working extremely long hours in appalling conditions, can sometimes manage to have higher average earnings than certain other trades on the site. This is an old trick which cleverly obscures the issue by referring to only one factor — the size of the pay packet — and ignoring the rest.

Official support from the men's union, the General and Municipal Workers is, predictably, not forthcoming, but unofficial support from other trades on the sites affected by the dispute is solid, despite claims to the contrary by the managements.

And the dispute is now being carried beyond the Merseyside region. Lagggers at Fleetwood ICI plants are on strike after being visited by representatives from the Merseyside strikers. The Glasgow Lagggers' Committee have promised total support by levy and by blacking sites on strike.

Determination to win is rising higher than ever. If solidarity with the lagggers can be kept up on all sites while the strike continues to spread, success must come before long.

Messages of support, offers of help and financial contributions should be sent to 143 Strike Committee (NUMGW), 162 Stanley Road, Liverpool 5.



Johnson Matthey strikers snub TUC enquiry

ENGINEERING WORKERS at the Johnson Matthey metal works in Enfield, North London, who have been on strike for three months for union recognition, turned down on Wednesday a TUC request for them to go back to work.

The strikers, all members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, downed tools in June when the management refused to allow AEF stewards to represent their members. The men were locked out and the management of the big combine (profits up 55 per cent in the first half of this year) used police and scab lorry drivers in an attempt to intimidate them.

The only union recognised at Enfield is the iron and steel association, BISAKTA. A TUC disputes commission said the AEF men should return to work and those who have left BISAKTA during the dispute must tear up their AEF cards. But the strikers are determined to stay out until they win their case.

TUC RULE CHANGES from page one

Rule 12 deals with disputes between unions. Many people, including a number on the Left, condemn demarcation disputes as foolish. Foolish they may be, but it is an equal folly to dismiss such disputes as frivolous.

For many workers they are deadly serious, involving their livelihood. Under capitalism, technological change is almost always the cause of demarcation problems.

The trade unions, created to defend the workers from the worst effects of capitalism but not to abolish it, fight each other in classic 19th century capitalist style in defence of group interests. The wider class interest is lost sight of in the process.

The proposed alteration to Rule 12 will not resolve the problem, it will intensify it. The position of the big general unions will be strengthened and that of the smaller unions weakened.

If the smaller unions step out of line, they will be dragged before the General Council, on which the general unions have a built-in control.

The bureaucratic leadership of the smaller unions will solve their personal problems by doing amalgamation deals with the big general unions, whose record of industrial militancy is deplorable. The basic problems will remain. Workers will have to find new means of resistance to capitalist pressure.

Some TUC delegates and many trade unionists, anxious

for a quiet life, will say that the new rules, like the old, will lie fallow in the TUC files.

Anyone who heard Wilson speak at the TUC and watched the reception given to his speech by the General Council must know that what is being advocated is capitalist efficiency — and capitalism can only be made efficient at the expense of the working class.

Harold Wilson has not deceived us. We must not be deceived ourselves.

Three-month pay battle by immigrant workers

A MILITANT STRIKE by coloured workers for better pay and conditions at a North London plastic moulding factory is now in its third month.

The firm, Punfield and Barstow, is one of a number of small factories on the Queensbury estate employing coloured workers at poor rates of pay. It was immigrant workers at the nearby Injection Moulders plant who staged a series of sit-in strikes last year to win union recognition.

At P & B, 43 machine operators and labourers, all members of the AEF, the engineering union, have maintained a picket line for 12

Orange murder gangs' terror in Belfast

ON THURSDAY, 14 August the Bogside defenders drove the RUC and B-Specials right back to their barracks in Strand Road. By 6 o'clock British troops had moved in and cleared Stormont's uniformed thugs off the streets of Derry. The Bogside had won. The Unionist regime's attempt to conquer them had failed.

To compensate his bigoted followers for this defeat, Chichester-Clark called out the B-Specials. By early evening the Shankill Road was filling up with this Orange militia carrying sub-machine guns. Mobs of Unionist extremists surged around openly brandishing weapons and some were given guns by the B-men.

That night the mobs surged down the side-streets leading to the Falls, wrecking and burning Catholic houses. They were escorted by the B-men. Most of the frightened Catholics fled, but some put up a brave but futile resistance with stones and petrol-bombs. The Specials opened fire with sub-machine guns.

As the night wore on gangs of Specials, on foot or in private cars, roamed the Falls, firing into houses and burning and looting shops. They were followed by RUC armoured cars with heavy machine guns strafing streets and houses. Snipers mounted on high buildings raked the Falls and Springfield roads. Only after all this were a few guns produced and the invaders driven back.

Fired into crowd

The results next morning: Rows of burnt out houses in Conway Street, Cupar Street and Dover Street, four people killed and 127 wounded. Ardoyne had also been invaded on Thursday night and one man was killed in his own home. In Armagh, a line of specials had fired without warning into a crowd and killed one man and wounded two. In Belfast the invasion of Catholic ghettos by Unionist mobs aided by B-Specials and RUC in armoured cars, and well-positioned snipers, all pointed to a co-ordinated attack.

Chichester-Clark spoke at Stormont and gave the official version. It was an IRA insurrection which had to be put down. Apparently the IRA had burnt down Catholic houses and spent the night shooting into homes on the Falls Road. Clark had not a word of sympathy for the innocent victims his private army had murdered.

On Friday the terror continued. Bombay Street and Kashmir Road were burnt down and sprayed with bullets in broad daylight. A youth was killed. Snipers continued firing into the Falls and Ardoyne. But by evening the Falls was barricaded off and the British troops were on the streets. That night the Falls was quiet. So much for Clark's 'IRA insurrection'.

Meanwhile women and children were moving out of Ardoyne. There were desperate appeals for troops there as well. Military head quarters announced they couldn't go in without permission from Stormont. Stormont refused. They said all was quiet on the Crumlin and well under control. Another night of terror was necessary to satisfy their followers.

That night the mobs of Unionist extremists backed by Specials and the RUC invaded Ardoyne. They burnt Brookfield Street, parts of Hooker Street, Butler Street and the front of the Crumlin Road. Another man was killed and many wounded. On Saturday the troops moved in and all was quiet.

Fanatical gang

For two nights Catholic areas in Belfast underwent a reign of terror. Eight people were killed — one a nine years old child — and hundreds wounded. Five hundred houses and many pubs were burnt and thousands rendered homeless.

Chichester-Clark knows what the Specials are like. His father was one of their first commanders. He knew that to loose this fanatical gang of Orange thugs on Belfast would lead to wholesale murder and destruction.

Why did Clark unleash this murder gang? The Unionist Party have preached arrogance and hatred for so long that they could not afford to admit defeat in the Bogside. To appease the blood lust of their supporters they had to compensate them for this disappointment. What better compensation than licence to pillage and burn the Catholic ghettos with the Specials at their back to help them? The Unionists have incited pogroms before this to serve their selfish ends. Why not another one? A few lives had to be sacrificed for the good of the Unionist regime.

The people to blame for the two nights of terror in Belfast are not the hate-crazed mobs or even the brutal fanatical Specials. The guilty ones are the Unionist bosses who by their bigoted, lying speeches have stirred the mobs up to this pitch of hate and then turned them loose, the cruel and cynical liars like Chichester-Clark who, having caused the murder and bloodshed of Thursday night, can blame it on the IRA and stir up yet more hate.

The blood of those killed and wounded on Thursday and Friday is on the hands of Chichester-Clark, Faulkner, Porter and the rest. They are the real murderers.

Stan Bishop

The firm, aided by police, have made continual attempts to break the strike and several pickets and supporters have been arrested.

A scab labour firm has supplied workers at 21s an hour — 11s for the scabs and 10s for the agency — but AEF officials have intervened to stop this. But a number of scabs are still working and they underline the racist nature of the strike, for they are predominantly white and all the strikers are Indians

and Pakistanis. The management has so far offered 7s 3d an hour basic rate, an increase of 8d, and an improved bonus rate of 3s an hour.

If the strikers win they may well spur on other workers on the trading estate to rebel against their conditions.

A joint workers' committee covering the entire estate may be formed in the near future. Such a committee could use the power of all the factories against individual firms.

Pickets and money are urgently required. Donations to: M. Bashir, 5 Clayton Avenue, Wembley, Middx.