

THE WORKER



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NO WAGE FREEZE NO UNEMPLOYMENT

IT'S ROUGH AND NO JUSTICE !

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There may be somebody in this country who is not yet convinced that the Labour Government's only prescription for the economic crisis is a vicious attack on the standard of living of workers by pegging wages, while prices, rents, fares and every other charge on the people continue to rise. If so, Wilson will have cleared this matter up in his August 20th address to the nation, on the perils of inflation.

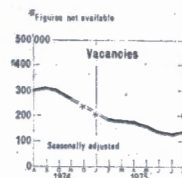
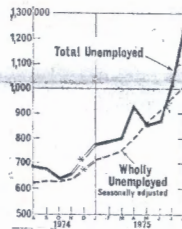
For Wilson, swollen profits are not inflation. Soaring prices are not inflation. Only wage rises, by which workers attempt to defend their standard of living, are inflationary.

What is the sanction he invokes against workers who try to fight back? More unemployment. That's the same warning cry we have heard ever since Labour returned to office. Unless a Labour Government is elected, there will be unemployment. Unless Britain joins the Common Market, there will be unemployment. And all the time unemployment has gone on rising, passing the million mark months ago and still getting worse with every month that goes by. If the workers do not knuckle under and accept wage cuts, unemployment will go on soaring. And if they do, unemployment will also go on soaring.

Calls for reform within the capitalist system - import controls, a check on overseas investment and stronger doses of state aid - are no substitute for the necessity of the working class to destroy capitalism itself.

There is no way in the world you can make capitalism work for the working class. The only thing workers can do with capitalism is smash it and establish socialism in its place.

To hell with Wilson's £6 halter around the necks of workers. To hell with this lick-spittle Government on its knees before the great god profit! To hell with capitalism!



SAVE THE MOTORCYCLE INDUSTRY

The treatment to which the British motorcycle industry has been subjected at the hands of asset strippers, various holding companies, and different government policies illustrates the fate of manufacturing industry in Britain as a whole.

Before 1939 there were over thirty major motorcycle manufacturers in Britain - a whole alphabet of names from AJS to Zenith. The British motorcycle industry led the world - technically, in design, in competition, in production methods, in volume of production and in all-round craftsmanship. But British capitalism wasn't interested. Small firms were deliberately wound up - their assets sold off by holding companies. The excuse - the advent of the 'mini' or 'Japanese machines were better'; the real reason - quick profits made in the industry post-war could be much more lucratively invested elsewhere. Manganese Bronze Holdings, owners of NVT, who were hailed as 'saviours' of the motorcycle industry only two years ago, have themselves been responsible for the folding up of AMC (Matchless, AJS and the original Norton company), the closure of Royal Enfields and the death of Velocettes.

The fight facing the NVT workers is the fight for the right to work. But it is not only this. It is the fight to save what little remains of what was once a marvellous industry - it is the fight to preserve what capitalism would so shortsightedly and wastefully discard, it is the counter-attack against the destruction of craftsmanship and industry, that is taking place' throughout Britain. It is the fight to destroy the destroyer itself -

Capitalism.

Nowhere recently has the callousness - the idiocy - the rottenness of government policy towards industry been so clearly illustrated as in Eric Varley's announcement on July 30th in which he outlined the decision to cut off further funds to the motorcycle group NVT.

Welcomed unanimously by the press as a 'hard-headed business-like decision', Mr. Varley's move was even more severe than that originally predicted.

Workers at the Wolverhampton plant of Norton Villiers took immediate action to save their jobs on announcement of the plant closure. They cut short their holidays and occupied the factory, mounting a 24-hour picket to prevent the removal of motorcycles and machinery.

The timing of the government's refusal to provide further finance appears well suited to the owners of NVT, Manganese Bronze Holdings. This follows lengthy management-government negotiations, dividing one plant against another with the view to closing the industry and channelling the capital into more profitable avenues.

The pickets are well organised on a rota and are determined to fight. "We'll stay here till the plant is reopened." They are confident of support from fellow workers. "Support will come from other factories in the area, especially the sixty or so supplying components to NVT where a further 3000 jobs are threatened. At the last mass meeting plans were made for further action and to win more support from Meriden and Small Heath where a further 1200 jobs are now in jeopardy.

TUC CONFERENCE

The Trade Union Congress, meeting in Blackpool, must decide whether to reject utterly all forms of restraint, compulsory or so-called voluntary, on its member unions and their members, or to continue its policy of class collaboration.

Having tried to handcuff the working class to one fraud, the social contract, the TUC generals now try another fraud, the guaranteed £6 rise. And for this £6 they will fight to the bitter end - even, it seems, will they mount the barricades for it. But for £6 and one penny they will lift not one finger.

Already the stage is being set for mock battles which would make the undignified scrambles for Heath's threshold payments appear positively revolutionary by comparison. To take action for what the bourgeois state says you may

have is to degrade class struggle to the level of greyhounds chasing a mechanical hare.

The elaborate side-show now being staged by Lenny the Lion about this miserable £6 has but one aim - to con the working class into thinking that £6 is something desirable, something to be fought for. Yet all the world knows that £6 is a quite arbitrary figure, it has no meaning in real terms except it draws a line - as well at £5 or at £7 - where by State decree we all halt and seek to advance no further.

Those at Congress should remember that the TUC has no brief to regulate in whatever way the claims which its members may decide to make upon their own employers. No decision, at Blackpool, Brighton, Barchester or anywhere else, can alter this.



The Motor Vehicle Industry - Capitalism vs Socialism

In the House of Commons Expenditure Committee's Report on the Motor Vehicle Industry, there is a vehement attack on the Ryder proposals, already accepted by the Government, for rescuing Leyland's with public money provided mainly by taxes on the working class. The Ryder team is accused of accepting without criticism Leyland's own schemes for future development based on a vast outlay of 'Government' money which is 'treated like confetti'.

The Report argues that unless a much higher level of output and sales can be achieved than Ryder forecasts, the labour force would have to be reduced by 50,000; that sales in Europe would have to be doubled at a time when the European market is already saturated; that model strategy as to emphasis on quality or volume needs reconsidering along with the lumping together in one industrial combine of both commercial and private vehicles.

The motor vehicle industry is a peculiarly apt example of the nature of capitalism and what is wrong with it today. It pioneered assembly-line methods of production which tried to take the skill out of industrial work and reduce workers to automata; it has taken the lead in trying to force on workers, for its own long-term profit assessments, the three-year-package-deal type of wage bargain with fringe benefits and phoney 'participation' to sweeten the pill; but most of all it shows the utter irrationality and chaos of production for profit rather than to meet people's needs, when whole economies are tied to the mad increase in the production of something whose social cost has already become an intolerable burden.

Investment and Class Struggle

The general context of the Expenditure Committee's investigation of the British motor vehicle industry is the problem of "low investment and outdated plant" which puts Britain at the bottom of the league in terms of capital equipment and, hence, value output per worker. The Report does not, of course, consider why investment is so low.

The major factor in the falling rate of profit over the whole range of industry, making one section after another - coal, transport, steel, shipbuilding and now aircraft and motor cars - too unprofitable for other than public financing, is the organised resistance of the working class to increased exploitation. Britain's position at the bottom of the investment table is also the measure of the extent to which British workers, not so much in the motor car industry alone but over the whole industrial field, have fought harder and more skilfully directed guerrilla struggles against employers.

But that class struggle within the capitalist system is no longer enough. If capitalism has proved incapable of directing funds where they ought to go, the answer for the working class is simple: get rid of capitalism. If our money is going to be used to revitalise the motor vehicle or any other industry, we have to demand that we control British industry. We are not interested in 'participating' in the running of it - only in running it ourselves on a socialist basis.

Committee meets Socialist

The Expenditure Committee, naturally, was only concerned with how to make the motor vehicle industry a more substantial prop of the capitalist system. But in its deliberations it summoned one person who spoke for the working class in the voice of socialism. In the exchanges between Committee members and Reg Birch, who was called on May 6th to represent the AUEW, one gets the true flavour of the irreconcilable interests of capitalists and workers.

Asked if, in his experience, industrial disputes in the industry were mainly brought about "for political purposes or were mainly due to working conditions and levels of remuneration", Reg Birch replied: "Perhaps you can see a separation. It seems to me that economics is the root of politics."

To the question of whether the British motor vehicle industry had a worse record with respect to disputes and their effect on production

than other countries, Reg Birch pointed out that, "Hitler never did really make the Volkswagen."

"But don't American unions discipline their members more than yours do and doesn't that help to ensure a better finish on their cars?" Reg Birch: "I thought it was the United States which invented built-in obsolescence and everybody else aped it thereafter in terms of manufacture."

"Mr Birch, would you not agree that there must be a case for your unions in some way disciplining your members to help the industry over the hurdle of improving the finish of British cars?"

Reg Birch: "I do not accept what you say as correct, that the British motor car; if there is such a thing, is inferior to any other - unless it is being said on a tundra or in South Africa or somewhere the vehicle is not built for. I think if we talk about the manufacture of motor cars anywhere, in the United States, in Germany, Italy or France, they are all very bad and indifferent products. As an engineering commodity they are practically obsolete anyhow, and all that ever happens is just 'badge' engineering which has nothing to do with the quality of the commodity. It is such an archaic product. It is wasteful and, in terms of its development, there has been practically none since the day of its invention."

"Mr Birch, as your union is a factor of major importance in the motor vehicle industry, can you define, as you see it, the scope of your union's responsibility to the industry and within it?"

Reg Birch: "In elementary terms it is the maintenance and improvement of wages and working conditions. You ask if we are not concerned with the size of the potential market, with productivity and investment. We have had to teach ourselves to be concerned with such things and we have built up a research department and we share our knowledge with conferees in other countries. On the question of whether the market contracts or expands I do not think our union believes it can control that factor... Our function is to see that our people eat and pay rent and are able to work, so we are against unemployment, irrespective of the state of the market. Although we may be inhibited by our knowledge of the external factors, we nevertheless do not go in fear to employers and say there must be improvement for our people."

On competition with Japan (which does not seem to have suffered very much in motor sales from not belonging to the EEC!) Reg Birch pointed out that the car industry was a completely new industry there after the war. "Equally, one can say that following the destruction in Europe, particularly in West Germany, the whole industry was rehabilitated. Ours has been perpetually in decline. It is no fresh discovery to find that others take us apace and pass us, as with the textile industry in Britain and its decline as Indian textile manufactures rise. It is new there. That is what we want here - something new."

And that is what can only be developed when workers have thrown off the shackles of moribund capitalism - something new!



REALITY IN RHODESIA

While the press has been concerned with an absurd half hour meeting in a railway carriage suspended high above a river exactly half way between two countries, the reality of Smith's racist regime in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) is that for more than five years now ZANU has been mobilising a liberation army and winning popular support for its understanding that 'armed struggle is the only way out for Zimbabwe'.

Smith knows this too and whatever verbal concessions he may make about exploratory talks on the possibility of a constitutional conference under pressure from South Africa and Britain, he is desperately preparing to try to crush African resistance by force. Students at the only Rhodesian university have had their exemption from military service withdrawn and concessions on military service to white immigrants have been reduced in spite of the need to attract as many whites as possible to swell the ranks of the quarter of a million whites in Zimbabwe compared with six and a half million blacks. The Government is calling up 40 to 50 year old police reservists and the defence budget over the past year has been increased by 23½ per cent with another million ear-marked for 'protecting' villages in the border area.

This 'village protection' is our old friend the 'strategic hamlet' policy from imperialist aggressive wars against Malaya and Vietnam. Typical is an incident on June 12th, reported by a Roman Catholic Church commission, when 50 villagers of Karima in the north-east were summoned to a night meeting by three armed civilians pretending to be guerrillas. Security forces opened fire on the unarmed villagers and among those massacred were five children and eight women.

Joshua Nkomo can go to South Africa and talk with that great friend of the African people, Vorster, about the future of Zimbabwe; Muzorewa can seek British support in connection with a constitutional conference; but the reality was stated by ZANU guerrilla fighter, Malindi, addressing a meeting in London on August 8th:

"How can we put any faith in a constitutional conference with people who are not human beings? We send a few of our people to ANC meetings, but when it comes to 'umbrella' organisations it must be realised that we are fighting now in a hot dry land - not sheltering from rain. ZANU in its entirety is concerned with nothing but armed struggle."

"We in ZANU believe the British Government forfeited any right to a say in the affairs of Zimbabwe when in 1965 it assured Smith in advance that no force would be used to restrain him. Any British minister who comes to our country is wasting his time."

Reminding the audience of the relationship between the struggle of the people in the Portuguese African colonies and the struggle of the people in Portugal itself, Malindi said: "We fight shoulder to shoulder with our comrades in Azania and those belonging to SWAPO. As Zimbabwe becomes free we hope the British people will free themselves also."

ANY OFFERS ?

Firms should sell profits to their workers, says Michael Heseltine, Shadow Industry Minister. An 'intellectual' advertising campaign should be launched, and workers must be taught to 'buy' capitalism rather than as you might choose one soap powder over another. Workers can look forward to some interesting commercials.

Housing Standards

'Unreasonably high' standards in new building and conversions in the private sector should not be enforced - that's the latest recommendation from the Labour Government to deal with London's housing crisis.

The idea is even being floated that Councils should encourage their tenants to take in lodgers, and multiple occupation is suggested to solve the problem of homelessness. London is being turned into the biggest slum in Europe while bricks pile up and building workers are unemployed.

EPPING FOREST THREAT

The beautiful and ancient Epping Forest is again being threatened by the capitalist planners. It is almost the only expanse of open countryside available to North-East Londoners for peace and relaxation. For many London children it is 'the country' which they visit on day trips from school. Already it has been carved up by roads and encroached upon by badly planned urban sprawl. The new threat comes from the proposed route through it of the M16, part of the outer motorway ring which is wrecking the rapidly diminishing natural countryside around London. Once destroyed it will take centuries to restore.

There has been a public outcry, but the Government tries to fob us off with a Public Inquiry. They want us to fight on their terms - the Department of the Environment lawyers, the British

Road Federation and the Road Haulage Association. When we fight by their rules and on their ground how can we win?

The final pickings from this vandalism will go to the property developers. Exploiting the high price of housing in London these vermin are already attempting to 'infill' the spaces left in the green belt by this road. This greedy act of grabbing more land instead of reclaiming derelict city centres will recreate the very problem this road was supposedly to remove - people living near heavy traffic.

Concern for the quality of life of our class has never been a noticeable priority for the bourgeoisie. The swift transport of heavy goods and commercial goods has more bearing on profits. Under capitalism, when every area of our lives is under attack from the ruling class, our houses

and open spaces can never be safe from their greed.

Test of Civil Liberties

At the very time when the campaign by friends and neighbours of George Davis to get his case reviewed has called into question police methods, the Police Federation is calling for even tougher laws and more punitive measures.

They want extra powers for magistrates, those amateurs of the world of justice, to impose more severe punishments. This is, of course, a call for people to be subject to graver penalties without trial by jury. It is in line with the Metropolitan Police Commissioner's recent plea for a reduction in jury trials.

Thirty Years of Epic Struggle

On September 2nd 1975, when the people of Vietnam, north and south of the 17th Parallel, celebrate their national day, the rejoicing will be boundless. For the first time since 1847 there will be no foreign invaders in their land, the last ones having been kicked out earlier this year.

It was on this day thirty years ago, in a central square of Hanoi, that President Ho Chi Minh proclaimed the Declaration of Independence of Vietnam - not north Vietnam or south but one country which it has always been and will shortly become - after a glorious struggle against the French and then the Japanese. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam, a socialist state in which the workers and peasants had power under the leadership of the Vietnam Communist Party founded in 1930, was immediately attacked by British imperialism. British soldiers and Indian mercenaries landed in Saigon to bring back the French.

But neither British imperialism nor the United States could keep the French flag flying in Indochina. At Dien Bien Phu on May 7th 1954, the French general and the cream of the French colonial army surrendered to the guerrilla forces under their brilliant communist commander - Giap. The way was clear for the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to resume its work.

Once again the imperialist powers stepped in - this time the USA with the backing of its minions. The Geneva Agreements which had made the 17th Parallel a provisional line of demarcation and laid down the speedy reunification of the two zones were completely violated by successive US presidents from Eisenhower to Ford, and the world's cruelest, most destructive and most savage colonial war began. It ended in May 1975 when the last of the invaders and their puppets were driven out through the most

brilliant and sustained liberation struggle of our time.

What was the secret of their success? What enabled tiny and poorly armed Vietnam to take on the world's richest and most powerful country with an arsenal second to none? Marxism-Leninism.

It was this ideology that gave the people of Vietnam the only weapon that can overcome nuclear missiles, saturation bombing and torture. This is the ideology that should be studied by all of us who have yet to liberate ourselves, for it deals with the resolution of class questions in the context of national needs. This fusion of the national and class realities through the changing objective situation of the last three decades is the setting for the brilliance

of their people's war. From nationwide strikes in rubber plantations, coalmines and railway depots and peasant insurrections to the complex strategy that outflanked the American puppets in the Mekong Delta in the spring of this year, the clear line of scientific socialism that can identify the main contradiction and resolve secondary issues to unite the people shines bright.

In his last Testament, written shortly before his death in September 1969, President Ho Chi Minh said:-

"My ultimate wish is that our entire Party and people, closely joining their efforts, will build a peaceful, reunified, independent democratic and prosperous Vietnam and make a worthy contribution to the world revolution." They have.



In South Vietnam After Liberation

Euthanasia by Government Economy

It is likely that before the end of the year the Department of Health will cut the financial aid it gives to the regional health authorities. With this in mind, these authorities are investigating areas where savings in health expenditure can be made. Spokesmen admit that this means cuts in manpower, in catering, in laundry and other supplies,

Scorpion Sting

The Army has placed an order for several thousand of Leyland's new-tank, 'the Scorpion'. The vehicle is lightweight (under 8 tons), does no damage to road surfaces, travels at 50 mph and handles like a heavy lorry. The main armament, a small 76 mm gun - range 2-3 miles, is aimed by guesswork. Unlike normal tanks, the Scorpion lacks armour, being made of welded aluminium-plate throughout.

The Scorpion's construction makes it incapable of fighting conventional warfare. Design, handling and armament indicate city use, but whose cities? Belfast Derry perhaps - but the order is for several thousands! If they cannot see service abroad, their envisaged battlefield is the cities of Britain.

and closures of wards, departments, and even hospitals. Vacancies are not being filled. Part-timers' jobs are in jeopardy. Newly-qualified student nurses are no longer automatically employed.

Already small casualty and outpatient departments have been closed in many places, leaving single large departments to serve huge catchment areas. Next in line of fire are the small cottage hospitals and geriatric and disabled wards. As it is, admission of old people to hospital is restricted to those found collapsed and brought in by ambulance. The small geriatric centres working to rehabilitate old people are grossly overworked. In short the burden of caring for the handicapped and elderly sick is falling more and more on the working class family.

It is not by accident that they first attack the weakest section, those least able to defend themselves. Care of the old and chronic sick is the least glamorous department of medical care, the heaviest burden on NHS staff. To attack without provoking counter-attack, to instil us with an 'economic mentality', to prepare the ground for cuts in more sensitive areas - this is the aim.

And what a victory when a consultant says, 'If there's one bed and a sick 70 year old and a sick 50 year old, I admit the latter.' Pit low-paid against high-paid, council tenants against house-buyers, the right of the young to care against the right of the old - divide and rule!

To defend the 50 year old we must defend the 70 year old. These cuts are neither limited nor temporary. No question of regaining lost ground later on. The health service is being slimmed down - permanently. This was the experience of the last depression - that wealth was transferred massively from where it benefited the working population to where it could benefit the industrial magnates of capitalism.

This cannot be allowed to happen again. That old and sick people should suffer medical neglect to provide extra finance for the government's ballooning-out operations, that the skill of health workers should be under-utilised when there is so much need is intolerable and must be resisted vigorously. The health service exists to provide care, not population control for a system that won't afford its old,

THE WORKER INTERVIEW

We quote verbatim from the last few pages of the May 6th session of the House of Commons Expenditure Committee's investigation of the motor vehicle industry. Questions from those MPs on the Committee are directed at Reg Birch.

Q. Mr. Birch, what is your position in relation to the Ford Company?

A. I am a secretary. First, my position is that I am the Executive Council member for the Union at Ford. The Executive Council controls the national negotiations for our Union. Secondly, I am secretary of the trade union side of the negotiating body.

Q. What would you say - and be as immodest as you care to be - is your influence at Ford?

A. Well, I should think I am like Pepys there. I don't think I will ever be a King Charles.

Q. What is your ambition for Ford?

A. None at all. I have no affection for them and no dislike whatsoever.

Q. Do you want to see Ford a profitable company in the United Kingdom?

A. I do not think the question arises for me. I am not a shareholder.

Q. But you represent the interests of workers?

A. Yes, I want to see them prosperous there.

Q. Would you agree that their interests are best served if the company in which they work makes profits?

A. No, I do not think the question of profits has anything to do with it.

Q. From where, then, does the money come for their wages?

A. From their labour power.

Q. How do they earn it?

A. They earn it by labouring.

Q. But is it not earned by the degree to which the product which they make is saleable?

A. First they have to make it.

Q. Then it has to be sold.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you care whether or not the company makes profits?

A. No, I care only that the product our people make is useful and that it should be sold for use.

Q. Do you have any political convictions yourself?

A. Yes I have.

Q. Are you identified with the Labour Party or some political party?

A. I am not identified with the Labour Party or with Ford.

Q. With the Communist Party?

A. No, on the contrary, not the Communist Party you refer to.

Q. What particular party is that?

A. My own Party.

Q. The Birch Party?

A. No, there are many more people in it.

Q. Does that Party have a name?

A. It is called the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

Q. Does your attitude which you have described to this Committee have much following? Would you say it is representative of the workers' attitude in Ford?

A. If it had, nobody would work at Ford. Only an idiot would work at Ford.

Q. So your own views are not really the views which are representative of the workers' attitude in Ford?

A. No, I have to represent the Union there, not my views, and people work there because they have to pay the rent. That is all they go there for.

Q. Is this the attitude which you bring to the negotiating table?

A. I just bring all the skill which I possess, which is very little, because by trade I am a toolmaker. I served my time at that. I learned that you have to do the thing as carefully and as perfectly as you can, and the fact that you do not like it or find it irksome must not stop you filling it flat.

Q. May I follow this. If Mr. Birch thinks only a fool or an idiot would work at Ford, where would a wise man work?

A. He would work for himself and for society, for a society that is for him.

Q. They would all be self-employed?

A. On the contrary, it would be a socialist society.

Q. But he would be working for himself?

A. Of course, because he is a part of the whole, and no man is an island.

Chairman: That will be all.

CAPITALIST INEQUALITY

The Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth shows how strongly capitalism maintains inequality. The richest fifth of the population received 42.7 per cent of the total pre-tax income, more than seven times the share of the poorest fifth (exactly the same proportion as in 1867). A tenth of total dividend income went to the 0.5 per cent of taxpayers with incomes over £20,000. The redistributive effect of taxation is shown to be extremely limited. "Taxes on expenditure are broadly regressive and can be shown to offset, to a large extent, the redistributive effect of taxes on income. Al-

ternatively, the progressive effect of benefits in kind from the social services on the distribution can be shown as largely offset by the incidence of indirect taxation."

Even so, income is far more evenly distributed than wealth; 28.1 per cent of total personal wealth is owned by the richest one per cent - and within this group nearly half of its wealth is owned by the richest tenth (i.e. about 12 per cent of all personal wealth is owned by the richest one-thousandth) - 53.9 per cent by the richest 5 per cent, 67.3 per cent by the richest 10 per cent and 82.4 per cent by the richest 20 per cent.

Industrial Front

The lead at the TUC conference at Blackpool against the Government's wage-freeze policy will be taken by the AUEW, democratically committed to opposing any form of wage restraint and defending free collective bargaining.

At the same time the AUEW will urge trade unionists to ward off large scale unemployment by taking "maximum solidarity action with all affected workers". There is also a call for a shorter working week, longer holidays, the elimination of overtime and the rejection of all redundancies whether voluntary, by natural wastage or by outright sackings.

From another union will come a call for changes in the law which would safeguard workers' sit-ins and work-ins from legal proceedings. But whether such changes ever come about or not, nothing will prevent politically conscious workers from taking whatever industrial action is necessary to defend themselves from the present onslaught of employers and Government.

IMPERIAL TYPEWRITERS

"They were very disappointed in not having been successful. If faced with the closing down of a factory and the increasing unemployment caused, they'd have no hesitation in fighting all over again. They are very proud of their great fight to save their jobs and expose multi-national companies for the country and the world to see. The experience of the sit-ins is to be set down by a number of those involved and passed on to the rest of the working-class movement." This was how a Hull TGWU official summed up the feeling following the termination of the occupation at Imperial Typewriters after 4½ months.

The unions involved, TGWU, AUEW and ASTMS gave full support right from the start, and only those elements not involved directly in the struggle, who think that socialism can be won by one big factory would blame them for the defeat. According to workers at the factory, without the help of their unions they'd have lost before they'd even begun. "We fought to the best of our ability, took advantage of any assistance, tried everything we knew.... It's an easy thing to put the blame on everyone else. The fight of the working class is not a path of continuous victories, but the lessons must be learnt and used by the next group of workers placed in a similar situation."

COURTAULDS

Engineers at the Courtauld's factory, Spennymoor, County Durham now on strike for some 10 weeks over a pay claim of £6 a week, are still in dispute. Six hours of negotiation ended in deadlock at York with little progress being made. The meeting was adjourned to a date yet to be fixed. For the 160 workers involved the fight goes on.

SWAN HUNTER

At a mass meeting on August 23rd workers at the Swan Hunter Shipyards, amongst the first to take action against the Government's "rough justice", voted to continue their six week strike. Their demand is for £8.30 immediately and for a further £2.00 in January.

LEYLAND

Mass meetings of 9000 workers from five Lancashire track and bus plants voted for an immediate ban on overtime, withdrawal of co-operation and strike action from September 15th, unless the company honours agreements on pay rises up to £6.50 and lump-sum payments of £52. The overtime ban will cut output by 10 per cent. Non-cooperation, used as a guerrilla tactic to step up or tone down activity as required to suit the situation in the separate plants, will further put the bite on the company where it hurts most - profits.

The AUEW convenor stated: "It is a fundamental issue of principle that your representatives signed an agreement when there was not one dot of legislation to prevent it, only to have it thrown back in their faces." He further went on to explain that there had been a rationalization of pay scales and modified agreements in view of Leyland's financial problems. "We have turned the other cheek and finished up getting our teeth kicked in," he said.

AEI, NORTH FLEET

Clerical workers at AEI Cables (Northfleet) have ended their strike. One of the Shop Stewards spoke to The Worker about the settlement and the political gains the workers had made.

The offer accepted was £5 in October, £1 in January and promised negotiations on equal pay and shift allowances.

"We felt we would not have got this without taking action. We had support from the factory and transport staff, but many of our workers voted to go back because others were being laid off. We went back to preserve unity - after all, a divided union is what the Company wants!"

The struggle has given the workers confidence in their own strength, and gained them encouragement from their fellow workers. They received £40 from a neighbouring print union, and sympathetic action from drivers and loaders who refused to handle blacked goods.

"We know this is not the end of it. We shall have to fight again next year. But gains made in understanding and in tactical organisation will serve us in good stead."



FORD, DAGENHAM

First day back after the summer shutdown and Fords (Dagenham) again tried to pursue their infamous "manning" policy (more work at less cost).

But in one section of the Hot Metal Department the men refused to accept the proposed 3 shift 40 hour system and secured instead a 3 shift 37½ hour system without loss of earnings. In another section, management tried to cut overtime for some of the workers while demanding the same production. In response, the Metal Power workforce walked out after their basic eight hours.

BRIDGWATER SIT-IN

On August 11th, 800 men and women, who make circulating pumps for central heating systems at Sealed Motor Construction Ltd, Bridgwater, made a courageous stand against 152 proposed redundancies by occupying the factory.

At first, management refused even to talk to the workforce, but after a week of occupation they withdrew all contested redundancy notices and agreed to talks with AUEW representatives. Having achieved this victory the employees returned to normal working.

NUJ

At a Special Delegate Meeting (SDM) the NUJ voted by 204 to 190 to settle a vital issue of policy by secret ballot.

Yet that decision had already been made in the correct democratic manner by the annual conference - the union's sovereign rule-making, policy-making body - in April this year. Then, delegates who were elected in the proper way at Branch meetings decided that the union should fight for closed shops which include editors.

Now members are to get an armchair vote, so undermining the traditional, democratic relationship between union branches and union conference. Postal votes open the way to "cornflakes democracy" - snap decisions which crackle fiercely over the breakfast table but go pop in the heat of struggle at the office - which seeks to replace the collective responsibility implicit in Branch meetings.

Nothing illustrates better the possible damage the NUJ is inflicting upon itself than the present struggle at Birmingham where 250 union members on two newspapers have been sacked for taking industrial action in support of a wage claim. The papers continue to appear on the streets because the editor and a group of ten non-union journalists carry on working. If the NUJ had put into practice the April conference closed shop resolution instead of spending the intervening time organising another conference to institute a secret ballot to overturn that democratic vote, the Birmingham papers might have a 100 per cent union-disciplined membership.

The contradiction evident in the Birmingham struggle and the danger of a vote against the closed shop in the ballot must be stressed, and the mass of the membership must be drawn into discussion at their offices. Only after informed debate can the members use their vote wisely.

The Bangladesh Coup

As coups go this one was quite spectacular. The President of the country, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, his immediate family and some 200 of his cronies were wiped out in the early hours of August 15 by some officers of the Bangladesh army and men who had once been his close political associates. Obviously the Sheikh's own private army of thugs and bullyboys knew nothing and certainly Indian intelligence and their boss, the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs Gandhi, were caught napping. Another strange thing: for one who was always being hailed as the father and friend of his people, the Sheikh's sudden exit provoked little or nothing in the way of popular wrath.

Coups solve nothing and this one, no doubt, will lead to the inevitable in-fighting. Some will no doubt see the ubiquitous CIA and certainly it would not be surprising if some such move was thought to be necessary to divert the mounting opposition to the monumental oppression and corruption that is present day Bangladesh. But what a commentary on what was said to be a "free" country, created out of the ashes of a "liberation struggle" against tyrannical Pakistan!

It would not be out of place to remind readers of the truth. Since our Party was alone in this country in the labour movement to analyse correctly how and why Bangladesh, we are quoting from the Central Committee Resolution we passed that December in 1971. Far from calling that a war of liberation, we saw it for what it was: an expansionist war waged by the Indian government against its neighbour - Pakistan - to help the Indian bourgeoisie, to deceive and divert the Indian people from their massive internal problems, and to do Russian imperialism's dirty work - to contain China. We said then: "The territorial integrity of the State of Pakistan must and will be defended by the workers and peasants of East and West Pakistan. They will unite to drive out the aggressor Indian Government!"

Unfortunately that unity did not take place. Instead the Indian army succeeded in placing India's man as President. Since

that euphoric period to the present the people of Bangladesh must have seen through what we had called a "phony nationalism." Though they grow more rice than any other part of the sub-continent they cannot eat it as most of it is smuggled to India, not to feed the hungry millions there, but to line the pockets of grain speculators and politicians on both sides of the border. Pakistan used to be accused of not industrialising its eastern state. Today there is even less industry thanks to the machinations of the Indian bourgeoisie. East Bengal, once the home of the greatest weavers the world has ever seen, today can scarcely clothe its people. Most shocking of all for those who might have actually been deceived by the slogans of socialism, assiduously promoted by the local revisionists, has been the reign of terror instituted by the Rakhi Bahini, a paramilitary force trained and equipped by India, allegedly in comb-and-destroy operations against guerrillas, but in reality terrorising the villagers to squeeze whatever can be grabbed.

The coup is not going to help the people. Its ideology appears to be little better than religious obscurantism and conservatism and no doubt the frustration of those who got left out in the distribution of spoils. But the future is grim. The fascist developments in India and the strengthening of ties between the Indra Gandhi government and the Soviet bloc bring the possibility of war against China that much closer. In our resolution we had said:

"This war - this aggression - is not only against the State of Pakistan but is part and parcel of the hopeless attempt and imposed plot of encirclement against Socialist China. Shame on the Moscow revisionists that it should be they who lead in this filthy plot..."

The Russian navy is still in Chittagong and the massive arsenal of MIGs and tanks are waiting in the wings. Only Marxism can help the people fight for real freedom. We hope, the Communist Party of East Pakistan (M-L) which has already begun the struggle, will be able to mobilise the people for the long haul of people's war.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

PUBLIC MEETING. Wednesday 10th September at 7.30 pm. "Attack the attackers - the need for a Revolutionary Party" - Thornton Heath Library, Brigstock Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey.
PUBLIC MEETING. Thursday 11th September at 8.00 pm. "Only Socialism can save Britain" - Main Trend Books, 17 Midland Road, Bristol.
PUBLIC MEETINGS AT BELLMAN BOOKSHOP. Friday Meetings - Autumn series commences on 19th September - 7.30 pm - "Problems Facing The British Working Class"

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