

Workers Power

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ENGINEERS MUST WIN

ON THE FACE OF IT the claim for an £80 a week minimum wage and a 39 hour working week put in by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) seems neither excessive nor significant. Most engineers, particularly in the bigger firms, stand to gain very little from it. Yet, this claim has resulted in the outbreak of a major battle in the class war. The Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF) despite some recent and important signs of wavering, have entrenched themselves to face a prolonged period of struggle. The unions, under the right wing leadership of Duffy and Boyd, have been forced to mobilise their troops to avoid an unacceptably humiliating defeat.

The real significance of the Confed action has only become apparent as the stubbornness of the bosses aroused resentment and sympathy for action amongst the two million workers involved in the two day strikes. This is now a vital test case for the whole ruling class. If the engineering workers succeed they will open the doors to a flood of wage claims in other industries which will challenge the employers' attempts to foist the burden of the economic crisis onto the backs of workers. For the working class then, a victory for the engineers would seriously dent the bosses' ability to hold down wages.

For the ruling class the resistance to a shorter working week and a higher minimum wage is crucial, since both of these would, if conceded, tighten the screws on profitability. They are fully aware that an inch given to the engineers could all too easily result in a mile being taken by the rest of the working class. In addition to this a resounding defeat for the claim would have the effect of demobilising, for future battles, the whole of the AUEW. This would create favourable conditions for the Tories to bring in their anti-union laws.

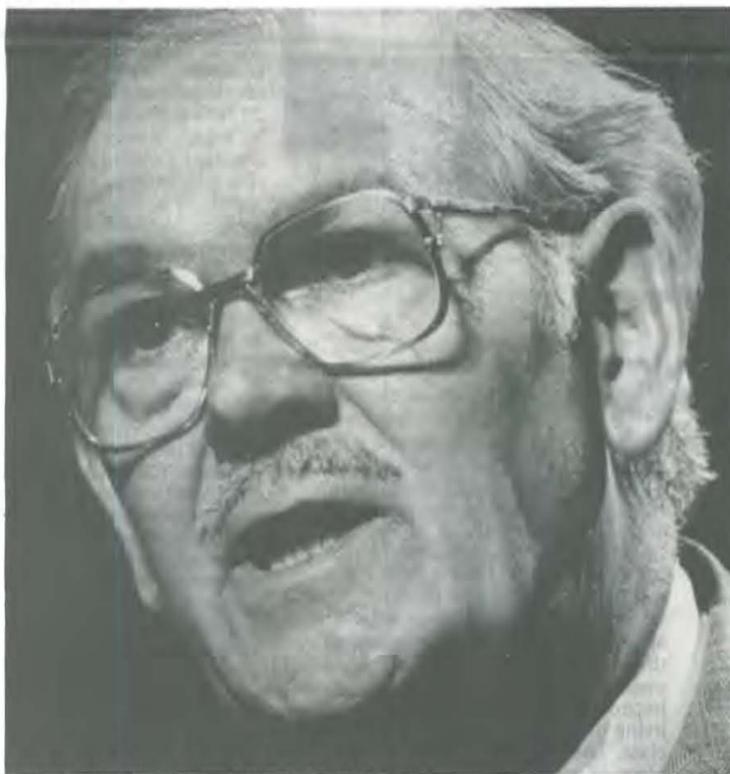
Jobs

The bosses would also use a victory to step up their job-slashing restructuring of the industry. Last year 42,000 engineers were made redundant, and, since the current dispute began, the employers have announced plans to axe a further 6,500 jobs. For both armies in this particular battle the stakes are high.

The engineers must win. To do this the tactics of the dispute need to be drastically overhauled. The sluggish leadership of Duffy and co., consisting of actions escalated at a

them, they announced their determination not to be shaken from their course and are plodding on with the two day strikes.

These tactics are a recipe for demoralisation and defeat. They will not force the bosses' hand. They will strain the patience, the willingness to fight and trade union loyalty, of the membership to breaking point. Against such tactics



Terry Duffy: Heads he wins, tails you lose?

speed that would embarrass a snail, is incapable of such an overhaul.

Frodsham, the full time organiser for the EEF, has thrown down the gauntlet of the lock-out. He threatened that it was, '...impossible to continue operating economically and we have the choice of closing indefinitely or resuming normal working.' Rolls Royce, Raleigh in Birmingham and Nottingham, Dialoys in South Wales and GEC Traction in Sheffield have all taken Frodsham at his word and implemented lock-outs or lay-offs. The response to this from the Confed has been appalling. Instead of calling for occupations to beat the lock-outs and extension of the strike action in support of

militants within the 'unofficial' leadership of the dispute must campaign for an indefinite, all-out strike. Shop stewards' committees, district committees and combines, while demanding an official all-out strike, should follow the example of GEC workers at Liverpool, Stafford and Lincoln who are striking over domestic wage claims. ALL local claims inside the industry should be brought forward and fought for now. This would give resonance and purpose to the call for an ALL-OUT STRIKE NOW.

Although such a strike would then begin to meet the needs of those workers who have not yet been locked out it does not answer the needs of those who have. The

LEYLAND THREAT

The Leyland bosses are all set for a decisive trial of strength in the next months. They are preparing to force through their plans for 40,000 redundancies and resist the 26% pay claim.

Over the last two years Leyland workers have been subject to a barrage of propaganda, from the press and their bosses. Any success in defending living standards, conditions and trade union bargaining strength, they have been repeatedly told, will be paid for by closures and sackings. Either sacrifice conditions and pay or the Government will withdraw financial backing to Leyland.

The organisation and the self-confidence of the Leyland workers has suffered serious set backs at the hands of Edwardes, and Ryder before him. Edwardes knows this all too well. The introduction of Measured Day Work and Ryders participation scheme have taken their toll on the independence and strength of the shop steward organisation. The piecework system—albeit at the price of acute sectionalism—kept the shop floor organisation on its toes through a regular bargaining process over prices and conditions. It encouraged a relatively close and open relationship between the shop floor members and their stewards. The introduction of Measured Day Work in the early 1970's and the inauguration of a hierarchy of joint participation committees has changed that. Edwardes, aided and abetted by the Trade Union leaders, has encouraged the creation of full time union committee members separated from the shop floor, in order to undermine the role and

strength of the shop steward.

The impact of the scheme can be seen in the level of involvement and attendance at shop stewards meetings. At the giant Longbridge works, for example, only an average of 20 to 30 stewards, out of 800, attend the monthly shop stewards meetings. Only those stewards politically committed to organising and strengthening shop floor workers bother to hold shop meetings to involve and inform their members. In most Leyland plants it was taken for granted by the convenors and senior stewards that mass meetings were not to be held to organise for, and explain, the Confed. claim—an instruction was supposed to be sufficient to convince the members. The absence of shop and plant meetings as a regular feature of shop floor organisation has served to isolate the militants and leave the vast bulk of the members at the mercy of the lies and smears of the bosses press.

The impact of Ryder's participation web can be seen at every level of Trade Union organisation in Leyland. Wage bargaining has now been centralised on a national scale in the hands of full time national officials who are firmly ensconced in the top echelons of participation with management. The Combine Committee has organised no fight against the Edwardes plan to date. From Longbridge Convenor and CP member Derek Robinson to the right wing Eddie McGarry Convenor of Canley, not a finger was lifted to stop Edwardes axing 3500 jobs at Speke.

(Contd. p.2)

strike tactic can be just as effective, more so in the case of a lock-out, 'all-in' just as much as 'all-out'.

Sit-ins

Against the fruitless unpaid work-ins, workers who have been locked out should take over their factories, and strike from the inside. As the occupation at GEC Traction, Sheffield, by 600 workers, shows, such action can bind a workforce together, increase the effectiveness of the strike and put paid to all attempts at scabbing. Such sit-ins will face the legal obstacle of the Criminal Trespass Act as well as physical harassment by the police thugs and the Special Patrol Group. But these problems should in no way be taken as a signal for retreat. Occupied factories can and should be turned into working class bastions, defended not only by those inside the plant but also by the enlisted support of the local Labour movement. Legal niceties will not prevent the bosses from carrying through their attempt to smash the union—nor should they deter the workers from resisting those attempts. All such occupied factories must be organised in an exemplary fashion. They should be defended by well-disciplined groups of workers and should be run by democratically elected and accountable factory committees, acting as focal points for the engineering strike as a whole, and publishing propaganda aimed at spreading the action.

But militants must face the fact that opposition to such tactics will come from their own leaders, as well as from the open class enemy. After suffering a defeat at last June's National Executive where they attempted to accept the EEF's

offer of £70 minimum wage, Duffy and Boyd are trying to steer a course that will see them come out on top whatever the final result. The weak and largely discredited Broad Left in the union have been unable to mount a challenge to these manoeuvres. Duffy is edging towards a 'Heads I win, tails you lose' position against the members. If he hatches a deal with the EEF, short on the claim, it will amount to a defeat that could lead to cynicism and even an exodus from the union—although it would allow Duffy and Boyd to maintain their positions in next Summer's AUEW elections.

Equally, if the employers are forced, by the militant action of the rank and file, to make an improved offer, then the leaders will claim the credit for the 'victory'.

Campaign

An urgent task is to campaign to take the union out of the hands of these dangerous misleaders. It will be through energetic and democratic organisation, combined with a political offensive against the reformist policies of Duffy, shown to be bankrupt in the present dispute, that this can be achieved. At a rank and file level this means that stewards', district and combine committees should link up and co-ordinate the struggle. The first step towards this would be a conference of shop stewards, which could be called by any of the strong regions of the AUEW, to assess the state of play in the dispute and draw up plans on how to take it forward. Such a conference should elect a national shop stewards' action committee to lead and co-ordinate the struggle. Occupation and strike committees must be given official support, as must all

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Occupations can beat the Lock-outs

ENGINEERS MUST WIN

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claims that are brought forward during the dispute. Duffy has refused to fight for the TUC to actively support the strike. He has consoled himself and reassured his members with the knowledge that 'the TUC are solidly behind our claim.' But, unless it is turned into action such pious support will be little solace to striking engineers. One of the tasks of the shop stewards' conference must be to demand that an organisation embracing 12 million workers should be forced to act in support of the Confed claim.

Duffy and Boyd will not sit idly by while militants grapple for control of the strike from them. They will fight for their position even if it means sacrificing the AUEW to the EEF. Unless the initiative is seized by the rank and file the claim stands little chance of being won. The EEF, traditionally a strong arm member of the ruling class, has faltered in the face of this strike. GEC boss Weinstock, has even declared his intention to 'quietly' withdraw from the Federation after the strike. It would be dangerous to

exaggerate but it is clear that serious disunity exists in the ranks of the enemy. This chance should not be missed. The unity of the Confed will be strengthened as that of the EEF crumbles. Now is the time to move into all-out strike action, and, wherever possible, sit in strikes. The bosses may be wobbling but they have not yet collapsed. A well aimed militant blow is needed to finish them off and win the claim. Let's deliver it now!

by Mark Hoskisson

THE GATHERING momentum of the Tory offensive marks a new phase in the class struggle. It will put to a sharp test ALL the traditional organisations of the working class and their leaderships from factory to union executive level.

At stake is whether the working class can mobilise its strength to meet the attack spearheaded by a Government determined to use the courts, the Whitehall bureaucracy and police violence to win. The employers and their organisations are preparing their financial and strategic resources for new, hard-nosed tactics — mass sackings, lay-offs and lock-outs.

Straightjacket

The TUC has moved quickly to organise a passive protest campaign against the attacks. They say they want to mobilise public opinion and pressure the Tories into a U-turn. This will inevitably lead to defeat. It is the straight jacket designed to keep the bureaucrats on top and the rank and file militants under control. Remembering the mass battles of 1972-4 they have vowed, 'Never again!'

Vic Feather did not lead a fight against Heath. He was pushed into it largely by militants grouped around the CP-led Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions (LCDTU). But the CP and their Broad Left allies are a dwindling force compared with the early 70's. Having totally relied on Scanlon and Jones they were left in disarray when these gentlemen defected to wage restraint.

The 'Back to the Sixties' militant trade unionism of the SWP and Rank and File Organising Committee cannot present a real alternative to the goals and the leadership of the movement as a whole. Their obsession with the 'little things' actually disarms militants who are daily confronted with big political questions. Our Government has a lethal logic of protest politics now and a five year wait until Benn can put all to rights again.

For militants the mirage of a Bennite 'Left alternative' Lab-Struggles necessary to defeat Thatcher cannot be restricted to any of these formulas. The direct action needed—the workplace occupation, the mass solidarity strike and flying pickets all pose the need for a CLASS AGAINST CLASS confrontation with the bosses and the Tories. Separated and section-

al battles will never defeat the bosses' attacks. To coordinate them and forge unity in struggle, COUNCILS OF ACTION must be built to link representatives of Trade Union bodies capable of mobilising their members. To this end we call on the LCDTU and the RFOC to organise an open democratic delegate conference to prepare for the mass actions ahead.

General strike

The ultimate logic of the class wide resistance is class wide direct action, the GENERAL STRIKE. It is the central weapon to break the anti-Union legal shackles. We demand NOW that the TUC call a General Strike the moment those are put before Parliament. Its starting point can, however, be mass action against cuts, solidarity action on closures or a combined wages offensive — particularly if the Tories invoke a statutory wage freeze, an option they have NEVER ruled out.

A general strike, by paralysing society will inevitably pose the question of, 'Who Should Rule?' The working class must prepare to answer this question — through its Councils of Action — with a resounding, 'We will!'.

The preparation for power requires a new leadership — an alternative to the Duffy's Scargill's Callaghan's and Benn's. Only a revolutionary party can provide that leadership. It must be built in the struggles opening before us.

workers power

editorial

Mine to ba

A 65% claim by the Miners, an anti-union Tory Government, an economic crisis; these are the ingredients for a confrontation that could have Thatcher and Co. down, if not out for the count. This thought cannot be far from the minds of hundreds of thousands of activists in the labour movement. But to wait for a re-run of 1972 or 1974 would be a dangerous thing indeed.

Despite the size of the claim, despite the demand for a November settlement date, little or nothing has been done to prepare for action when the NCB gives the thumbs down. Thus the strategic importance of the early date looks like being squandered by a leadership which certainly does not want to repeat the explosion of 1972.

In the last five years important events have changed the political and industrial map. The productivity deals engineered by Gormley and Energy Minister Benn, have broken the solid unity of '72 to '74, based on a serious fight for the full

by Andy Smith

national claim. The bloody handiwork of Messrs Gormley and Benn can be seen in the rise in deaths, 40 in 1977-63 in 1978. A living wage should be paid to the bosses pockets, not at the expense of miners lives. The

fighting power of the NUM has also been weakened. The productivity deal sets pit against pit, and region against region. These deals must be scrapped with consolidation into the national rate. As a result the NUM played no role in fighting Callaghan's

Miners' action in 1972 escaped bureaucratic control



of low profit or loss making sections of capital will be shed and the rate of profit pushed up. Deductions from profit by taxes on capital to maintain social and welfare services will be drastically cut back in order to boost the profit rate. Government spending is to be cut by £4,000 million and lending restricted by a 14% interest rate. Profitable sectors of nationalised industries like telecommunications will be hived off and the unprofitable sectors, like ship building and steel, scaled down to a minimum.

The Tories look to the expanding dole queues to 'moderate' wage claims. The Treasury is predicting an official unemployment total in excess of two million. This, they hope, will enable real wages to be held down while output is hiked up.

The burden of unemployment will fall unequally on women workers. The 9½ million women employed are due to bear far more than their share of redundancies. Cuts in welfare provision, in schools and nursery places and attacks on abortion rights will force women back into the home to take up as unpaid work the burden dropped by the state. Job cuts in the social services where women workers are a majority will add to this.

Brunt

The immigrant workforce will also bear the brunt of the attack with additional harshness. Thatcher's new immigration regulations are designed to harass, intimidate and turn into scapegoats this section of workers.

The Tories economic policies have a single aim—raise the rate of exploitation, and a common method—to weaken and divide the workers' organisation. But the Tories and the CBI know that 'natural market forces' will not do the trick alone.

The Tories will use the law of the land to make sure that the workers do not use their trade union s to violate the laws of economics. In Joseph's own words (5th February 1979) "Unless the present imbalance of union bargaining power is redressed it would be impossible to start the huge task of national economic recovery." The answer is "an appropriate framework of law for the trade unions."

Prior's working paper on picketing is aimed at restricting the

legality conferred on it by the trade unions and Labour Relations Act 1974 Section 15.

- i) to those who are party to a trade dispute which occurs during the picketing and
- ii) to the picketing which takes place at their own place of work."

Outlaw

These provisions would outlaw picketing from other work in the same or allied industries, sympathetic action and the picketing of suppliers or users of black goods. The miners picketing stations would be illegal. Such actions would be liable to court action by employers leading to injunctions, fines and imprisonment for defying them.

The Tories propose to restrict immunity originally granted by the 1906 Trades Disputes Act or to restrict it to breach of contract of employment. No immunity exist if a commercial contract is broken.

Prior's second paper deals with the closed shop. His proposals are more vicious than the Industrial Relations Act of 1971. That Act demanded a majority of the constituency or two thirds of those voting before an 'agency shop' could exist. Prior wants an 'overwhelming majority'. He proposes that the creation of a closed shop be subject not to an agreement between unions and management—but to be subject to a Code of Practice drawn up by ACAS which will fix the percentage of the workforce considered to be 'overwhelming' who should be 'responsible for arranging and conducting the

The immunities for work will not join the union are extended to all those "with a deeply personal conviction against a member of any trade union soever" or "—to being a member of a particular union." Such provisions would be able to sue the union management jointly for unfair dismissal.

The move to make funds available for secret ballots was combined with a legal onslaught. This has already been opened by Lord Denning in the Provincial case, where he required that of the entire membership of the union be taken before industrial a

SLUMP POLITICANS

The method in their 'madness'

The papers of the official labour movement, including those of the 'Left Wing', vie with each other in painting the Tories as wanton vandals driven on by sheer hatred for working people and suffering from mental derangement. Benn accuses the Tories of being revolutionaries because they are destroying the system of Attlee and Churchill. Meanwhile the dignitaries of the labour movement loudly predict that the facts of economic life will force the Tories to make a U-turn and return to sensible labourite consensus politics.

It is a shallow and totally misleading picture of the situation in which British capitalism finds itself, and of what the bosses representatives are trying to do.

World capitalism is about to enter another serious recession only four years after its last (74-75). The Bank of England predicts a slowing of growth in demand in the main industrial economies to ½% between 1979 and 1980. This may well prove optimistic. The US economy, which accounts for 40% of the world's total industrial production (as against Britain's 5% share) is staggering into recession with its annual inflation rate soaring at 11.8%, a currency sharply declining in value and a record trade deficit of over \$4 billion.

The monetary system built on the dollar as stable world currency collapsed in 1971 and has not been replaced. As the US loses ground to its German and Japanese rivals so the US recession will be transmitted,

via monetary instability, to the other major economies. Germany and Japan are likely to weather the storm with less difficulty. Britain, on the other hand, is likely to suffer more severely in what The Economist calls 'an English speaking slump.'

The recession is nothing to do with Arab oil price increases, as the popular press tries to present it. Its roots lie in the very nature of capitalism as a system of competitive production for profit on the market. The oil price increases of 1973 and 1979 were results of, not causes of, recession in the world economy.

Lifeblood

The weakness of Britain's capitalists can be measured by the lifeblood of the system—profit. While many firms can show a rising mass of profit, the rate of profit (percentage return for every pound invested) is falling drastically especially in manufacturing industry. In the period 1960-64 it stood at 10.9%, in 1970-72 at 6.8% and in 1977 at 3.2% according to the Bank of England. This must be borne in mind against the simplistic argument of many socialists and trade unionists that 'the money's in the kitty'. It may be, but what gives the British bosses nightmares is that profit rates are not high enough to solve their uncompetitiveness relative to their German and Japanese rivals.

This does not mean accepting the bosses (and Healey and

Callaghan's) arguments that workers must tighten their belts to improve the viability of 'Great Britain Ltd'. Raising the profit rate for British bosses means raising the rate of exploitation of British workers. British capitalism will never again reach the pre-eminence that enabled her bosses to afford to yield and maintain significant improvements in the standard of living of a large section of the working class. The Tory offensive is not a piece of mindless vindictiveness, it is an attempt at a long term redistribution of wealth and power away from working people and their families.

Thatcher and her right hand man Joseph are monetarists. They see the problems of modern capitalism as being caused by increased money supply in excess of increases of profitable production during the post-war period. Above all they blame the state spending, anti-inflation, full employment measures associated with the economist Keynes, for interfering with the natural harmony of the market. In short they are slump politicians who look to unhampered sharp periodic crises to destroy unprofitable sectors of the economy, hold down wages and discipline the workforce.

They aim to deliberately intensify the effects of the recession in what the US journal Business Week calls "a calculated dose of recession". By tolerating bankruptcies the burden

s must move little stations

anti-working class policies. The union abandoned its proud position won in '72 and '74 in the vanguard of the working class. But against Thatcher's offensive the working class needs the miners, and the miners need the solidarity of all other sections of workers. Special case pleas, always reactionary, will only isolate the miners. Their economic position, given the long term oil crisis gives them tremendous strength. A vigorous struggle—including mass and flying pickets could help bust the Tory laws before they reach the statute book and rally other sections to take direct action on similar lines.

The Tories, as employer in the public sector will want to set an example to all employers. The miners own 'example' can likewise encourage and weld together public and private sector workers. An important way to win this support and solidarity is to tackle a key question which will be used by the Government against workers trying to emulate the miners. Inflation stands at nearly 16% and will go higher. It is not caused by wage claims. It does erode them and there are huge sections not as strong as the miners who cannot as yet hope to keep abreast of it

could be called, even for a section of that union. These statutory ballots funded by the state opens the unions, their rules and practices, to government and court interference. Further proposed alterations to the detriment of unions include the raising of the period from 26 weeks to a year after which an employee can appeal to an Industrial Tribunal for unfair dismissal, the cutting of benefits to the families of strikers and the charging of unions with their upkeep, the non provision of special benefit offices during strikes.

The Tory offensive is a class offensive dictated by their class needs—the massive increase in the rate of profit, the restructuring of British capitalism. It will be carried through with the full weaponry of the class war—the Courts (fines and imprisonment), the State Bureaucracy (cuts in services, welfare, jobs, benefits, etc), the police (including the murderous Special Patrol Group), the spying network massively increased over the past ten years, and the army.

Whining

It is no use whining about the Tories as class warriors. It is useless protesting to them. Karl Marx did not invent the class war—the bosses did. The working class, if it wants even to defend itself, must fight this war and fight to win. To do this the crippling illusions of a community of interest with the bosses, in 'our firm', 'our industry', 'our nation' must be shed. Furthermore, the related illusion that there can be a return to the 50's and 60's, to a 'viability' and 'profitability' that restores and improves working class conditions needs to be dispelled in struggle. The sacrifices that these Gods and Idols of the bosses class demand are the same misery and humiliation that they demanded in the 20's and 30's. We must not pay them. The alternative is a society freed of the profit drive, with planned production for human need, but there is no peaceful or gradual road to this. The way leads through the class struggle and if we are to win it must lead to the expropriation of the bosses, the smashing of their state apparatus of repression, and the creation of a workers state.

Dave Stocking

by their own actions and claims alone. The miners should add to their claim an escalator clause—1% rise in wages for every 1% rise in the cost of living. The Tories new rigged index, like the old Retail Price Index grossly underestimates the rise in a workers cost of living. The latter must be calculated by committees of union members, and housewives. Further, miners should add the demand for a legally binding national minimum wage of £85 per week—the base line of their own claim. These demands—important to the miners will act as a banner to rally the rest of the class against the Tories.

The will to win such demands certainly exists among the miners. As Arthur Scargill commented: "There is a demonstration in the coalfields of support for this claim that there has not been since 1974." (Sheffield Morning Telegraph 25.9.79).

Manoeuvres

But there are already manoeuvres afoot to ensure that strike action is avoided. Asked about the possibilities of industrial action and strikes Joe Gormley said: "We are miles away from any such thing. At the moment we stand by the claim, flexibility comes much later." (Sheffield Morning Telegraph 25.9.79). For 'flexibility' read - sell out! Anxious to emulate his old friend Scanlon, Gormley is firmly set on the same road to the House of Lords, or at worst a knighthood. To achieve his personal ambitions Gormley will need to stay the rest of his presidential term and carry on working in the 'national interest' against the 240,000 miners he's supposed to represent.

The Tories know that they have reliable allies in the shape of Gormley and Daley. Already they have fended off a call for industrial action preparations on the national executive by 13 votes to 10. This has given them the time to prepare a 'flexibility' programme that will be sellable to the members. This would probably include bargaining over fringe benefits such as compensation payments, pay for bathing time, pensions and so on. Added to these, a pay rise of 20% will be the sort of deal, short on the original claim by a full 45%, that Gormley will be going for.

Preparation to defeat such a sell out should begin amongst rank and file miners now. The militant statements of Scargill, whose eyes are more firmly fixed on winning the NUM presidency than on winning the claim, and Mick McGahey, the Communist Party member and leader of the Scottish miners, must be put to the test by calls for action. After his firm statement that 'We must win' (Sheffield Morning Telegraph 25.9.79) Scargill must be called upon to devote union resources to devising a strategy to do just that. This would include, as it did in 1969 in Yorkshire, organising and spreading strike action immediately the NCB turn down the claim. The 'flying pickets', which won the struggle in 1972, must be deployed at all the key factories and depots as soon as strike action starts. As the Tories try to outlaw secondary picketing miners should be aware that their tactics will be fought by police thuggery. Defence of pickets is therefore

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All the major convenors sabotaged the tool room workers when they twice took on Edwardes and his main backers, Callaghan's Labour Government. Edwardes, doubtless well pleased with his divide and rule tactics has now turned on his stunned collaborators.

The craven McGarry who took on work on the TR7 transferred from Speke has now discovered, to his horror, that Edwardes latest package includes the closing of Canley too.

Already there are 30,000 less employees in Leyland than there were in 1977. Edwardes now plans to cut another 40,000 jobs in two stages (one of 25,000 the other of 15,000) in a bid that will mean the sack for one third of the production workers in Leyland's car plants. Under the spur of Industry Minister Keith Joseph this is Edwardes plan to boost sagging profit margins offset crippling loan and interest repayments and thus improve the "competitiveness" of Leyland. Like the Tory Government that stands behind him, Edwardes calculates that the spectre of the dole queue, and the failure of the unions to organise to halt redundancies will force workers to sell their jobs, their wages and conditions to the bosses.

Leyland workers can place no trust in the Combine Committee or the hastily formed Leyland Emergency Trade Union Committee to lead the fight against Edwardes for them.

Convenors sabotaged toolroom strikes



PHOTO: Dave Evans (IFL)

essential. But the likelihood of Scargill drawing up such battle plans is slim indeed. His record in the past demonstrates the sort of role he could play. As we pointed out in *Workers Power* No 3 it was Scargill who, throughout the 1974 strike, defended the bureaucratic organisation of the action, the limiting of the pickets etc. Summing up the differences between 1972 and 1974 Scargill said: "We didn't need any more than 6 or 8 pickets at the contested points because the unions . . . responded magnificently." (WP No 3 January 1979).

Substitute

Cosy deals between bureaucrats became a substitute for the mass action and involvement of thousands of workers. Such a strategy will spell disaster this year. Scargill has already declared his intention to win the NUM presidency; he topped the poll at the NUM conference for a seat on the TUC General Council. He will be less willing to jeopardise these positions by rushing into strike action—he has a career to think of now! He must therefore be checked by a force more powerful if his vacillation is not to cause confusion amongst the militants who currently support him.

It will be action in the pits that will determine both the outcome of the struggle and the actions of lefts such as Scargill. Mass meetings must be held immediately in every pit during worktime so that workers from each shift can attend. The Sunday

The first meeting of the emergency committee declared predictably that the Edwardes proposals were "not acceptable". But no plan of action was drawn up to defeat the proposals. Instead all plants resisting redundancies were offered the support of this committee of full time officials and convenors.

But all the convenors and officials have offered in terms of resistance is a demonstration to Leyland headquarters on October 9th.

Spineless

The plant and national officers have not refused to fight simply because they are weak and spineless individuals. The problem is that they completely share Edwardes commitment to making Leyland viable i.e. profitable within the framework of national and international capitalist markets. CP leader Robinson is committed to maintaining a productive Leyland company.

Robinson would like more of the benefits of increased productivity to go to the workers than does Edwardes. But he shares a common premise that has led him to positively support Edwardes' plans for "putting Leyland on its feet."

For the Leyland bosses participation has meant the possibility of forcing the senior stewards to take responsibility for bosses decisions as shared positions of workers and management.

Lodge meetings which suffer from low turn outs, will be no replacement for pithead mass meetings.

Special action committees for each mine, with representatives from each shift and section, must be elected to organise for strikes, picketing and to link up with all other workers struggling against the bosses and Tories. All actions of such committees must be made official by the Executive.

If Scargill stands with such action then so much the better, but the miners cannot afford to wait—action quickly will be essential so that the November settlement date can be taken advantage of.

If the most powerful section of the British working class, the miners, are to take on and defeat Thatcher then it will be by the rank and file taking the initiative out of the hands of company director Gormley. Whilst Scargill's every fighting action against the Tories or against Gormley's betrayals must be supported, the problems of the miners will not be solved by enthroning King Arthur at the head of the NUM.

The union needs fundamental democratic change from each pit upwards to build a fighting union. It needs a new leadership built by winning the best militants in the coming struggle to the programme of leading the working class not merely to the overthrow of Thatcher & Co but to the destruction of the system that spawned her. This new leadership will be forged in action against the bosses' agents in the labour movement whether they wear a 'left' or a 'moderate' label.

LEYLAND

Wherever such agreement was not on the cards the bosses resort to immediately and with no consultation to ultimatum and confrontation. T&G national officer Hawley, speaking after the emergency committee meeting was horrified that the bosses had not given him sufficient information and 'detail'. So too was the newly aggrieved darling of the participation machinery—Eddie McGarry.

The Leyland pay claim has emerged from the closed enclave of officials, convenors and shop stewards. No shop steward meetings have been held to prepare and hammer out the claim. No mass meetings have been held to develop, explain and justify the claim that has been presented and prepare the shop floor for action to win it. Unless militants act to change this immediately the Leyland bosses, backed by an adoring array of local and national papers, will sow divisions and dismay amongst a membership which has seen their leadership accept redundancies and speed up and not armed them to defend their wages against Edwardes concerted attack.

Time is short. Leyland stewards and militants must act now to break off all collaboration with a management intent on sacking one third of the workforce. This must mean breaking off the participation arrangements at every level now.

In re-establishing the independence of the shop floor organisation the fight must be waged for a national Leyland shop stewards conference to mobilise resistance to all the sackings and to ensure that the national pay claim is an adequate catch up claim and guarantees that inflation will not erode the value of the claim when it is won. A battle plan must be prepared by an action committee democratically responsible for the shop floor leadership for occupations to resist all redundancies, for solidarity stoppages and guaranteed refusal to collaborate with all management plans to re-allocate or increase the workload. WORK SHARING UNDER SHOP STEWARDS CONTROL, WITH NO LOSS OF PAY, must be the workers answer to the Tory plans to run down British Leyland. Only such a programme can save the threatened jobs.

Members

If militants are to carry their members with them they must organise the widest shop floor democracy to do it. Shop meetings, mass meetings, must take the key decisions. They must prepare for these with shop bulletins—with a factory paper, if possible, to counter Edwardes lies and the union leaders treachery. Negative resistance to redundancies is not enough. An alternative road of struggle has to be posed to capitalist viability plans whether they come from Edwardes, Moss Evans, or Robinson. Militants must raise the demands for the full nationalisation of the car and components industry with no compensation, for workers control over hiring and firing, manning levels, hours worked, conditions etc.

They must also raise within this battle, as part of the battle against the whole Tory offensive, the need for working class political power. For that alone within the framework of a planned economy can assure success for these measures. These goals may seem distant or 'unrealistic' to Leyland workers today, but the 'realism' of the Evans-Robinson-McGarry road will turn to the cynicism and apathy of the dole queue for tens of thousands and to plummeting real wages for the minority who keep their jobs.

Dave Hughes

workers power

Cuts: Test for 'Lefts'

THE ACTIONS of 'Red' Lambeth Council in South London show what can be expected of even the most left talking councillors when they are faced with the need to translate words into action. From being the showpiece of the 'revolutionary' Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, Lambeth Labour leader Ted Knight 'inexplicably' turned into an axeman when it came to the Tory demand to cut expenditure by 5%.

Having been forced to rescind the cuts by a conference of four local Labour Parties, Knight now defends his original position with the novel argument that the Labour group was going to use the cuts to show, 'What the Tory cuts mean in real terms for people living in Lambeth'! (Socialist Organiser)

The rescinding of the cuts is a short term face saver. Having borrowed money to pay for the short-fall in council finances, the Labour group intends to recoup it through a massive rate rise next year. This has already led to a backlash among the local middle class. A Tory-led campaign against rises has begun and could gain support from the working class who will also be hard hit by the higher rates.

Instead of fighting the Tories head on by refusing to either make cuts or raise rates, Knight has played right into their hands. In an attempt to find a way out of his dilemma 'on legal grounds', Knight was forced to cancel the Council meeting at which the vote on cuts was to have been taken.

The law will not provide 'Red Ted' with any escape. In the face of this he can only throw up his arms in despair and lament that, 'The fault lies with the Government'. (Streatham News 28.9.79)

protests can't stop axe

STRIKE TO STOP CUTS!

By John Lindfield

The full impact of the Tories' pledge to cut public spending was brought home last month with the announcement of a string of hospital closures. The suspension of the Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark Area Health Authority (AHA) showed that the Tories meant business. Each day sees another hospital added to the casualty list. The comment of Education Minister, Carlisle, that, "Clearly at a time of falling school rolls, we cannot justify the retention of the present number of teachers and schools", shows that the Tory attack is on all social services.

Thatcher's first budget laid the basis for the attacks by reducing the Rate Support Grant by 5% which amounted to £385 million. Plans were approved by the Cabinet (some described as 'alarming' by Health Minister Patrick Jenkins) to top £4000 million off public spending, and Ministers scurried back to their Departments to draw up lists of where the axe should fall. Proposals from the Tory controlled Association of County Councils (ACC) give us a glimpse of what these cuts will mean. They want to be released from the legal obligation to provide education to 5 year old children, raise the school entry age to 6 and lower the leaving age to 15. They also want to cut school transport, milk and school meals. These cuts would be consolidated by introducing 'morning only' schooling.

Workers are being softened up for cuts such as these by a right wing ideological offensive. Jenkins has launched an attack on women's rights, dressed up as pious sermonising, "I am convinced that a mother is the best person to look after her young children," he said. This is just a thinly disguised attempt to drive women back into the home to care for the young, the sick and the old - whose needs have been sacrificed for the sake of profit.

The Tories are only carrying out a policy started under the Labour Government. Thatcher's aim, like Callaghan's, is to restore profitability to an increasingly crisis ridden economy. To do this the bosses need to cut back not only on wages but also on the social wage - the public services.

While Labour slashed public spending at the behest of the international bankers, the trade union and Labour Party 'lefts' contented themselves with muted protests. Under the Tories they are more strident. However their perspective remains one of carefully controlled protest tactics aimed at changing Thatcher's mind. This was summed up by Moss Evans who declared that the aim of the TGWU's campaign to defend the welfare state was to, 'persuade this Govern-

ment to do a U-turn and recognise that it has a positive obligation to look after people's health and welfare.'

The most 'militant' response to date has come from COHSE who threatened 'occupations' to fight hospital closures. But, a spokesperson for the Executive was quick to qualify this by pointing out that this was not to be seen as a campaign of industrial action against the cuts. (Guardian 28.9.79).

Even if COHSE are pushed into militant action by their members hospital occupations can have only a limited effect. Isolated work-ins will not put a halt to the cuts unless they are backed up by solidarity strike action across both the public and private sectors.

priorities

The strategy of protest will lead existing campaigns against the cuts to disaster. For the Tories the cuts are a necessary part of their chosen method for restructuring British capitalism. For them there are no 'alternative strategies'.

The trade union bureaucrats accept the priorities of the Tories, that capitalism needs to be saved, they are, therefore, really only arguing over the scale of cuts that need to be carried through.

It is the acceptance of capitalism that leads to their useless tactics. Revolutionaries have to counterpose to these tactics, a **determined campaign of direct action, involving a refusal to cover for vacancies, an overtime ban and strike action against the cuts.** Such a campaign would have to draw in workers in the manufacturing industries as well as those in the threatened services.

The willingness to take such action does exist amongst the rank and file. On Friday 28th. September NUPE workers struck against the closure of a London hospital and on the same day 1600 local government workers struck in Liverpool in support of 6 members of the CPSA suspended

for taking action against the cuts in a local Social Security office. But this fighting spirit is being channelled into the dead end of protest lobbies, by the local and national trade union bureaucrats. In the North East, South Yorkshire, the Midlands and Manchester 'official' campaigns have been set into motion. The efforts of such campaigns are being centred on building for a Lobby of Parliament on November 8th called by the Local Government sub committee of the Labour Party National Executive Committee. The aim of this lobby is to convince Heseltine of his 'folly'. In Nottingham miners who were willing to defend the health service have been spending their time collecting 19,000 signatures for a petition and writing a letter to Patrick Jenkin. The problem with all such campaigns, held in tight rein by the officials, is that they will not stop the cuts. The Tories cannot be convinced - they can only be fought.

No real opposition has been apparent amongst the 300 Labour councils who were elected to represent the interests of the working class in localities. Roy Hattersley, launching the party's 'autumn offensive' against the cuts, threatened the Tories with a campaign of 'public meetings, marches and demonstrations' together with a "detailed monitoring of the cuts." (Guardian 14.9.79). Just in case this was not enough to set Thatcher quaking in her shoes Hattersley added sternly that the Labour Party would lend its support to any councils putting up the rates rather than cutting the services. As if this wasn't enough this fearless crusader against the Tories then proceeded to declare that the Labour Party was "wholly against any unlawful action, in practice as well as in principle." The Labour Party leadership wants no more embarrassing Clay Cross millstones around its neck. For all its limitations the Clay Cross struggle against Heath's Housing Finance Act showed the potential strength of a united resistance by a council, trade unions and community to oppose Tory attacks.

action

Workers' Power argues for a battle against the cuts based on mobilising the whole of the local Labour movement to pressurise councils to



More than marches will be needed to stop the cuts.

preserve services by overspending and over employing. Action committees should be set up to bring together delegates from the public sector unions, shop stewards' committees, trades councils and union branches, with the aim of enlisting the maximum support from workers outside the service industries.

Such committees should be open to local Labour Parties and tenants' organisations, estate groups etc. They should build for demonstrations in worktime and prepare for all-out strike action in defence of services.

To carry out a policy of overspending a council would have to cancel the ruinous interest charges that it pays to the financial institutions, and fight for the nationalisation of the banks and finance houses. As a basis for such a fight the action committees and councils would have to link together with other such bodies in other boroughs. Only such a united resistance can decisively defeat the Tory attacks.

collision

Such policies would immediately set the Councils on a collision course with the 'law', the Tories and the Labour and Trade Union leaders. A refusal to pay back the banks or implement the cuts would see the Tories either try to jail councillors or replace them with special 'commissioners'. It is only the organised strength of workers in industry, hitting at the bosses most vulnerable point, their pockets, that can answer such attacks. But such a strategy will be denounced as 'ultra left' by the vast majority of labour councillors. They prefer the option of implementing the cuts 'under protest', while cautioning their supporters to wait for some stronger section to take on the Tories, or even to wait for a returned Labour Government!

It will only be pressure from a mobilised rank and file that will force councils into a fight. To call

on Labour Councils, as the 'Militant' group have done in Lambeth, to take the lead will be a recipe for inertia. While we would place demands on Labour councils we recognise openly that their vacillation, their desire to retreat rather than offend the sacred cow of legality, can only be checked by the power of workers involved in direct action, direct battle with the bosses and their central and municipal executors.

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