Redundancies and unemployment can be fought

THE OCCUPATION of the UCS yards has raised the struggle against unemployment to a new level. The government has announced its intention of slashing the workforce from 8,400 to 2,500 and the UCS workers immediately assumed control of the yards.

In John Brown's-the only yard where the workers have returned from their holidays-the shop stewards have made it clear that nothing can be done without their permission. Stewards are also manning the entrances to other yards as a symbol of their intention to assert their control when the workers return on 9 August.

The steps already taken represent a huge leap forward from any previous redundancies struggles. But clearly further measures are necessary before the workers exert full control in the yards. For example, stewards have already advised workers not to accept their redundancy notices sent out last week.

They should also instruct the office staff not to make up redundancy payments, insurances cards, etc, for the 400 workers concerned.

If, as the workers, have decided production is to be maintained, then the organisation of production has to involve the workers concerned. So far, management have been represention on the committees set up by the shop stewards to run the yards, but no workers are involved except the shop stewards committee.

INSULT

One of the lessons that has to be drawn is that the workers don't need a foreman standing over them and still less do they require private ownership.

The government's acceptance of the Inquiry Committee's Report has only made the workers more determined than ever. Almost 6000 redundancies are bad enough, but when an attempt is made to gag the pill by telling them that 1000 jobs are available at the Scott Lithgow yards then this is adding insult to injury.

Scott Lithgow is at least 20 miles from most UCS workers' homes, so travelling time and expenses would increase, while wages are currently 20-25p an hour less than at UCS. Clearly a wage reduction of this dimension ($1.80 a week) is what is meant by the Committee's reference to the need to achieve 'competitive wage rates'.

The union would also have to agree to radically alter working practices and this means more flexibility, interchangeability, work study, etc. Double-day shifts from 6am to 2pm and from 2pm to 10pm are further government demands. This means that workers living in outlying areas would have to get up at 4am for the first shift, or, if on the shift system, arrive two hours before their regular time.

From Peter BAIN

that the new company would decide whom to employ and may start labour from outside UCS so even the 1500 jobs retained appear to be an exaggeration.

In the past, a succession of crises have been utilised to foist similar measures on UCS workers. This time with the chronic local unemployment situation, the workers' backs are against the wall. They have no choice but to fight.

One of the principal architects of the 'accept this or the yards close' policy was, of course, Anthony Wedgewood Benn.

It was Wedgewood Benn who demanded more than 3000 redundancies in May 1969, 45 per cent productivity increase, increased shift work, rigid adherence to procedure, etc.

Now that he is in safety opposition Benn has confessed he made mistakes in the past. He has now discovered that he should have nationalised UCS, while his now-repudiated belief in workers' control is of even more recent vintage.

WHY

If Benn wishes to support the UCS workers' struggle then that is up to him. But those who unifically accept his arguments must be asked to justify their attitude.

In opposition, it just so happens that Barbara Castle, the 'brain behind In Place of Stile', now opposes the Industrial Relations Bill, while Wilson weeps crocodile tears over the health service and school milk charges which he initiated! The Labour Party always shows its 'left' face in opposition so as to pick up votes. These opportunists are swallowing the depths of cynicism, with Benn clearly staking his claim as future leader of the Labour Party.

But no UCS worker can believe that the struggle can be won by speeches in parliament.

The only way to defeat the government is to continue the occupation and to mobilise the whole labour movement in a massive campaign against unemployment.

POLICE ASSAULT FINES TUBES PICKETS

Clashes outside the Plymouth factory last week. For an on the spot report see back page.

HOW TO WIN

UCS WORKERS can defeat the government and stop the redundancies. But only by a determined and militant struggle. They have given a lead to the whole working class by their action of occupying the yards. It needs to be followed up.

As a coincidental step, the Central NUM is to make a call in the area to show solidarity, not only by continuing supplies to UCS, but by occupying their own plants as well. Workers in other plants threatened with redundancies should be prepared to follow the UCS example.

The best way to ensure this is a press for a spreading of the occupation. The call should go out for other workers in the Glasgow area to show solidarity, not only by continuing supplies to UCS, but by occupying their own plants as well. Workers in other plants threatened with redundancies should be prepared to follow the UCS example.

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TO TYNE STRIKES

WHILE UCS men were occupying their yards, shipyard workers in the north-east were showing that they were not to be cowed into submission by high unemployment. For the first time in 10 years, all shipbuilding in the Tyne came to a halt when the five yards of Swan Hunter closed on 2 August.

At a meeting held in Wallsend on Sunday the 2800 general workers in the yard voted overwhelmingly to strike in support of their claim for a basic £2.60 plus a week.

The men, all members of the General and Municipal Workers Union, are demanding parity with the general workers in the shipbuilding industry.
**Militancy vital for Upper Clyde victory**

THE OCCUPATION of UCS is a turning point in the fight against the employers’ offensive to retrench and cut jobs. The struggle to turn the tide against the employers and the government can be won.

Harland and Wolff is proof enough. Whatever the profit prospects of the Belfast yard, the workers have been fighting for two years to keep it in their hands.

Why? Because the workers are desperately afraid that its closure would leave them the support of the Protestant workers in Belfast. That support is vital if they are to win. The grievous step taken by the employers is now part of the deciding factor and not, as the Tories pretend, market forces beyond their control.

If anyone has any doubt about this they should look at the Concorde project. Hundreds of millions of pounds down the drain for an aircraft that nobody, even years post-hoc, can show a profit on the books. Or consider the cost to the state in unemployment pay and supplementary benefit of 18,000 redundancies in the West of Scotland. It would be cheaper to subsidise UCS to continue production for a few years.

But politics decides. The Tory ‘no lame ducks’ policy is part of the overall strategy of the bosses to intimidate and discipline workers by the threat of unemployment. They want to dampen down militancy, weaken shop floor organisation, shake the unions with the Industrial Relations Bill and they want to make these things quite simply to push up profits at the expense of real wages. The fight of the UCS workers is the fight to put people before profits. It is a fight for the survival of man and woman in the country. It will be won if the occupation sparks off a massive movement of support that can break the Tories’ will. Every socialist has the duty to do the utmost possible to support that movement.

Socialists have another, less pleasant duty. It is to point out that if UCS remains closed it is not a question of right or wrong for UCS, but that it will be a matter of life or death for that factory. It will be the battle to keep the factory open.

Remember the postwar. The UPW was beaten at its knees. When it came to the crunch, the trade union bureaucracy faced the same problem that day. It must stand up or fall down.

There are lessons from the past. The struggle is not just a continuing work of a ‘work in progress’ rather than an occupation as such, is very dangerous. One bargaining asset in the hands of the workers is the Thirty million pounds worth of unfinished ships in the yard. They could use this to win. They could get those jobs finished and pay off men progressively as they are no longer needed. To carry on working into this policy. Far greater pressure can be exerted by a sit-in, strike or occupation.

But above all the call has to come from UCS for sympathetic occupations of the country. The need is not just for a demonstration, for a national demonstration, but for a general shutdown of support in support of UCS, for the organisation of sustained financial support for an unlimited occupation. Spreading the movement is the key to the success of this struggle.

Further, channel, official and unofficial, must be used. The Tories can and will be beaten provided that the siren voices of ‘repeasibility’, ‘maturity’ and ‘no politics’ are drowned in a roar of working-class protest.

**BEHIND THE OZ WITCH-HUNT**

THE VICIOUS treatment of the editors of Oz must be condemned by everybody on the left. They have been found guilty of publishing an obscene article and have been held in prison for a week before sentencing for ‘sensationalist reports’. This follows closely upon a similar judgment against the members of the Black Book Club.

The important point about these decisions is that they really have nothing whatsoever to do with obscenity. If that were what the police were after they would have taken a long time to get into the big cinemas that make a handsome profit from exploiting sexual frustrations or to the big advertising concerns who continually exploit sexual symbolism in their efforts to outdo each other.

Behind the attacks on Oz and the Little Red School Book are quite different motives. Here we have people who are becoming frightened by the state of the society they live in. They feel that something is wrong with it. Yet they are not conscious of the origin of their discontent or of how to do anything about it.

Politicians who have no solution to these problems try instead to gain popularity by threatening the people with ‘crime’ and ‘decadence’. Labour lords, like Longford, can get a following for a campaign against ‘filth’ which they could never get for their policies of retrenchment and unemployment.

The situation is not helped by the often-naive and such moves. Attention is diverted from the real barbarity and obscenity of capitalist society, whether it be the inner cities, the Ori-Kan blocs and the slums of hundreds of thousands of people.

The situation is only understandable by the fact that they never let the real puritanism of such campaigns and laws against ‘filth’ determine their own behaviour—as was shown, for instance, in the Profumo scandal some years ago. Repressive legislation is always directed at those lower down the social scale.

Such campaigns involve attacking publications of a leftist hue, so much the better. The powers of the police to arbitrarily intimidate and harass is increased. And judges can get massive press publicity for actions that make it seem that anyone with a genuinely critical attitude to the existing set-up is in need of ‘mental treatment’.

**Tortured письменників in S African trial**

TWO important political trials began this week for three days and nights under the all-embracing provisions of the new law in Pretoria of the Union of South Africa. The Rev. Givouille-French Beytagh has made news already.

The other trial in Pietermaritsburg was lost to the world’s press. A number of members of the Unity Movement of South Africa were arrested and then charged with having the aim of undermining and overthrowing the government.

Some 35 people were arrested in February and March in various parts of South Africa and have been held incommunicado until the 14 were charged. The others are members of the African National Congress.

We have received information that they were arrested for taking part in the torture of the Security Branch of the South African police. The following are some of the details:

The accused were held in solitary confinement for about six months. The allegations by the accused include violent assaults on their legs and feet, blows with fists, whips and sticks. They were hooded and whipped in such a manner as to cause mental anguish. They were hooded and whipped in such a manner as to cause mental anguish. They were hooded and whipped in such a manner as to cause mental anguish.

The accused were allowed to write letters to their families but these were not passed on.

Several of the accused were subjected to the well-known electric shock machine, applied to various parts of the body, including the penis.

Matsieni Cuswela from Qublo, South Africa, was courted in Pretoria in the Tsehla trial, which he has now stood before the court, where he has been sentenced to life in prison for the murder of a police officer.

The judge in the case sentenced him to death, the maximum sentence for murder in South Africa.

In addition, the accused were denied the right to see their families or to have access to legal advice.

I would like more information about the International Socialists

**NIGERIAN SOCIALISTS**

ASK FOR HELP

LAST YEAR the military paper Nigerian Socialist issued its first issue. It has been successful, having been awarded damages of £200 to. (See Socialist Worker, 29 August 1975.)

But editor Babs Olowude has told Socialist Worker that the newspaper was taken off the presses. "It is being made for us by the government," he said. "We have agreed to make it a private paper."

"We have agreed to make it a private paper, pulling out all support from the government," he said. "We have agreed to make it a private paper.

In the autumn the crucial metal workers’ wage round began. It was too early to say how the chemical strike will affect the others.

The government’s hope that a ‘moderate’ settlement would dampen the size of the demand may succeed. But it is more likely that the metal workers will be encouraged by the development of effective local strikes in the previously passive chemical industry.

The bureaucracy of the IG-Metall (the metal-workers’ union) with 1.4 million members will probably try to use the same tactic as the chemical union, encouraging local strikes but preventing any link-up between them.

The most discouraging thing is that the left will probably be unable to even start any effective fight against this.

**German workers picketing chemical factory**

(pics: Keystone Press)

German workers picketing chemical factory. (photos: Keystone Press)

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The most discouraging thing is that the left will probably be unable to even start any effective fight against this.
Hit by Dave Peers

For the first time since 1967 there will be a million unemployed and being destroyed at the rate of 2000 a day. By any standards this is a major crisis for the British labour movement.

In the system of recording unemployment, figures were used in Britain, we would already have a million unemployed. In the United States, anyone who could work if there were jobs available was counted as unemployed. In Britain the government does not count the latter.

But many married women, older men, partially disabled and part-time workers are being registered when they lose the number of hidden unemployment. How, of course, Stalin didn’t produce men’s figures, but there were no unemployment benefits. In March 1967, 524,600 unemployed administrative and professional workers, PLUS ABOUT 20,000 ARE NOT UNEMPLOYED FOR EVERY VACANCY IN BIRMINGHAM. This will be a black year for school leavers. In black spots like Kitchener, outside Liverpool, youth unemployment has doubled over the last twelve months and the juvenile unemployment rate is as high as 30% per cent. In one particular town there will be 1000 young people leaving school this year to compete for no more than 1000 available jobs. At the centre of the government’s strategy on unemployment is the attempt to join us at a threat to keep wages from rising in step with prices. The basic thing is to make unemployment bearable. The problem exists on the back of a long unemployment. In the former boom areas of the West Midlands, unemployment is the major problem for the first time since the war. In May 1973 there were 12 unemployed for every vacancy in Birmingham. The fact is, however, that the level of wage increases is not keeping up with the rise in prices. And prices started rising because of tax increases and devaluation. So the Trade Unions recognize in their election manifest that unemployment is the major problem for the first time since the war. In May 1973 there were 12 unemployed for every vacancy in Birmingham. The fact is, however, that the level of wage increases is not keeping up with the rise in prices. And prices started rising because of tax increases and devaluation. So the Trade Unions recognize in their election manifest that unemployment is the major problem for the first time since the war.

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Black week

The technological and design staff in the engineering industry — formerly one of the most productive industries now find themselves in the same condition as the farmers: out of work and out of pocket.

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The Communist Party played down as much as possible the fact that there was a major industrial dispute. It is, after all, rather an embarrassment to have the armed working class taking power if your ideology is anti-socialist. It is, however, a threat that all that was needed was a bourgeois revolution.

A former officer described the situation: The fact that the Kremlin [by the Popular Front!] is that there has been a successful socialist revolution in half of Spain. Due to the demands of the directed agitprop I was instructed not to send out one word about this revolution... Nor are any foreign correspondents in Spain, regarded as a threat permitted to write freely of the revolution that has taken place. I was not allowed to discuss with any of the leaders those that I was close to.

As it was the same moods of old Bolsheviks were getting under way in Munich, Stalin was quite the move of the political police, expected to be a head of state, and the Public Order Act was established in the Communist Party.

So from the beginning of the Communist Party’s lives, theQualifiedName was a double civil war raging between fascist and communist parties and armed workers and also, behind the Communist front lines, between the Communist Party and the revolutionary left.

Weakness

Some hundreds of courageous and sincere Communists took part in the war, of the famous volunteer International Brigades, but they were tragically misled and served up to the Spanish democratic forces by the Moscow-dominated leadership. In May 1937, the Spanish Communist Party, the CP, was led by the most militant revolutionary elements in Spain... the Spanish rank-and-file had lost the configuration of the Spanish workers and peasants combined to politically develop and, on a national scale, to make a more determined fight from the anarchists of the old, official government.
**Tool room struggle continues**

by EDDIE MCCUSKLY
(Senior Editor, TUC, Stoke)

**THOUSANDS of workers in the Coventry area are involved in a protracted work to rule and overtime ban. They are resisting an attempt by the engineering employers to end the Coventry Tool Room Agreement.

The agreement was first concluded during the 1950’s. It is an attempt to stop drift of toolroom workers to more lucrative pacific works on the shop floor. But over the years it has been extended to cover more workers and in some plants, such as Self Changing Gears, all hourly paid workers are on it for a percentage of their pay.

More importantly, it means that average earnings are paid every month. They are a backbone of pay in the district which is important not only to Coventry car workers, but all engineering workers nationally. The rate provides one of the main benefits people in Coventry have compared with other pay scales in the country.

The Coventry Agreement has been an important factor in what the employers like to call wage drift. That is why the rate has increased by an average of one shilling per hour each year for the last five years in spite of wage freezes, percentage norms and price rises. And next year, for the first time in two years the rate has grown faster than ever, and the employers have no means of holding down wages while it continues.

For some time now the TUC has been pushing the introduction of a Measured Day Work system. But they have been unable to break the TDA in their Coventry plants.

The rate employed by the Tool Room, MTR, Cutter Grinders Gauge and Tool Room employees. The basic agreement for the rest of hourly paid workers specifically mentions the TDA in reference to wages.

The Tool Room Agreement must be defended against the engineering employers’ attack. Full support must be given to any workers involved in the engineering struggle. Any workers laid off because of strike action did not need emotional support than what they are as workers.

The maximum unity is essential. Any attempts by the employers to split workers on this issue must be resisted by all trade unions.

NOTICES

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS’ conference of new members on Sunday, 8th August at 6, Cottons Gardens, Open to all members. Get a copy from branches.


FOUR PAGE PAPER

Socialist Worker will be quarterly four pages this week and next because of the 21 August issue.

**Demand for TUC action on Bill**

SW Reporter

THE big guns of the TUC have already moved into action to try and persuade SOGAT, the printers’ union, to stop or compose a tough motion on the Industrial Relations Bill. A letter to every member of SOGAT’s executive is being circulated to members of the General Council of any union leaders whose union registers.

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