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Car workers and post strikers lead counter offensive

GREAT FIGHT BACK

KEY SECTIONS of workers are staging a magnificent fight back as the Tories openly challenge their right to a decent wage. Section after section are being forced to strike as the only way to defend and improve living standards.

For postal workers are in the third week of their dispute, 44,000 Ford workers have just started their battle for parity. Railwaymen and power workers may be in the fight in the next few weeks.

Claims for better wages are being turned down throughout the whole of the public sector. If the postal men had accepted the Post Office’s 3 per cent offer they would have suffered a pay cut because the increase in the cost of living in 1970 was more than 10 per cent.

Ford workers are the worst paid in the entire motor industry. Their wages are between £10 and £17 a week less than those earned by Midland car workers.

Ford can afford to pay huge pay rises. For years they have made tremendous profits.

DETERMINED

In both 1963 and 1969 they made more than £1,000 profit per worker. In simple language this means about £20 profit a week from every member of their labour force.

The government is determined to hold down wages. They say this is because they want to stop inflation.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The employers want to increase their profits. The Tories are their parliamentary representatives.

Together they want to boost profits at the expense of working people.

An example of this is the selling off of the profitable parts of the nationalised industries. This is not being done because of “principle.”

It is being done to swell the pockets of the wealthy. It is the Tories way of thanking Big Business for giving money to their election funds. It is the big pay-off at the public’s expense.

The government is determined to defeat both the post office workers and the Ford workers. They want to

by SW Industrial Correspondent

Frighten workers into not asking for pay increases and to publicly demonstrate that they and the employees are stronger than the working class.

This offensive is underpinned by the introduction of anti-trade union laws. If passed, those laws would have made the Ford strike “unfair” and given the management the right to claim huge damages in the TUC special National Industrial Relations Court.

If the Tories are successful in holding down wages and defeating the current strikes, millions of working people will pay the penalty. The fate of power workers, railwaymen, teachers, clothing workers and many others will be determined by the present strikes.

The Ford strike is particularly crucial. For years the millionaire press has complained about “highly paid” and militant car workers.

MAGNIFICENT

Car workers have been in the front line of the wages battle for many years. The pay increases they won have encouraged hundreds of claims from other groups of workers. Several years ago, Ford workers struck in support of low-paid nurses. It was a magnificent gesture.

Today they are again in the front line. The standard of living of millions will either be improved or cut depending on the outcome of their struggle. They are the crack troops of the working class.

1. Ford reports: page 8
2. Post strike: page 8

Boy ‘beaten by police’ died

Dagenham: Body plant workers march out on Monday to start their vital strike for parity with Midlands car rates. Another picture: page 8

Oil: the forgotten people

ONE MATTER that has not been discussed in the abortive talks between the oil producing nations and the western petroleum monopolies is the plight of the poor oil workers of the Middle East.

But their situation is a burning indictment of a rubber-baron system that exploits the wealthy resources of the oil areas and leaves the people in abject poverty.

Only 12 per cent of the proceeds from each barrel of crude oil goes to the producing country. The rest is carved up by the oil firms and the wealthy western powers in profits and taxes.

The love affair between the west and the Shah of Iran is likely to cool as he leads the campaign for the Middle East despite grabbing a bigger slice of the cake. The Shah and the rulers of Kuwait who live in luxury while their people starve and their militant leaders are jailed and flogged deserve no support from anti-imperialists in the west.

But we must maintain our chief condemnation for the real villains: the giant oil monopolies and their government backers who have supported the reactionary regimes in the Middle East in order to bleed those countries of the product that could bring decent living standards to the Arab masses.

Shaming through the hypocrisy of the oil talks is the urgent need for a joint struggle of the people of the west and the Middle East to smash imperialism and its puppets.

IT IS HAPPENING HERE: Centre pages
CZECHS TO TRY SOCIALISTS FOR CONSPIRACY

IT IS NOW two and a half years since Russian troops invaded Czechoslovakia to bring to an end the Czech ‘spring’ of 1968. But the use of police to prevent opposition to the rule of the minions of the Russian government continues.

In Prague next Monday 26 young people, who have been detained for ten days and two days of the activities. They are accused of an ‘anti-state Trotskyist conspiracy’.

Opposition Ctty Party newspaper Rude Pravo, claimed to expose a Trotskyist organisation opposed to the state whose aim was to disrupt and weaken the system to create political crisis’. It described this organisation as ‘created under the name of Czech Revolutionary Socialists Party and allegedly had its origins in the so-called revolutionary youth movement’. Rude Pravo said the party’s aim was to overthrow the ‘socialist’ regime not only of Czechoslovakia but of the Soviet Union and the other East European countries as well.

Rude Pravo went on to say that the organisation was a grouping of students and young workers, and that its activities manifested themselves particularly in the engineering and printing unions.

In fact, the programme of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, published in the left-wing press in Western Europe last August, showed that the organisational expressed itself the capitalists that exist in the state and to the Stalinist regimes of the so-called Communist countries. It seeks for real workers’ power, based on workers’ councils.

Before the trial takes place, socialist and trade union organisations in this country should make their protests known to the Czech authorities. Resolutions should be sent to the Czechoslovakian embassy (25 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8. Phone 01-229 1255).

CHRIS HARMAN

US-RUSSIAN PRESSURE FOR NEW MIDDLE EAST CARVE-UP

by Stephen Marks

ISRAEL and Egypt are squaring up for another confrontation as the ceasefire on the Suez Canal is due to end this week. But behind the scenes the pressure from America and Russia continues for a carve-up ‘peace’ that would leave the Palestine question outside the area for imperialism and the oil monopolies.

Civil defence exercises and air raid blackouts in Cairo, with the conscription age raised by six months for fuller air raid protection, are aimed to make Israeli ‘hawks’ think twice before resuming attacks. And Israeli ‘optimism’ about the outcome of peace talks through UN mediator Jarring are also moving in the propaganda war so that the Arabs will be blamed for any resumed fighting.

SETBACK

But basically the situation is deteriorating. Israeli guerrillas suffered in Amman last September. At that point in time, imperialism’s kingpin King Hussein of Jordan had to eliminate the Palestine guerrillas as an independent force in the way of the ‘peace’ moves then being hatched.

The guerrillas could only succeed in their aim of doing away with the revolutionary forces and the state country if they also attacked imperialism and the oil companies, Israel’s backers. This made the Arab governments afraid of them too. They had to be got out of the way so the Arab regimes could do a deal with Israel.

Since the September defeat, Amman has been purged of guerrillas and attacks on Israel from Jordanian soil have been banned. The left-wing guerrilla groups are banned, and the paper of El Fatah has been shut down.

DISOWNED

This has led to splits in Fatah, the largest guerrilla group, whose claim that the Palestinian struggle is separate from the struggle against Arab regimes is nowhere near as strong as that of the Arab regimes. Fatah spokesmen in Damascus and Beirut calling for the organisation’s liquidation were said to be owned in Amman.

And Fatah leader Arafat, in a recent TV interview on Panorama, refused to answer questions on the proposal for a Palestinian state on the West Bank of Jordan, now occupied by Israeli forces, and said that the Land of Israel was sacred. Arafat’s refrain is that ‘there is no ‘peace’ carve-up, and Arafat’s silence shows he may support this puppet-state solution.

After that, Arafat, who is temporarily banned by September, America and Russia can go ahead with their plans.

The stumbling block may be Israel’s unwillingness that the Arabs not only recognise her boundaries but open themselves to Israeli economic exploitation.

Israeli foreign minister Eban has said long ago that what he means by ‘peaceful coexistence’ with the Arabs is ‘the kind of relation the USA has with Japan and the Arab government and ruling classes of colonial, merchant and shippers and others can offer to our own people.

‘Leave it to Bradley’ is no different from that. We don’t have to have it from them what we know, in parliament.

Why should we encourage the working class to organise themselves to build their own运动 rather than being nothing less revolutionary than ‘More power to Bradley – the social spine’.

STEVE EVANS, Colchester, Essex.

INDO-CHINA: THE ALMOST FORGOTTEN WAR

THE WAR in Indo-China rarely makes the news now. Yet day after day, the US forces in Vietnam try to suppress the guerillas to burn their inhabitants with napalm, and to destroy their crops with defoliants.

The war goes on, even if the majority of the Vietnamese peasants are less newsworthy than the criminals in Algiers. They want to protest to their governors that they are not going to be forced to march in the streets with compulsory ballots and would order its members to respect picket lines and black goods – then the government’s prestige would be exposed.

The US forces are not winning the war, despite its ability to murder and terrorise. For two years now Nixon has been forced to withdraw, although at a small’s pace, troops from the country, because of economic pressures at home and because of the US government found that it could not afford the enormous cost of subduing the Vietnamese people – a clear credit to the fighting heroism and determination of that people.

Nixon now proposes a withdrawal at the rate of 15,000 a month. This is far too slow and the US forces in Vietnam means that they can survive the pressure of the guerilla government’s South Vietnam to survive is undermined.

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but how did Whelan and Grant keep their men happy and working for only £35 for a 60-hour week when some of them used to earn £600 for 40 hours on the same job?

The answer is that the firm was operating a secret labour-only system on the site of regular wage packets. The ASW were not satisfied, but they took until 21 January this year to prove how.

Charges of around £30-50 were given to the firm's regulars every week, ensuring that the work was done speedily and the site was 'trouble free'. It was not to have been generally organized and the carpenters could have been earning £70 per week quite legitimately.

Defeated

They had applied for membership only three days before Laing gave notice of terms to sack its own apprentices. Membership was only granted one full week after the strike was settled.

What maddened the employers was that the challenge to their wages and power had been defeated. To do this they prepared to pay the men £35 a week. ASW members were flogged on the job for the next few months.

Defeated

Two main motives inspired the union leadership. These were the cost of the unofficial leadership that had emerged on the big London sites and the pursuance of company-wide agreements with Laing which would give the check-off system of union dues collection, with membership a condition of employment.

The conclusion that the whole affair was set up in advance is unanswerable. This means that the strike was made official by the union executive to give the militants full rein in striking against the lamp knowing they would be caught in the trap when Whelan and Grant were shown to be 'legitimate'.

So Whelan and Grant were established on the job, with their chippies taking our union membership as a condition of employment. The ASW executive agreed they should be no bonus scheme on the job until the work was speeded up. One block was nearly finished now as far as the chippies were concerned and there is still no negotiated bonus scheme.

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Witchhunt

but the news of the tale is more than the particular need to defeat the corrupt leadership of the ASW and to take back union as the property of the members.

It lies in the whole tactics of the newspapers and the MPs, who are in the vanguard of witch-hunting workers and the scab and scum and scab of the industry.
Repression is on the increase. You may be aware of it...
emotional pain from the beatings they received when the army threw teargas canisters. The army has used teargas canisters in the past, but in this case, it was used in a more aggressive manner. The canisters were launched at close range, causing widespread panic and injury. The use of tear gas has been a source of contention between the army and civil rights groups, who argue that it is a violent and unjustifiable tactic. The army, on the other hand, defends its use of tear gas as a necessary measure to maintain order and protect its personnel. The issue of tear gas use by the army continues to be a source of debate and conflict in Northern Ireland. The use of tear gas has also raised concerns about the safety and well-being of civilians, particularly those in the most vulnerable communities. The continued use of tear gas by the army is a reminder of the ongoing struggle for justice and equality in Northern Ireland.
How the TUC came in from the cold

First of two articles by Mike Cafoor

THE HOSTILE RECEPTION given to Vic Feather, General Secretary of the TUC at the Albany Hall rally on 12 January, is an indication of the changing discussion felt by many trade unionists at the lack of leadership shown by the TUC leaders in the fight against the Tory Industrial Relations Bill.

The TUC General Council claim to be the leadership of the trade union movement. Yet they have done little to defeat the Bill.

All these questions need to understand the role of the TUC. How can they capsize the Bill? Will they call a General Strike? What demands should we make on them?

The answer to these questions is of crucial concern in the coming weeks and months. The part played by the TUC will be assessed by examining the past record of the TUC.

Ever since the defeat of the General Strike in 1926, the TUC have spoken openly of the need to collaborate with the employers in the national interest. During the Second World War the TUC led the most massive organization of union leaders to help the war effort.

With the election of a Labour government in 1945, the TUC leaders made their first public moves to organize a national council to work with the government. The TUC leaders wanted to make sure that there was no repetition of the general strike of 1926, which had split the working class and broadened the struggle of the working class against capitalism.

The election of a Labour government in 1945 did not deter the TUC trade unions from their policy of collaboration. As the TUC General Council stated in the Thirteenth report of 1945:

"The TUC leaders have adopted the long-standing practice of seeking work amicably with union recognition. They have adopted a policy of consultation with employers, to find practical solutions to the social and economic problems facing the country. These may lead to no doubt, therefore of the attitude of the TUC towards the new government.

For the TUC leaders, the national council was a major step forward, as it was necessary to work together to overcome the difficulties of the time. The TUC leaders wanted to make sure that there was no repetition of the general strike of 1926, which had split the working class and broadened the struggle of the working class against capitalism.

In the years following the TUC leaders' 1945 election victory, the TUC leaders faced the task of rebuilding the trade union movement. The TUC leaders wanted to make sure that there was no repetition of the general strike of 1926, which had split the working class and broadened the struggle of the working class against capitalism.

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War games - blood hides the truth

ONE of the ways in which the cinema plays an important ideological role in society is by picturing and interpreting recent history on the screen. Billed as 'the most spectacular film ever made', Tora! Tora! Tora! attempts to show the battle of Pearl Harbour from both the American and Japanese points of view.

It is a welcome exception to the usual run of war films that deal with the Japanese. Normally, they are portrayed as wicked, evil and cruel yellow devils and the war takes on an openly racist tone.

In the same way, some people defend the use of the atom bomb at Hiroshima on the grounds of the basic cruelty and illogicality of the Japanese mind.

Subtle myth

Tora! Tora! Tora! does manage to avoid this crude characterisation of the Japanese but it works to perpetuate another, more subtle myth. It attempts to show that freedom-loving America was unprepared for Pearl Harbour because she was a democracy and not armed like the Japanese militarists.

The small element of truth in this view is dwarfed by the fact that sheer stupidity and lack of foresight played a much larger part than is admitted here. Equally, Stalin's allegedly either 'socialist' or 'totalitarian' Russia proved to be just as unprepared for Hiroshima as the US, and was actually warned by numerous sources, including its own spies.

Moreover, the film fails completely to analyse and explain the social and political lay that lay behind the American-Japanese war. We are simply shown a series of diplomatic manoeuvres which are just like games.

There is nothing about Japanese fascism or the role of the military in Japanese society. Neither is there any mention of Japan's war in China or of the basic struggle for the markets of South East Asia between American and Japanese capitalism.

Numb with apathy

The film becomes an excuse for masses of blood and killing. The battle scenes take up more than an hour of the film's running time.

I became immune in the end: the blood seemed bloodless and you wait quite happily for the inevitable slaughter. This is simply a Western on a grand scale.

It left me numb, but with apathy, almost boredom, not shock. This war, which culminated in the dropping of the atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is safely domesticated into a kind of adventure with large adventures. The baddies had a headstart but as usual the goodies won in the end.

Tora! Tora! Tora! tells us nothing about the real causes of this war, adds nothing to our knowledge of war in general and deals with nothing to excite for lots of gratuitous violence.

Martin Tomkinson

If you have difficulty in obtaining Socialist Worker please set your local bookshop to stock it.

A HERO of these Tory times: leading businessmen in Romford, Essex, are invited to be a trump to their special guest at the next meeting of the town's Chamber of Commerce. The tramp, Mr Peter Blandell, makes a living as a pavement artist and lives in a run-down b'n the side of the Southend highway. The Chamber of Commerce's magazine admires him as a man who has had the courage to discipline himself to help his own existence without becoming a parasite on society. They mean he doesn't draw unemployment benefit or social security.

Described as 'a shining example of private enterprise', Mr Blandell will be taken to the Chamber's meeting so that the assembled business brass can shake him by the hand. And get him to do a few quick sketches on the town hall!

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Cannon's fodder

BBC Radio 4 interviewed electrician's union president Les Cannon shortly before his death at the end of 1970. The interview was printed in last week's Listener.

Years after the defeat of the ETU Community leadership in the High Court, Cannon was still obsessed by the 'red menace'. He worried at it like a terrier with a bone. The interview is shot through with his persistent fear of Communist and Trotskyist 'composites'.

When questioned on the Community technique for getting left-winners nominated for office, the 'composy' tends to diminish somewhat.

In a particular branch of the union, which is 500 strong, which gets 20 or 30 in attendance at a meeting, you have two or three fairly skilled Communist debaters at the meeting place who have discussed beforehand what kind of resolution they want passed or what kind of wages demand they want the executive to make or who should be nominated for the executive council elections.

'Nobody else got any firm line and so one of these chap gets up and says: 'I move brother so-and-so as a national officer because he is a good chap, he's got a fantastic record.' And another Communist gets up and says: 'I was working on the contracting side and he was a great fellow,' and that's it - he's nominated.'

So the wicked reds had their way because nobody else had a 'firm line'. Who was it if you were indicting, Les?

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Bovis boys

BOVIS, the large construction firm, made millions by cultivating particular companies with large building requirements. All Marks and Spencer shops are built by Bovis, as are all Players cigarette factories and offices of Bernard Heaphy. Bovis' managing director, was quoted in Construction News last week to the effect that the Ministry of Health could benefit from a nice, friendly relationship with Bovis on all those big, expensive hospitals it will be building. Could well happen that Bovis gets in on these lucrative contracts.

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The World of big business has a dreadful fascination for the tidy player. In the world of industry it is the dream of working people, reserved for the occasional document or the plastic nonsense of Coronation Street, the romanticisation of business is as close to working people as a head of state business almost as a pastime. Yet we will see how, or at least the last three episodes I have seen - it is his adventures are monumentally boring and work up none of the back-stabbing steam that made Sir Wilfrid's Power Game escapades so viewable. So, we will get a glimpse of the two-faced morality of the ruling class that condemns the 'violence' and 'piracy' of sticklers but condones the most base betrayal and dubious methods of the Men of Property.

Last Friday's serial of Huddersfield fighting to buy a local Yorkshire brewery in order to save it from the murky hands of a powerful London corporation. When a flighty lady accountant stands in his way of raising a loan, his mother's advice is crisp and to the point: 'Bed, hair, fish, the lot.'

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In a tizzy

But James stays firmly zipped, his many exploits continued to whipping up his cheque book when confronted by a member of the opposite sex. He makes the cash in the nick of time and he is the grand winner of the heavy, although trouble looms with the prospect of a strike. Meanwhile, back at the family mansion, Lady Jane's lover has walked out and she doesn't know how to plug in the Hoover. It is all mind-rebulous, but, as they say up North, 'where there's muck, there's muck'.

BBC's series The Six Wives of Henry VIII (serialised on BBC1 on Sunday evenings) has been widely praised and deservedly so.

Keith Mitchell's development from North country lout, great-gutted, belching king is an astonishing performance. Last Sunday's play dealt with Ann of the other hand it was a bit of a disappointment - the intrigue and the passion in the series were one dim-factious and the religious smoke screen that scarcely veiled the political ambition of Protestants and Catholics in Europe.

BBC2, with considerable rolling on the drums, is presenting a trilogy of plays on Wednesdays called Long Voyages Out of War: an account of the torpedoes that sank in 1914. The film was in Rome, it had in captures over the 'depth and significance' of the reports about the problems of the individual in our modern life, an expression of the breakdown of communication between the old and the young generation.

Also, it was a build-up for a big lecture.

The first play was set on the River Themse, a re-enactment of the last war and had a set of famous British MPs selected for a bomb-outted church. The second, set in the grave yard, was about an elderly disciplinary committee square figure and a young army officer who was a copper on the picket. There was another series round Lord Hannay's speeches, falling about on floors and beady-eyed, the one about approaching floods and the sudden totally unexpected appearance of a black soldier.

It took the author two years to write. A long time to write.

David East
**Socialist Worker**

**POST**

Strikers firm as Chataway puts on the 9d ‘frighteners’

by Dave Percival, UPW

THE POSTAL WORKERS’ strike — now entering its third week — is totally solid. Strikers are now in a position to deliver some long overdue benefits for the 10,000 UPW members, strikers everywhere are determined to win a £3 minimum wage increase.

Last Sunday’s meeting at the Department of Employment was useless. It was called by Robert Carr but nothing extra was offered. It was held to raise hopes of settlement and then to dash them. The union is using every trick to try and demoralise us. They constantly pressure retired postal workers returning to work.

They publicise the growth of the private sector post mail service. Although these are ‘charging us up’ to get more work for the Union.

The latest issue of the Gazette is being clinically examined by the BMA, the National Union of Railwaymen, the GMB, the CP of England and Ireland and the TGWU.

The latest issue of the dispute and the power workers’ power to win an economic victory is the key to victory. It warns power workers that the Wilberforce report is unlikely to give them the pay increase they deserve. If it does not accept the power workers’ claim for a £5 minimum wage increase, then the TGWU will contest the report.

The Three week strike is as a result, every trade unionist should come to the power workers’ aid. Last time they were the victims of vicious press attacks.

Next time rank and file trade unionists must stand up to the power workers’ side. Their case must be argued to the public through leaflets and public meetings. The responsibility for cuts and redundancies will fall on the management’s shoulders.

Copy of Advance can be obtained price is (50p) per set from 6th Foundation Road, Stretford, Manchester or JS South Service, 6 Cottam Gardens, London E2.

**FORD: ‘NO MORE CARS UNTIL WE GET PAY PARITY!’**

by Colbin Beadle, Dagenham Body Plant, TGWU

THE MULTI-MILLION Ford empire ground to a halt on Monday. Mass meetings at all the main plants voted to strike in response to the insulting wage offer of £2 a week for a week. The battle for parity with other car workers is now really on.

The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on. The unions had put in a claim for £16 a week more to bring Ford Midlands car rates is now really on.

The rank and file response to the workers shocked the management. It was clear to most workers that the Ford company was standing behind Ford, demanding that they take the line of a £4 a week pay.

Two weeks ago, both Robert Carr and the Confederation of British Industry had secret talks with the Ford management.

Ford management were looking at a repeat of last year’s strikes and the effects of the pay packet on the company’s profits. They were disappointed. Ford’s regional manager, Mr. James, said that the company had not been able to raise its profit margins in the past year and it would not be feasible for Ford to raise wages more than £4 a week.

The workers responded with a general strike. The TGWU, the NFU, the NUS, and the CWI all supported the strike. The TGWU has been in talks with the Ford management and has said that it will support the workers in their strike.

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