

# Socialist Worker

For workers control and international socialism 142 16 October 1969 every Thursday 3d

## What we think

### Craig moves to oust Chichester-Clark

# ULSTER: POWER BID BY EXTREME RIGHT

Sean Treacy

THE SIGNS of a full-scale split in the Unionist Party are multiplying. Following the publication of the Hunt Committee Report urging the disbanding of the B-Specials and the disarming and reorganisation of the RUC, a powerful ultra-right wing backlash has developed among the Unionists.

A move to swing the majority of the Unionist Associations against Prime Minister Chichester-Clark and the 'reforms' imposed by Westminster is gaining ground.

Already a third of the parliamentary Unionist Party have come out against the government's agreement to the abolition of the B-Specials.

Many more MPs are being told by the well-organised Orange faction: 'Fall into line or be kicked out'. One Unionist MP has already been driven out of politics by the judicious use of terror against him and his family.

Leaders of the right such as William Craig realise that Westminster and the British Army have more than enough fire power to contain any direct attempt by them to seize power in the streets. They see their best chance of disrupting Britain's plans in the destruction of its instrument - the Unionist Party.

## SHOCK

The fierce repression of the Paisleyite mobs by the British forces over the past week has come as a bitter shock to many Protestant workers. They now see that in spite of devoted loyalty over many decades to imperialism they have been abandoned without ceremony.

Some Protestant workers are now asking themselves what they have gained by their adherence to sectarian and ultra-loyalist politics.

As Bernadette Devlin pointed out in the Commons debate on Northern Ireland on Monday, a great majority of those concerned in the fighting in the Shankill Road area live in slums quite as bad as those occupied by Catholic workers.

People's Democracy, the socialist civil rights movement which is now organised on an all-Ireland basis, has warned that the main threat to civil rights and the Catholic workers now comes from the Green Tory right wing who have abandoned the movement to support a 'reformed Stomont'.

## MISERY

A major split is developing in the Northern Ireland civil rights movement between socialists and Left republicans on the one hand, and the Green Tory nationalists and social democrats on the other.

The Left points out that Westminster's reform programme boils down to 'sharing the misery more fairly' as far as the working class is concerned.

They see that both Stomont and Westminster are unwilling, and in any case, unable to solve the problems of slums, unemployment and low wages. They recognise that the precarious basis of

## URGENT APPEAL

THE WRITS for the by-elections in six constituencies have been moved in parliament and polling is on 30 October. The Irish Civil Rights Solidarity Campaign wants to mount a massive by-election campaign in North Islington and has elected Brian McCabe, a 26-year old socialist building worker to fight for the ICRSC.

To be able to put forward a candidate, however, several hundred pounds must be raised within the next few days. Will all supporters of the paper please raise collections in the next two days in the universities, places of work and anywhere else possible and rush the money to Ted McKernan, 53 Cross Street, London N1 by Saturday.

Even if it is not possible to put up a candidate, the ICRSC will mount a write-in campaign for '100 per cent civil rights now'. It will expose the Labour government's refusal to adopt measures which can solve the basic problems in Northern Ireland.

We also appeal to all members of IS, socialist societies and other organisations to prepare now for a national demonstration of solidarity with the civil rights movement to be held in London on Sunday 26 October. It will start from Hyde Park after a mass meeting and march to the Ulster Office at 2.30. Mass support from the provinces is essential.

capitalism in Northern Ireland requires both unemployment and low wages.

It is true that the Westminster programme will ensure some electoral and administrative reforms only if Chichester-Clark and Callaghan can contain the backlash from the far right. While Callaghan can contain it in the streets, it is far from clear whether the move in the Unionist Party to force a general election and the rejection of the reforms can be held back as successfully.



British armoured vehicles on patrol in the Shankill Road area.

## We'll stick out for £5 say militant dustmen

Bob Light

MILITANT LONDON dustmen voted on Monday night to continue their strike for a £5 a week increase and to stage a mass march on Wednesday.

The militants were all shop stewards in the Transport Workers Union whose officials voted against the £210s pay offer in Edinburgh, on Thursday.

The other unions, the Public Employees and General and Municipal Workers, accepted the offer but although they represent the majority of dustmen only a handful of London boroughs were working again by the start of the week.

The offer by the National Joint Industrial Council would give local government manual workers a basic wage of £1719s a week. Workers outside London will get a paltry 30s rise to make their basic £1510s.

But militants say the figure is an unreal one. It includes 11s London weighting 9s for productivity plus the 15s increase that the JIC was negotiating before the strike began.

Ted Street, Hackney TGWU

shop steward said: 'We don't want to know about productivity deals. Our demand is for a straight £20 a week with absolutely no strings.'

The Hackney strike committee registered its 'disgust at the NUPE offer' and passed a vote of no confidence in the NUPE officials. Shop steward Terence Cooper said: 'If the JIC offered 50s the first time round, we can be certain of a better offer if we hold out.'

## 'Determined'

Bob Lear, another steward, added: 'We are very disappointed at NUPE's action. We are determined to fight it out to the end.'

Throughout the strike there has been an open dispute between the leadership of the TGWU and the NUPE and GMWU. Jack Jones and John Cousins, the TGWU secretary and national officer, made it clear from the start

that they support the strike as part of their promised campaign on behalf of lower-paid workers.

But NUPE and GMWU full-time officials have been doing their utmost to damp down the strike and get the men back to work. NUPE officials have had orders to cool the militancy of their members as the union has a small strike fund.

Only pressure from their members and the TGWU's initiative has forced the two unions to act. This was shown clearly at Thursday's meeting, when the TGWU voted against accepting the offer on the grounds that the 9s interim bonus should be extended to all dustmen, not just those in London.

But despite their militancy, John Cousins has still put out a call for 'an organised return to work' on the grounds that TGWU members have to abide by the majority decision taken at Edinburgh. Once they are back at work, the men can negotiate a local productivity deal, the union says.

But most London militants agree with Ted Street's total opposition to productivity.

If the strikers win they will force a restructuring of all pay groups affecting 760,000 manual workers in local authorities throughout the country, ranging from gravediggers to home-helps. A victory for the dustmen would show the way to the other sections of lower paid workers.

In the words of Lenny Stubbs, a Hackney shop steward: 'We're sick and tired of

THE MINERS and the dustmen are both referred to in this week's issue as the 'Cinderellas of the working class' - groups of workers who suffer the worst conditions and pay and yet whose jobs are crucial to keep society's wheels turning.

Their strikes and the widespread support they have received are highly significant. Since the war it has been the better-paid sections of the working class that have tended to be more militant in pursuit of better pay and conditions.

But now the revolt is spreading and setting fire to the smouldering discontent of those thrust right to the bottom of the pile.

Wilson and co are cock-a-hoop about the latest trade figures, but the dustmen and miners have shown that while capitalism may be doing well the great mass of working people are still doing very badly.

Socialists must constantly ram home to workers the fact that British capitalism's 'recovery' has been at the expense of the working class. The Wilson government, determined to make capitalism more efficient and profitable, has placed the burdens squarely on the backs of the workers through wage freeze, incomes policy and rising rents and prices.

Encouraged by the anti-working class policies of the Labour Party, the Tories, the traditional, hard-line party of the ruling class, has moved further to the right. At their conference last week they outlined tough anti-union measures, including a 'black-legs' charter that would encourage workers not to join trade unions.

And the sickening baying of the racials and hangers shows that the extreme Powellites, not Heath, are more and more taking control of the Tory Party. Angry and frustrated though the workers may be, they must not look for solutions from that quarter, the traditional enemies of organised labour.

As the political parties move to the right, the need for a socialist movement that will campaign for the transformation of society - for workers' power - becomes more urgent. The struggle of the 'Cinderellas' should inspire all of us to redouble our efforts towards building that movement.

## Dockers back dustmen

FELLOWTRADE UNIONISTS:

We feel that the press and television have exaggerated the dustmen's strike. For far too long the Cinderellas of the service and municipal industries have been taken for granted.

It is only when they take militant action that their worth to society is fully realised. Many members of the public are now aware that dustmen, lavatory attendants, and even the unmentionable grave diggers are as important to the maintenance of a social system as any over-rated Harley Street surgeon.

There are many bureaucrats in town halls who claim that the dustmen, who have the undignified job of clearing up the flotsam of life, are wrong to take strike action. The press and television, as usual, have attacked workers taking strike action.

More power to the dustmen's arm (and not merely for carrying bins) in their struggle to achieve £20, which is merely a minimum subsistence level. We fellow trade unionists wish to extend to all municipal workers fraternal greetings in their struggle.

We hope their example will motivate teachers, nurses and other sections of the underprivileged working class to take action to achieve their just rights. Such action will be an interim step to achieving a socialist society where the rubbish will really be swept away. - Terry Barrett, Alfie Waters, Frank Shilling, Peter Bloss, Bill Kemp

LETTER

Protest at arrest of French publisher

IT HAS RECENTLY come to our notice that Francois Maspero, the leading Left-wing publisher, has been sentenced to imprisonment in France for distributing the international revolutionary journal Tricontinental, which is published in Havana.

As the English distributors of this journal we wish to appeal to British socialists of all persuasions to join us in protesting most vigorously against this shocking act of repression by the French government. - Ken Coates, Chris Farley, Ken Fleet, Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, Nottingham.

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# GEC: united strength of combine's workers only answer to mass sackings



Redundancy: the threat to your job PART TWO

by **SABBY SAGALL**

AFTER THE COLLAPSE of the planned workers' take-over of GEC's three Liverpool factories, we are still faced with the task of probing the reasons why it failed so that a more effective and coherent strategy can be developed to fight the threat of 3000 redundancies.

Recent experience points to the enormous difficulties involved in any battle against redundancy. Perhaps the greatest single obstacle is the workers' own feeling of weakness against the boss.

Workers will be willing to fight when they have the confidence that they can win. This confidence develops if they feel they can hurt the boss.

The threat of redundancy demoralises workers simply because, if the boss doesn't need their labour power any longer, how can they have the power to hit him?

The Liverpool Shop Stewards' Action Committee were clearly aware of this problem and of the failure of past struggles against redundancy in GEC, at Harlow and Woolwich. They felt that a different strategy was required, one that would damage the boss and not involve mere token gestures of protest.

With the advantage of hindsight, however, it is open to serious question whether a working occupation of the factories, the continuation of production and the paying of wages, was a viable means of struggle. The fact is that production could not have been maintained for more than a few days and it would have been impossible to market any of the goods or to transfer components to other factories.

Even if the occupation had come off, the only difference would have been that the

tactic of sit-in strikes at the three factories would have represented an assertion by the workers of their right to full employment that would not have carried with it the danger of demoralisation inherent in the call to maintain production.

A key element in any strategy for the Liverpool workers would be a strike at the huge and profitable English Electric factory where only 800 redundancies out of 3000 are scheduled. The fact that the management there were able to sabotage the occupation plan tells us something about the lack of contact between the stewards and the rank and file.

It is urgent to dispel the notion that redundancies can be fought in isolation. The failure of the struggles at Harlow and Woolwich underlines this. The belief in the possibility of isolated struggle is a hangover from the boom period of the 1950s.

Today, British capitalism's need to overhaul itself in order to maintain its precarious position in a relatively shrinking world market dictates the bosses' strategy of mergers and 'rationalisation'.

The only effective means of combating the bosses' overall strength is for workers to confront it with their own united strength.

This means developing a combine committee that will be able to prevent the closure of an unprofitable factory by hitting the bosses in the factories that are profitable.

For this general strategy to succeed, it is necessary to overcome the ostrich-like attitudes that are the product of 25 years of sectional, fragmented struggle. GEC militants must develop the combine committees to tell all group workers that if one section is threatened with the sack, then they are all potentially threatened.

Workers who say 'it couldn't happen to us' will allow the 3000 Liverpool sackings to take place and will encourage the GEC bosses to carry out further redundancies. It is significant that GEC announced their plan to close down the Woolwich plant a few days after the struggle at Harlow had collapsed.

In the particular case of the Liverpool sackings, with 3000 skilled workers swell-

ing a pool of unemployed labour, support from other Liverpool workers outside the combine is crucial.

The Action Committee worked hard to mobilise support from other Merseyside factories. But what needs to be emphasised is the political nature of the struggle, that the workers are facing these problems because the bosses assisted by the state, are trying to rejuvenate a backward British capitalism by holding down the workers' living standards and enlarging the pool of unemployed.

In a recent issue of the AEF journal, union secretary Jim Conway argued that the fight against redundancies was purely industrial and not political. Unless the militants can get over to the rank and file the essentially political nature of the battle, then the chances of building a strong combine committee are slim.

**Political fight**

A further crucial element in the anti-redundancy fight is the blacking by workers within the combine of all jobs or work transferred from factories facing partial or total closure. But for this tactic to be successful, the militants must convince the workers that redundancies are not inevitable.

The bosses can be defeated but only on condition that the workers accept the fight as a political one and commit themselves to raising political demands.

The workers must insist that the government maintain a high level of demand in the electrical power industry or else provide alternative jobs in the same areas without reduction in wages or deterioration in working conditions.

Failure to conduct the struggle in explicitly political terms is to leave the propaganda open to the bosses, the bosses' press and the labour lieutenants of the working



GEC Merseyside shop stewards lobbying union-management talks in London

class such as Jim Conway or Les Cannon, president of the EETU and a director of the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation which supported the sacking of thousands of AEI workers.

Who are the troublemakers, workers who strike in defence of their jobs or bosses who throw them out of their jobs?

It is also necessary for the militants to firmly dispel any illusions that the workers might still have in the possibility of their jobs being saved through the efforts of MPs or as a result of negotiations between management and union officials on the National Joint Consultative Committee. Indeed, the Action Committee's first resolution at their meeting in the Liverpool Stadium on 13 August called on all trade union officials to immediately withdraw from the NJCC.

As George Harrison, shop steward at GEC's Vulcan works outside Liverpool told me: 'The NJCC is there just to pull the wool over the workers' eyes. They don't realise that 'consultations' took place every time before the sackings were announced. The decision to sack had already been taken.'

At one factory, the management announced that 1100 jobs would be 'affected'. As a result of 'consultations' only 500 sackings took place.

The management had never intended the number to be greater than 500.

George Harrison has this to say about the role of 'left' trade union leaders such as Scanlon: 'Scanlon has said he is against redundancies in principle. But what has he done about it, in practice? What difference would it make if Scanlon said he was for redundancies in principle?'

Everyone expresses abhorrence at redundancies but the effect of this, in the absence of any real fighting lead, is to divert the workers from the task of building up

rank and file strength.

As George Harrison said: 'Everyone thinks they are terrible officials, MPs, councillors. My thinks they're we don't have £2000 to say so.'

The Action Committee is currently campaigning against GEC factories country to rouse the struggle against redundancy. There are a number of factories that they have their mistakes, their defeat at a meeting outside Electric factory.

**Raised demands**

There is no doubt that we must formulate a programme of demands around which workers can mobilise their struggle against the company management. The Action Committee have raised the demands for the TUC to instigate a campaign for the public control of the industry.

The next step is to make it clear that, in any initiative or trade union, the combine committee must undertake the task of such a campaign. A programme would be as follows:

1. The combine committee to inspect workers' representatives.
2. A complete government economic policy in order to restore a high level of demand in the electrical power industry.
3. Public ownership of the industry with control of all key areas affecting their working conditions and security — control over hire-

## Socialist Worker

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CAPITALISM has nothing to offer mankind but exploitation, crises and war. The ruling classes of the world—a tiny minority—subordinate the needs of the vast majority to the blind accumulation of capital in the interests of competitive survival.

Imperialism condemns two-thirds of mankind to famine and calls forth movements of national liberation which shake the system and expose its essential barbarism. The constant and mounting preparations for war and the development of weapons of mass destruction place the survival of humanity itself in the balance.

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

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

### WHERE WE STAND

state of workers' councils and workers' control of production.

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

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

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

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

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

International Socialists therefore fight for:

- Opposition to all ruling-class policies and organisations.
- Workers' control over production and a workers' state.
- Opposition to imperialism and support for all movements of national liberation.
- Uncompromising opposition to all forms of racialism and to all migration controls.

**Ireland: no such thing as 'Irishness'**  
by TOM HILLIER

THE IRISH ISSUE can never be understood unless an objective analysis is available. It is clearly the duty of socialists to provide this in order that our attitudes are based on concrete facts, not wishful thinking.

Much, indeed everything depends on one's perspective. If this is reformist then it is correct to play down the role of Bernadette Devlin, the Catholic Church etc, it is right to look to the Callaghans and the Wilsons to do the job, it is logical to see the British troops as 'defenders of the faith'.

It is inconsistent and contradictory to change slogans mid-stream without a marxist analysis. There is no such thing as revolutionary reformism.

Revolutionaries however are forced to accept the lessons of history. Reformism is the means by which capitalism smoothes away the rough corners of exploitation in order that the system can survive and perpetuate itself.

Marx rightly gave critical support to the Prussians during the Franco-Prussian war. Why? Because he saw

the unification of the German states as a progressive development, a step towards the proletarianisation of Germany.

This argument doesn't apply to Ireland. Listen to Mr Callaghan, the Home Secretary: 'Let me get one thing quite clear, there is no question of the Border being removed... the Border stays. Anyone with any ideas about the Border had better forget them.' (Belfast, August 1969).

**CONFUSED**

Understandably many people are confused by the Irish issue. Taken at its face value, it seems doomed to everlasting sectarian strife.

However, the situation, once studied, reveals some encouraging developments.

For example, hostility towards fellow workers of differing nationalities or religion becomes meaningless when artificial methods of dividing them (privilege or lack of it) are removed. No reforms can take place in the Six Counties without straining the traditional hegemony of the Protestant workers and the Orange ruling class, which

while it takes a religious form is in fact economically based on discrimination in jobs, houses, etc.

Whatever is given to the Catholic population will be seen as something taken away from the Protestants. Inevitably hostility will be aroused, but the fact remains that although it will be the British government that determines what reforms are necessary, their time limit, etc, it will be the Orange ruling class in Stormont that will have to implement them.

For the British government to have to take such a drastic step themselves would make the future of the Ulster government impossible. Loyalty to the Queen and the Orange Lodge will fast erode when the chips are down. Just as Ian Smith's allegiance to the British monarchy ended in a republican position.

That which is economically obsolete (unable to produce the goods) quickly becomes politically undesirable. Thus Stormont and West-

minster will be Protestants in colour, ie partition.

If one looks at the trial situation majority of un-Catholics (although the minority indication of division can be seen as emerging.

Capitalist internationalism comes in technologically stage that it fails sufficient jobs in decaying industry alone alleviate level of unemployment of those undant in these will be Protestant inequality in job it can be seen as fragmented and class interests consciousness among the more elements.

To channel this sectarianism and socialist consci-

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the paper.

# Pressure on Communist Party to join coalition

## As strikes rock Italy, the spectre of revolution haunts and divides the ruling class

from  
**ANDREA SAVONUZZI**

ITALY has seldom been out of the news in the last few months. Agricultural labourers were killed during a strike in Avola, the insurrection of Battipaglia left behind a trail of dead and burnt-out public buildings, and there have been riots in Turin, Caserta and prisons throughout the country.

Student unrest and innumerable scandals involving public officers have all found their way into the headlines, coupled with concern about Italian democracy.

It is as if the French experience of May 1968 had taken place again in slow motion in Italy. The country is plunged into a deepening political and social crisis and the working class shows a militancy and determination only comparable to the situation 50 years ago when Italy was on the brink of revolution.

There are many causes. It has proved impossible to solve the traditional problem of underdevelopment in the south. A few years ago it was confidently predicted that government efforts to channel industry and resources into the south were well on the way to success.

### STARVATION

No one would show such optimism today. The south is as poor as ever, contributing only 17 per cent of the national wealth. Mass emigration is still the only way of escaping a life that for the majority of people in the countryside means starvation, disease and a single-room house which the whole family often shares with the livestock.

Industry that has been started there in the last few years has created few jobs and is riddled by constant crisis. The number of industrial jobs is declining and many poor farmers who came to the towns find themselves out of work. The Battipaglia insurrection started as a protest against a threatened wave of redundancies.

The gulf between north and south is expanding. Last year wages nationally increased by 5.7 per cent but in the south they have slightly declined. In the north, the wild growth of the major industrial centres has created acute housing shortages, ghettos for immigrants, slum landlordism, overcrowding in schools and hospitals.

A large proportion of the labour force has just been uprooted from the countryside and social and family patterns have been destroyed.

Conditions in the factories are harsh. In the Fiat car plants, workers have only recently won the right to a canteen and, consequently, to hot lunches. They are still not allowed to leave the production line to go to the lavatory.

In the last 12-14 months the pace of production on some assembly lines has

increased by as much as 20-25 per cent. The result of these conditions is a daily absenteeism rate of 8-9 per cent and the yearly turnover of first year employees who cannot stand the pace is as high as 40 per cent.

These problems are likely to get worse. In an attempt to remain competitive, Italian industry is concentrating into fewer and fewer units. Three concerns, Fiat, Montedison and the government-owned IRI, produce more than 50 per cent of all manufactured goods. This is a higher rate than anywhere else in the world.

The rate of technological change has had to be very high to increase productivity. More and more of the smaller firms will be forced out of business and in the rest machines will increasingly replace men.

A confidential section of a government report allegedly recommends that emigration should be organised again on a large scale as the northern regions cannot ensure employment for southerners as they have in the past.

An institute of economic research predicts that, if present trends are maintained, there may be 10 per cent unemployment by 1980 in Lombardy, at the moment the most prosperous of Italian regions, with full employment.

The seriousness of the economic and social situation has resulted in a resurgence of workers' militancy. The extreme Left, once largely made up of students and middle class, is now making real contacts with more advanced workers.

Months of agitational work at the factory gates has born fruit. In most of the larger industrial factories of the north, comitati di base (rank and file committees) have been formed.

The committees are informal, democratic bodies set up by workers in conjunction with students and political elements to counter the bureaucratic apparatus of the three main unions - Communist, Christian Democrat and social Democrat. Outside political contacts, as well as workers in any union or none at all, can take part in the committees' work.

Two long strikes, at Montedison in Porto Marghera (Venice) and at Pirelli, Milan,

were led by the committees and the movement soon spread. Most industrial conflicts today take place because of the activity of the committees.

The official trade unions have tended on the whole to act as a brake on the movement from below. For example, on 3 July, after 43 days of department stoppages that had brought the whole of Fiat to a virtual stop, the unions called for a 24-hour strike in Turin in protest over rising rents. They hoped to take some of the steam out of the strikes with the rents issue.

The unions called for a 24-hour general strike after the deaths in Battipaglia, but they reduced it to a two-hour stoppage in Fiat, where the situation was 'delicate'

### BACKFIRED

But their attempts to restrain the rank and file have often backfired. In Turin the first 24-hour strike developed into a full-scale riot. The second strike gave the workers the chance to have the first mass political meeting since those held during the general strikes called by the resistance against the war, the fascist regime and the German occupation.

Today the unions are leading the wave of strikes, but only because they have taken up all the demands of the rank and file. Even in normal strikes about pay it is the militant workers who give the lead outside the union organisation while the officials merely carry on negotiations.

And the strikes are falling increasingly outside of the 'normal' domain of union demands. Now the battle is for such demands as the right to general political meetings inside the factory and the recognition of the power of the comitati.

These demands directly challenge the right of the employers to both own and run the factories.

The spectre of revolution

has led to a deep split in the ruling class. The most backward business and industrial sectors are openly calling for a strong government and all-out repression against the workers.

Their strategy is difficult to put into operation. The Left is too strong for an outright military coup and anti-fascist feelings are too widespread, even among the middle class, for a sharp turn to the right.

But small changes that do not actually smash the working class organisations are unlikely to improve things. On the contrary, it would lead to a sharpening of the conflict, with all the consequences that this might mean for Italian capitalism.

The more dynamic and, for the moment less economically threatened, members of the ruling class call for a more progressive response. Their strategy is to give a sop to the masses in the shape of marginal reforms while integrating their organisations into the system.

The collaboration of the Communist Party is necessary for both objectives to succeed. The last few governments have been unable to carry through a consistent programme of reform since the right wing of both Christian Democrat and Socialist parties are by no means committed to it.

The entry of the CP into the government would ensure the strengthening of the reformist wings of the other two parties. The CP could then be trusted to 'police' the masses that support it.



Police brutally attack a striker in Turin

Drawing the CP into the government is the last card that the capitalists have to play. And the whole strategy of the party has been directed towards joining a coalition. It is now only a matter of time.

The chief exponent of the CP right wing, Amendola, has put the case for entering the government in the party press. On the other hand, the Left wing of the party, found guilty of opposing this perspective and publishing their views, have been summoned to appear before a disciplinary committee.

But if this is the last card of the ruling class, it contains many dangers for them. The CP has to tread a dangerous path, performing difficult balancing acts.

Through its trade union, it must show sufficient militancy to retain the loyalty of the masses. But at the same time, the militancy must be held back in case it worries

the capitalists. At one and the same time, the CP must be both shop steward and foreman of the working class. And when you serve two opposing masters, there is a strong chance that you will displease both.

If the CP joins the government, it may give the bosses a new lease of life, but it could also lay the foundation for a real turn to the Left among the masses.

The task of the Italian Left is to exploit the contradiction of the situation and increase the power of the comitati di base. But this cannot be done without a national, centralised revolutionary organisation.

Once before, the shortcomings of their leaders led to the defeat of the working class and to 25 years of fascist dictatorship. It is up to the Left to make sure that the same mistakes are not repeated in the next few years.

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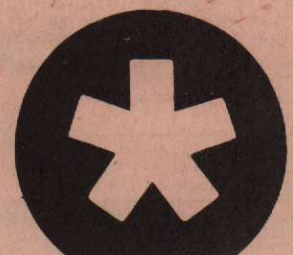
- ENFIELD Ian Birchall 109 Croyland Rd N9
- FULHAM Brian Rose 49 Schubert Road SW15
- GLASGOW North-Ian Mooney 4 Dalcross Passage W1
- South-S. Morris 4 Elphinstone St Glasgow SW1
- GLOUCESTER Tom Buder 36 Brook Street
- GRAYS & TILBURY Alf Waters c/o 1 Russell Rd Tilbury Essex
- HAMPSTEAD Chris Barker 36 Gilden Road NW5
- HARLOW Hugh Kerr 70 Joiners Rd Harlow Essex
- HARROW Kevin Simms 56 Salisbury Road
- HAVERING Terry Ward 91 Heath Park Rd Gidea Pk
- HEMEL HEMPSTEAD John Barrett 20 Belswaines Lane
- HORNSEY Valerie Clark 18 Dickinson Rd NS
- ILFORD Lionel Sims 16 Madras Rd Ilford 01 478 7311
- IPSWICH Brian Mulvey 104 Westbourne Road
- KILBURN Valerie Lloyd 37 King Henry's Rd NW3
- KINGSLEY John Owen 4 Sandown Court Esher
- LANCASTER Don Milligan 56 Norfolk Street
- LAMBETH Andy Smith Flat 6 126 Streatham Hill SW2
- LEICESTER Lynette Allham Stanford Hall Stoughton Drive South Oadby Leics.
- LEEDS Vince Hall Flat 3 25 Bagby Rd Leeds 2
- Woodhouse-Viv Hopkins 25 Midland Rd Leeds 6
- LOWESTOFT Trevor Moss 82 Blackheath Rd
- MANCHESTER-J Sutton 11a Rowan Ave Walley Range M16
- Joni Jones 15 Parsonage Road Manchester 20
- MERSEYSIDE Janice Humphrey 96 Princes Rd Liverpool 8

- MERTON Pam Kelsey 47 Richmond Avenue SW20
- NEWCASTLE Barney Hardy 26 Lesbury Rd Newcastle 6
- NORTHAMPTON Mick Bunting 25 Witton Rd Duston
- NORWICH Gerald Crompton 220 College Rd NOR 54F
- OXFORD Steve Bolchover 181 Ifley Rd
- PORTSMOUTH Alan Sandham 43 Marmion Rd Southsea Hants
- POTTERIES Dick Pratt 27a North St Newcastle Staffs
- RICHMOND Edward Brown 4 Cheyne Ave Twickenham Mddx
- SELBY John Charlton 12 Thatch Close Selby Yorks
- SHEFFIELD Rick Osborn 159a Rustlings Rd Sheffield S11 7AD
- SOUTHAMPTON John Fisher 144 Thornhill Park Road
- SOUTHDEN Chris Peace 18 Stirling Ave Leigh-on-Sea Essex
- STOCKPORT Geoff Hodgson 78a Forest Range M/C 19
- STOKE NEWINGTON Mike McGrath 28 Manor Road N16
- SWANSEA Dick Jones 37 Bryn Road
- TESSIDE Phil Semp 72 Mersey Rd Redcar. Rob Clay 33 Pasture Lane Lazenby Teesside
- TOTTENHAM Laurie Flynn 374 High Road N17
- WANDSWORTH Mark Hutton 87 Broderick Road Wandsworth Common SW17
- WATFORD Paul Russell 61 Carpenders Avenue Carpenders Park
- WIGAN Ray Challinor 34 Whiteside Ave Hindley
- YORK Bob Looker 22 Hobgate
- VICTORIA Tony Dunne 14 Carlisle Mansions Carlisle Place SW1

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_



## revolutionary reformism'...

vital to build the revolutionary socialist party, to build the revolutionary leadership based on a socialist programme which embraces all Irishmen and women irrespective of creed. This is the urgent task for socialists active in the Irish campaign.

The role of imperialism and its agents North and South must be exposed so that myths and blind alleys are also exposed. In my view, the presence of British troops on Irish soil affords us the opportunity to educate the workers as to the true nature of the Green Tories and the Orange ruling class.

### EMBARRASSED

The slogan recalling British troops embarrasses not only the Chichester-Clarks but also the Lynches in the South in that it poses the possibility of a united Ireland. Likewise to play down the Border is to acquiesce in its divisive nature.

The South under Green Tory rule is incapable of providing jobs and homes for the majority of its working class and is forced to export them to

economy, which contains pre-industrial peasantry, small farmers as well as the same capital intensive manufacturing as the Six Counties, is controlled by foreign and British capital.

Its agriculture, already declining, will be incapable of competing within the EEC without heavy subsidies from Britain. An extension of Green Toryism therefore has nothing to offer the Irish workers. Only a united socialist Ireland can provide any meaningful perspective.

Therefore the call to withdraw British troops is a political banner which not only puts pressure on the civil rights leaders who rely on reforms to appeal to the working class for support, but exposes the role of British imperialism and its agents North and South. Above all, it appeals to the aspirations of Irishmen and women for a united Ireland which can only be socialist.

It is necessary to look at Ireland as an entity not as the monstrous division imposed by British imperialism. The demand for the withdrawal of

invitation for a pogrom as some comrades seem to think.

If that were indeed the case, socialists would have called for the retention of British troops in India during partition when wholesale massacres took place between Hindus and Moslems (events that made clashes in Ireland seem like picnics). The 'contradictory role' of the British troops wasn't too evident in Aden, Egypt or Cyprus. Perhaps it's a new development.

### BAYONETS

Is there some socialist content in imperialism when it is in decline and when its activities are nearer home? What price revolutionary socialism that can detect a 'defensive role' when others can only see army riot squads that are specially trained to seize on leaders of demonstrations? What price socialism heralded by British bayonets?

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tom Hillier has recently resigned from the International Socialists. He was invited to write this article

# MASSIVE BACKING FOR COAL-FIELD 'CINDERELLAS'

Joe Kenyon

**BARNESLEY:-** The anger and frustration of mine-workers faced by pit closures, bad pay and appalling conditions exploded on Monday when more than 70,000 went on strike. The men were backing the demand by surface workers for an eight-hour day instead of the present 8½.

Barnsley and the surrounding pit villages were reminiscent of 1926 as men stood in groups discussing the strike. 'It's about time, too,' was the universal feeling.

## Humberside hit by big shutdown

**HULL:-** Engineering factories on Humberside were hit by an official strike on Tuesday. The AEF called out its members to demonstrate in support of workers at the Priestman factory who have been out for two months in protest against a productivity deal.

Five hundred workers marched through Hull in the most militant, united action seen in the region since the general strike of 1926. Plants represented included the three Armstrong factories, Deanes of Beverley, Imperial Type-writers, Hull radiators and, for the first time in living memory, the Hawker Siddeley works at Brough.

The AEF members were from factories that are part of the Engineering Employers' Federation. The EEF is believed to be subsidising Priestman's by £7000 a week. The management offered the workers 25s a week as part of a productivity deal but the strikers are demanding £2.10s.

Hull was also hit by a docks strike and local dustmen have joined the battle for higher pay.

## No help for Newcastle strikers

**NEWCASTLE:-** 300 workers at British Engines returned to work on Monday after three weeks on strike over the sacking of convenor Bill Kaye.

The return to work was a clear defeat even though Bill Kaye was offered another job in a different section of the firm. One of the major reasons for the defeat was the fact that the executive of the engineering union, the AEF, made no decision about declaring the strike official.

Bill Kaye built up the AEF in this traditionally backward and unorganised firm and he increased the basic wage rate by more than £4 in two years. It was not surprising that his members, with no trade union traditions, could not last out for more than three weeks without strike pay.

In cases like this, the union should demand seniority for stewards when there are lay-offs.

## NOTICES

**SATURDAY 2pm,** Hercules Street, Islington. All ICRSC supporters for a march and picket of the Conservative & Unionist office followed by mass fund collecting for the election campaign starting from the Nags Head, Archway 7.30.

**ICRSC:** N. Islington election meeting, Monday 20 October, 8pm the George, Liverpool Rd N1.

**ANGEL IS:** The Spanish Civil War Thurs 23 October 8pm the George, Liverpool Rd N1.

**CRISIS in the Shipyards** - the UCS sorry. 10d per copy. 7s a doz (post paid) from P Bain, 19 Leslie St, Glasgow S1.

**KINGSTON IS:** Tony Cliff on productivity deals, the unions and modern capitalism. 8pm Sunday 19 October. Three Compasses Eden St, Kingston on Thames.

**LSE Soc Soc:** Tony Cliff on Permanent Revolution Sat 25 Oct 4-6pm See next week's issue for further details.

**SW Circulation meeting,** 6 Cottons Gardens 7pm Wed 22 October.

They were angry. 'I'll strike until they shut the bloody pit down, it's the only language they understand.' 'Talk, talk, talk gets us nowhere.'

At a delegate meeting of the Yorkshire Area Council of the National Union of Mineworkers on Saturday, 73 of the 75 delegates and all the executive members and officials excluding President Sam Buller, demanded strike action.

They called for an end to the dilly-dallying methods of the Coal Board and they were determined to send out a call for strike action to all the branches. On Sunday morning at branch meetings throughout Yorkshire, messages of solidarity and support for a strike flooded in, not only for action in Yorkshire but for a national stoppage.

### DISREGARD

The only agitation for the strike was the steady and consistent disregard by the Coal Board of the men's complaints:

- Soaring Coal Board rents
- Pit closures
- Disabled men thrown on the scrapheap
- Ever-worsening conditions and wages

The surface men have been the Cinderellas of the industry for too long. For a five day week of 43 hours, they get £13 12s 6d. With stoppages some have just about £11 to take home.

Even those men usually regarded as 'responsible moderates' are backing the strike. Officials who only a couple of weeks ago were urging the Cadeby men to go back to work and follow the negotiating procedures are now as militant as the rest of the men in demanding a national strike.

### LOYALTY

One branch secretary said, 'We know our pit is scheduled for closure, but Christ, how much have we got to take? And what is the bloody government doing about this - they care less than the Coal Board.'

Many of the miners see this strike as a break in their traditional loyalty to the Labour Party. Sam Buller, Yorkshire President, says:

'It's not right that men should take control like this. It's not as though it's a major issue - it's a minor one. So why take this action? After all, we have been dealing with this matter for years.'

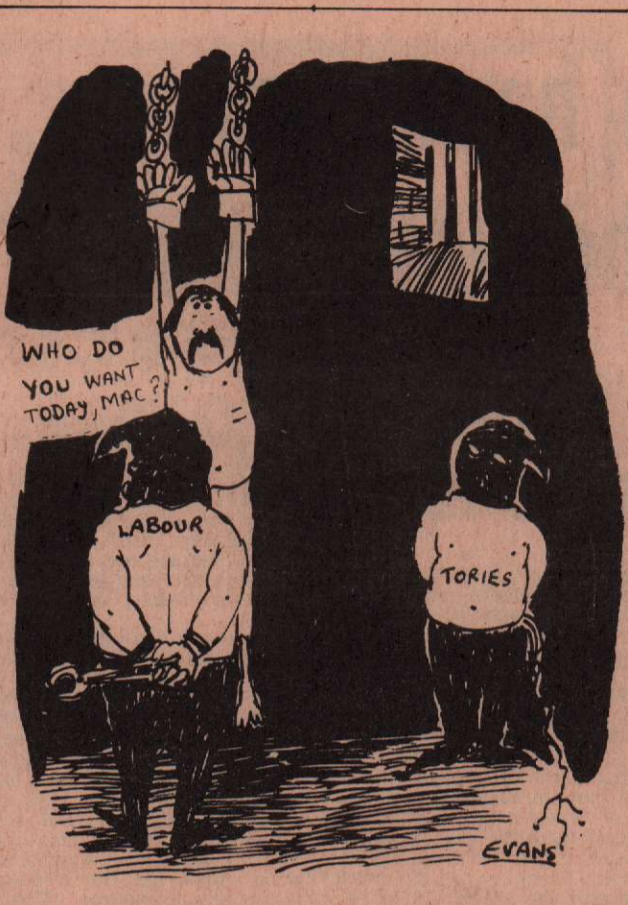
Lord Robens, the NCB boss, has got 'every sympathy' for these hard-worked, under-paid men doing dirty, and sometimes backbreaking jobs. But he has other considerations: 'Unofficial action is a serious matter, especially to our coal buyers - they like to be certain of supplies.'

No doubt Robens, government and others will be delighted to reassert the threats they are constantly holding over the heads of the miners about the government's decision to run down the coal industry and turn new developing power stations into gas or oil burning stations.

But at long last the miners are saying 'Enough' and united and defiant action could bring Robens and Wilson to heel.

### Tube strike spreads

London Transport lift maintenance workers joined the AEF official strike on Tuesday. The stoppage has spread to ten other depots and is over management refusal to recognise AEF members for training jobs.



## Post Office move to set up blackleg union

Gordon Blair (APOE)

**THE NEW** 'big business' style Post Office Corporation is attempting to weaken trade unionism in the industry by creating a scab management organisation.

The proposed 'Society of Post Office Managers' is described by the Association of Post Office Executives, which represents white-collar technicians and junior managers, as 'an unmistakable house union in embryo'.

The proposed SPOM will be formed from a merger of senior management associations and aims at the 'creation of a single staff association to represent grades throughout the Post Office corporation management structure'. Its intentions are clearly anti-trade union.

One of the senior management associations, the SPOE, attacked the July pay award to the Post Office Engineering Union. It claimed that the award was an attack on a 'balanced pay structure' and was not in accordance with government productivity demands.

This is an attempt by a non-militant group to defend their differential by imposing a ceiling on the lower paid.

### WELCOMED

Not surprisingly, the Post Office is encouraging this well-behaved child. The corporation is afraid of the growth of trade union attitudes among white-collar workers.

The APOE gave financial help to the POEU during their strike and took action to prevent blacklegging. The Post Office obviously does not like such elementary trade union decency.

The West Midlands APOE branch stated that solidarity with the POEU was achieved 'despite considerable pressure from a certain section of senior management and attempts to distort agreements reached with the branch prior to the strike.'

It is clear that there is

Preparation essential for notices. 1s a line, average 5 words a line. Deadline Tuesday.

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## New idea of 'democracy' for car workers

Steve Jefferys

**THIS WEEK** workers at Vauxhall's three factories at Ellesmere Port, Luton and Dunstable have been voting on the company's new pay and productivity deal. This consultation between management and men almost sounds like democracy, but it isn't.

On Wednesday 24 September and again on the following Monday, 11,000 workers at Ellesmere Port totally rejected the company's offer. Vauxhall offered a rise of 9d an hour for production operators which would have meant a weekly gross pay of only £23 3s 3d. The Merseyside men demanded a 3s an hour increase to bring them closer to the Midlands' hourly rates.

In support of their demand the AEF men at Ellesmere Port began a work-to-rule which the company countered by telling them to work normally or clock out. They clocked out and production on Merseyside stopped completely. A demand by 400 press operators for equal pay with Luton which had been backed up by another go-slow and then clocking out, had already halted Viva production from 15 September. The new stoppage meant that by last week 7000 men were on strike or laid off at Ellesmere Port, and another 6500 were laid off at Luton and Dunstable.

The national union officials met the company on 9 October and agreed to the deal previously rejected by the Merseyside men. The deal provides for:

- 8d-10d an hour rises for all Vauxhall's 27,000 manual workers.
- More employment of women - probably with equal pay provided they agree to shift-working (and the government lets them).
- Progressive moves towards a closed shop at Vauxhall - provided the unions abide by their undertakings to uphold procedure.

When the unions put the agreement to the men they will not disclose the nature of their 'undertakings' to the company. These are not going to be written formally into the deal because of what the two sides describe as 'sensitivity' about penal clauses. Instead the unions will promise to 'actively discourage' action in breach of procedure.

## A second vote

The 'democracy' that is returning to Vauxhall this week is of a most peculiar kind. Men out on strike against a miserable pay offer and its dangerous strings will be asked to vote on it again. Other men who may be feeling resentful about being laid off will also be asked to vote on the deal. But in the situation facing them, they will really be voting about whether they want to remain laid off or not.

In this way the so-called 'consultation' with the members is just another way for the full-time union officials to bring pressure on those who are prepared to fight for better wages and conditions. The TUC and the AEF executive are united in this attempt to pressurise the militant Merseyside workers. The AEF executive, as well as instructing the 400 Ellesmere Port operators to return to normal working, has recommended that the struggle against Vauxhall's new deal be dropped.

In the light of the eight-week old strike by 1150 workers at the British Leyland Standard Triumph factory at Wood End, Merseyside, for a guaranteed £25 a week and a £410s bonus rise, the activities of the full-time union officials take on a worse colouring. The strike, together with the month-old BL Rover strike in Cardiff and the week-old closure of BL's Morris Motors factory at Cowley, Oxford, has placed nearly 17,000 of British Leyland's carworkers on national assistance.

Yet despite the size and length of these strikes, which have stopped almost half of UK car production, no national crisis situation has been announced by Wilson or by the employers. The only people actively trying to get the men back to work are the union officials.

The reason is simple. In the week which sees the start of the Motor Show, car sales are still lower than they were a year ago. Export sales are just about keeping the car industry executives in caviar, but the home sales have slumped, and remain low. In consequence neither they, nor Wilson, are immediately worried by disputes. If the men stay out production is lost but the wage bill is cut too. If the men go back they return to worse conditions of work than when they struck.

This cleft stick for the workers can signal only one thing: a long and bitter struggle. No one can honestly say that it's easy to win under present conditions. But the turning of the screws on car workers means that it's still easier to win that long and bitter struggle than it is to retreat and accept bad pay and conditions. At the same time the struggle can't simply be conducted on the level of pay and conditions. The opposition is much bigger than that. It includes Vauxhall, British Leyland, the Labour government as well as the TUC and full-time union officials.

To win outright against this opposition needs a political answer as well. They are all trying to run our lives according to a system under which they do very well and ordinary people do badly. That is their politics. Our answer must be that we're not only fighting for better wages and conditions. What keeps the struggle going and the workers united is the knowledge that we're also fighting against their system as a whole. Socialism and workers' power is our politics.

## Merseyside loses a leading militant

**LAST THURSDAY MORNING** Merseyside lost one of its foremost fighters on the industrial field when Graham Buchanan, aged 46, collapsed and died at the Shellstar construction site. Workers on the site, which readers will know has an unparalleled record of militancy, clocked off at noon to show their respect.

A native of Derry, Graham Buchanan emigrated to Liverpool just after the war and sought work. Joining the Heating and Domestic Engineering Union, he came to play a major role in the local labour movement, both as a prominent member of his trade union and recently as an executive member of the Liverpool Trades Council.

In the latter capacity he fought for uncompromising op-

position to government legislation against the right to strike. The Trades Council adopted this policy and despite threats from the TUC it called for a stoppage on May Day, a call that was supported by 50,000 Merseysiders.

However, Graham correctly appreciated the importance of the grass roots of the movement and was frequently elected steward by members on the sites. One of his last jobs was to draft a series of proposals for rules revision in the HDEU which were intended to strengthen rank and file control over the apparatus.

In recent weeks he assisted in the setting up of a branch of the Irish Civil Solidarity Campaign and often spoke of the need to nail the lie that the strife in

Northern Ireland had its origin in religion. (He had too much experience of the Unionist record in the fields of employment, housing, gerrymandering and discrimination to fall for that one.)

Graham was increasingly sympathetic towards the International Socialists, Socialist Worker must be grateful to him for helping to foster sales on the Shellstar site.

Finally, on behalf of Socialist Worker, we would like to extend our sympathy to Graham's wife and children. Not only has the local movement lost a fine comrade but a happy wife and family have lost a fine husband and father.

I.P. Hughes

Ross Hill