

Will Communists join coalition with Socialists and Tories?

STRIKE WAVE ROCKS ITALY AS GOVERNMENT TUMBLES

Squatters spotlight housing humbug but lack links with workers

Lionel Sims

SQUATTING IN ILFORD is now entering the final stage of the bloody climax with Tory council logic. While barbed wire entanglements surround the squatters, Quartermain, the hired bailiff, and his thugs withdraw for a while to replenish their forces for the next attack.

'What is it,' the high Tory local press whines, 'that has turned the quiet streets of suburban Ilford into a battleground?'

The London Squatters first moved into the central area of Ilford in the early weeks of February this year. The council plans for redevelopment of the area, overwhelmingly in the interests of big business, will involve more than 1000 empty houses by 1973. Despite recent press statements in which the council has waxed innocent over its responsibility for the homeless, its plans for these empty houses in the years prior to the start of the rebuilding scheme were either to leave the houses empty, or to lease them out as business premises as a lucrative short-term deal.

True to form, the initial reaction of Redbridge Council to the Squatters was one of panic combined with high handedness. Injunctions were issued restraining nine people from entering certain properties owned by the council. Of those nine, only two people had been on the premises at all, and then for a total period of 10 minutes. Another five had never been anywhere near them, and two people on the list did not even exist.

Ignominiously thrown out of court, the council then invoked the Forcible Entry Acts of 1391 and 1429. These Acts were established to protect feudal knights who, when returning from years overseas on a crusade or two, often found their castle keep bursting at the seams with squatters. There are no castles in Ilford, nor any knights on the council (which is not for the want of trying), but nevertheless the local magistrates went down to the properties, let out three loud 'Oyez's' and were greeted cordially by the squatters. The Squatters are a legally sophisticated crew and by charmingly greeting the magistrates with an open door, Redbridge Council had no legal right to evict them.

Council barbarism

During this first phase in the history of squatting in Ilford, the council was destroying vacant property to prevent occupation by Squatters. The nation-wide condemnation the council received for this piece of barbarism and exposure in the courts as administrative humbugs, pressured it into a complete policy reversal. Redbridge Council publicly announced that it was contacting all other London boroughs, allowing them to send their homeless, if they were willing, to the empty houses of Ilford.

Whether or not Redbridge Council were sincere in their offer or whether they were just testing the ground on which the Squatters sat is secondary. What is important is first, the plus side, that a militant tactic of direct action gets results, and secondly, the minus side, if direct action has no firm social base then it becomes a putsch which can be quashed with the superior combat forces of the ruling class.

It is unfortunate that when it came to the test, the squatting campaign in Ilford had had no time to consolidate a social base. The reasons for this can be more easily understood if we compare the Squatters today with the previous and biggest squatting movement of 1946.

Immediately after the second world war, squatting in the summer months of 1945 took place in a number of seaside towns on the south coast. Although the Squatters were successfully evicted, they provided the example for hundreds of demobbed servicemen returning from overseas to the slums. The radical feeling of those who squatted in the summer of 1946 was part of a general discontent among the masses after years of privation and vague promises of Churchill's 'New Order' and a 'Land Fit for Heroes'. The number of strikes, nearly all unofficial, was at an all-time high of 2300 in 1946, compared with the previous high of 1600 in 1920.

The number of squatters was colossal, it was completely spontaneous and it had the very amenable target of deserted

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Demonstrators outside Islington Town Hall on Tuesday. Below, Powell and his wife leave the meeting surrounded by police. Pictures: Jeff Pick.



Big police guard for Powell as 400 jeer

SW Reporter

RACE - HATE MP Enoch Powell was surrounded by a heavy guard of police on Tuesday when he spoke to a Tory meeting in Islington Town Hall, North London.

More than 400 people picketed the building in protest against his presence in the area. Members of the International Socialists, An-

March attacked

CARS DRIVEN by members of the extreme right-wing national Front organisation drove cars at a left-wing demonstration in Croydon on Saturday. The lead banner was also seized by three NF men in a car.

More than 50 people, members of IS, Young Socialists, Young Communists and Croydon Socialist Group, took part in the march to protest against the growth of fascist and near-fascist groups.

A small fascist counter march was held, with such slogans as 'the working class can kiss my arse'. The main demonstrators countered this with 'Drive the fascists off the streets' and the singing of the Internationale.

archists, Communist Party and local immigrant organisations carried banners and slogans condemning Powell's anti-immigrant and anti-union sentiments.

The police acted in their usual provocative manner and took no action when a loitering fascist savagely punched a girl demonstrator in the face.

A protest meeting was held nearby and the anti-racists booed, jeered and cat-called as Powell and his wife left the meeting with their friends in blue.

NORAH CARLIN

THE SIX-HOUR BATTLE between police and strikers in Turin last Friday was the most violent episode so far in the wave of strikes and riots which has hit Italy this summer.

Forty police, armed with tear gas, jeeps and helicopters were injured. 120 rioters, mainly young workers and students armed only with sticks and stones, were arrested.

On the same evening, the deeply divided Socialist Party split and resigned from the Centre-Left coalition government.

The upsurge of the Italian working class is at the root of the crisis. Strikes have been so frequent since last summer that one trade union organisation in Rome has started a 'Dial-a-Strike' service - the anxious traveller can find out through it what public services are affected.

There have been many wage struggles. Few of this year's national wage contracts have got through without some militant action and pressure on the unions from below.

Strikes involving control of production are also on the increase. Resistance to speed-up is a major issue in the present strike at Fiat (Turin), and the workers at Pirelli (Milan) for several months organised their own 'slow-down' of production in support of their demands.

IMPACT

The student movement and the activities of left-wing groups such as Potere Operaio have had an impact on factory struggles, though political influence often evaporates once a strike is over.

More important, rank and file committees and factory councils are springing up in many places. This is a relatively recent development in Italy, where most factory negotiations are conducted by union nominees and not by shop stewards.

Some of the workers in these committees are members of the Communist Party, some previously unorganised and unpolitical. Their new forms of organisation and militancy show the strength at the base of the movement, which is no longer controlled by the trade union federation.

Like the events of May last year in France, the upsurge in Italy shows the refusal of the working class to be 'integrated' into the capitalist system.

This does not come at a time of 'economic crisis' for

Factory councils spring up

Italy. The growth rate of Italian capitalism is still the highest in Europe, but the workers have not felt the benefits of this.

But the Italian Communist Party is not in a position to play the restraining role of the French Communist Party last year. The split between right and left within it is widely publicised and it is not a body capable of providing national leadership.

The leaders of the left group would like more militant action, but cannot act as an independent political force while so much of their attention is concentrated on turning the party leftwards and winning office within it.

Leaders of the right, such as Amendola, are pinning their hopes on entering the government in coalition with 'sympathetic' Socialists and Christian Democrats. They do not wish to spoil their chances by actions which might frighten off these 'sympathisers'.

But they have to show some signs of being able to control the working-class movement - so they are calling a one-day general strike for Friday, the day when it is least likely to be extended.

COLLAPSE

The entry of the Communist Party, or sections of it, into the government is at least a possibility. The latest coalition has collapsed, and the game of Centre-Left politics has been played to its limit within the rule laid down in 1964 - to ignore the existence of the Communist Party, which is the second largest party in parliament and has the support of a third of Italian voters.

Both the Socialists and the Christian Democrats (the Catholic party) are split on the issue of co-operation with the left. The Christian Democrats came to blows at their last congress when the left demanded more co-operation with the Socialists, and the Socialist Party split when most of the former Social Democratic Party walked out because they considered any co-operation with the Communist Party a betrayal.

There is talk of a 'fascist alternative' in Italy, a 'swing to the right' of disillusioned sections of the ruling and middle classes.

Respect for parliamentary institutions is certainly at its lowest since the war.

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Irish Civil Rights Solidarity Campaign

March with us to the Ulster Office,

Berkeley Street W1

on SUNDAY JULY 20th

Rally Hyde Park 3 pm

PETER SEDGWICK

on the grim meaning of 'the Wilson syndrome'

The appalling silence and inactivity of the British Left as Biafrans face death and starvation...

TH

THE PEOPLE OF BIAFRA once again face annihilation despite talk of resuming relief flights. Until last month, international charities had secured the passage of vital protein foods into the war area, and ended the famine in which more than a million people, of both sexes and all ages, died of hunger and deficiency diseases.

Now the famine is due to be repeated - especially since a number of spokesmen for the Federal Nigerian government have at last admitted that their policy is to use starvation as a weapon to subjugate Biafra.

The British government continues to support the Federal campaign, diplomatically and in the massive supply of arms. In the hospitals and mortuaries of Biafra, the causes of starvation and death are inscribed in the victims' records officially 'The Wilson Syndrome'.

Total surrender

The issues in the war are fairly simple. The demands of General Gowon's Federal Nigerian government are for the total surrender of Biafra and the total re-organisation of the whole of Nigeria into 12 states one of which would be a truncated 'Iboland' without access to the sea.

The other Ibo areas would be carved up in different regions. The vital Port Harcourt (predominantly an Ibo town) and several Ibo-speaking oil areas would be outside 'Iboland'.

Quite apart from the prospect of this dismemberment, the Eastern people do not trust their future within a Federal structure which in 1966 permitted several waves of massacres of their citizens in the backward North and which in 1967 refused to accept any financial responsibility for assistance to the two million Ibos who migrated back into the East after the massacres.

They do not trust a regime which imposed a total blockade on the Eastern region when the latter, after the refusal of aid, switched its funds from Federal taxes to local relief, and which has demonstrated its concern for the population of Biafra (whom it claims to rule) by genocidal starvation and the repeated

slaughter of whole townships by Northern units waging a fanatical Muslim 'holy war'.

What are Biafra's demands? Simply sovereignty and independence, with the borders of the new state to be determined by referendum among the peoples of disputed areas, with the re-settlement of any groups who wanted to live either inside or outside Biafra.

This latest operation would be no more difficult than the re-settlement that took place with, for example, the people displaced in Ghana's Volta River Project, and is an effective answer to those who claim that Biafra is simply an expression of the desire of the Ibos to dominate their own non-Ibo minorities. (The Ojukwu regime is fairly confident that many of the minority peoples would choose Biafra, since many of them were also, as Easterners, on the receiving end of the massacres in 1966)

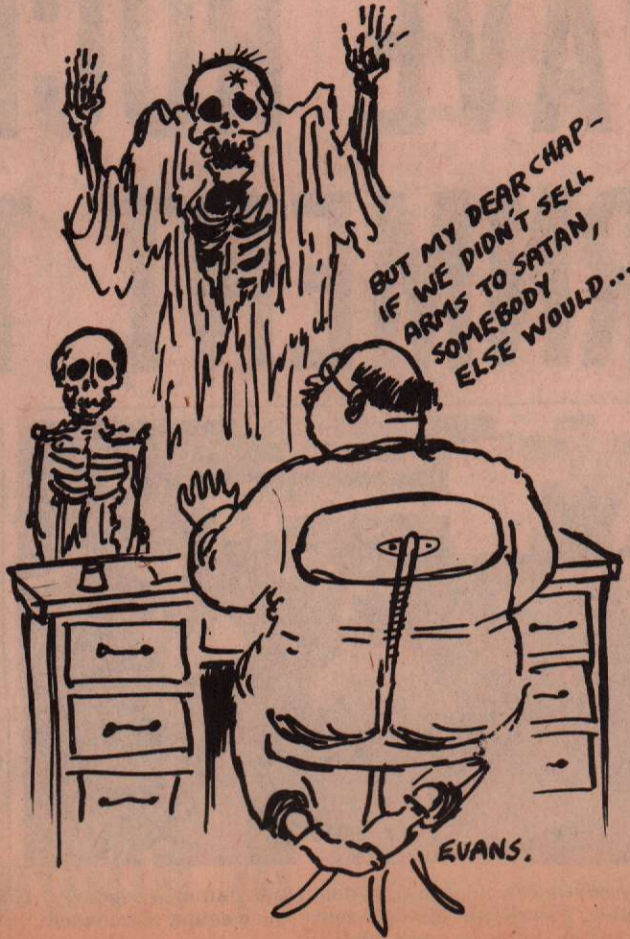
Virtually nobody, in fact, can be found who will defend the 'Federalists' war-aims. Nobody, that is, except the official 'Nigerian Marxist-Leninists' delegation to the international Communist Party conference in Moscow last month which declared, without any contradiction in the assembly, that 'history and the example of the Soviet Union' had proved the justice of the Federal/Military government's 12-state programme and that Biafra had been set up by, among others, the Vatican and Mao Tse-tung.

There has been, on the other hand, a marked lack of enthusiasm on the Left for taking up the Biafrans' cause. Surely some compromise should be arrived at, or so it is hinted.

Illusory demands

Unfortunately, as in Vietnam, the demand for 'negotiation' is illusory. The Federal side demands surrender - it is the Biafrans who are calling for a cease-fire and talks. Even the recent attempts by a few high-ranking Biafrans to fish for a settlement on terms of less than full sovereignty have proved totally abortive. General Gowon wants his victory.

It is quite likely, in any case that any compromise offered by Biafran leaders would be repudiated by the populace. In the original decision to secede in May



1967, Ojukwu was pushed beyond the mandate he requested to 'assert the autonomy of Eastern Nigeria without specifying either when or in what form this autonomy should finally be claimed'.

The Eastern 'Consultative Assembly', responding to the pressure of mass meetings in the localities instead mandated him urgently to declare the total secession of an independent Biafra. So much for the image of a Biafra created by the wilful ineptitude of the intransigent General Ojukwu.

Others on the Left allege that Biafra is in some way or other an imperialist puppet, the creature of South Africa, Portugal or France. If this were so, the recognition of Biafra by Tanzania and Zambia, who (especially the former) are vigorous opponents of white imperialism in Africa, would be very surprising.

And it is not so. Portugal supplies no arms or aid to Biafra (with the exception of permitting one of Biafra's few air outlets to the outside world via Lisbon and Sao Tome). Rumours of South African mercenaries have subsided as such characters have failed to make any appearance in the actual course of the war - although we must not forget the vicious behaviour of the small group of Swedes who recently committed the unforgivable atrocity of destroying most of Nigeria's Russian bombers by flying low over them with lightly-armed trainers (clear evidence of western neo-colonial influence).

Oil take-over

The role of France is obscure, though nobody suggested that de Gaulle's diplomatic support for North Vietnam and the Arab world meant that Ho Chi Minh or Nasser had sold out to French imperialism.

There have been reports

that French channels have been used for the sale of arms to Biafra. Even if these accounts were true, why the hell not? The Federal Nigerian government denies this, incidentally, claiming that Biafra is being armed from China, no less.

Far from being a neo-colonialist stooge, the Biafran government has taken over the oil fields in its territory, and is now the first African nation to refine its own oil.

Biafran guerrillas in the Mid-West are operating successfully against Shell-BP's pipelines in areas adjacent to Biafra (hence those captured oilmen), where the British oil companies have been moving in behind the Nigerian army to extract new wealth. Britain gets 20 per cent of its oil from Nigeria and would like more, given the Arab situation; Shell-UK bases its growth prospects for the coming year almost entirely on its Nigerian activities.

Press outcry

This month, Shell-BP plans to open a new 60-mile pipeline in the Mid-West costing £17½ million. As Auberon Waugh pointed out in The Spectator (May 30) these pipelines are militarily indefensible, in a region where an effective Biafran guerrilla force has been ranging for the last six months with the support of the Mid-West people.

Possibly the recent outcry in certain British newspapers over Biafra's plight may be prompted by the realisation that 'our oil' is not, after all, safeguarded by the support given to Gowon.

Readers of the press may remember the prominence given to a Major-General H.T. Alexander, former Chief of Staff in Nkrumah's Ghana, who visited the Federal-occupied areas as an 'impartial observer' and reported that no genocide was being committed. A man, clearly, of impeccable credentials.

Auberon Waugh, in the article cited above, revealed (1) that Major-General Alexander is managing director of London and Thames Haven Oil Wharves, which was deriving 75 per cent of its profits from Shell and (2) that Shell has now taken over London and Thames, lock, stock and General Alexander.

The Major-General has now been publicly encouraging the Nigerian government to take out Uli air-strip the only way in for relief aircraft to Biafra. No genocide of course, just let them

starve to death. (As the Commandant of Belsen said at his trial: we didn't kill all those Jews, it just so happened that conditions were very, very bad.)

On any other issue, of course, the Tory Spectator would not come out with this kind of exosure.

The silence and inactivity of the official and unofficial British labour movement on Biafra has been appalling. The alliance of Brezhnev's Russia and Shell-BP, of technological Harold and the feudal emirs of North Nigeria would be monstrous enough even without its consequences and its consequences are imperialist mass-murder, the war of oil and blood.

Softened up

The protest movement in the West has been softened up for too long. Duties are no longer enough for it, it must have the excitement of loyalties. If Ojukwu were to proclaim 'Viva Che!' and proclaim himself a marxist, if Biafra were to invent yet another phoney brand of 'African socialism' and introduce a one-party (instead of a no-party) state, then of course 'solidarity campaigns' would sprout and Shell-Mex House would replace Grosvenor Square as the scene of demonstration and battle.

Some supporters of Biafra have in their enthusiasm tended to claim that Ojukwu's regime represents some new wave of African radicalism. This is probably not so. A consistent anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist programme will need to be developed, in Biafra no less than in Nigeria, against the military, bureaucratic and native-business structure.

Cruel invasion

Paradoxically, it has been the very existence of illusions about the 'socialism' of many third world movements that has prevented the cruel invasion of foreign powers, of monopolist exploiters, and of an Islamic mediaeval Mafia on a scale which makes Vietnam look like a picnic.

The cause of Biafra is just. Its people are fighting a heroic war of courage and ingenuity against the gigantic weaponry of a feudal-imperial bloc.

And they are being killed off, the first million already, the next million probably soon to come. That should be enough, surely to compel us to act.

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SOCIALIST WORKER is the paper of International Socialism, a movement of revolutionary socialists who believe that the present form of society, with its blatant inequalities, its periodic crises, wars and racialist hysteria must be replaced by one based on a planned economy under full workers' control; those who produce the wealth should own and control the means of production. International Socialism is opposed to any incomes policy that seeks to restrict the wages of the workers in order to boost the profits of the employers. We unconditionally support all shop stewards and rank and file trade union members in their struggles for better wages and conditions and oppose all reactionary laws that threaten the liberties of the labour movement. We support all strikes in defence of workers' interests with the de-

WHERE WE STAND

mand of no victimisation of trade unionists. Redundancy should be opposed with the demand: five days work or five days pay. Shop stewards organisations should strengthen and extend their in-

fluence by linking up on an industrial and ultimately a national basis.

We are opposed to racial discrimination, a weapon used by the ruling class to divide the labour movement. Immigration control must be ended, ensuring the free movement of peoples regardless of race and colour. Black and white workers must unite and form their own defence organisations to fight fascism and racialism. The labour movement must demand the immediate recall of British troops from abroad as the first step towards ending colonial exploitation.

The task of revolutionary socialists is to join workers in their struggles with socialist ideas that will link up the various sections of the labour movement and help create a force that will lead on to workers' power and international socialism.

'NAIVE ATTITUDE' TO

WHEN I READ Tom Hillier's article (19 June) I appreciated the 'bread and butter' of retaining workers' protective practices, the need to raise the political consciousness of industrial workers and indeed the need to help us as workers to recognise ourselves as a class with class interests in achieving an egalitarian socialist society.

I cannot agree with Hillier's analysis of the role of the Communist Party in Britain today. In fact, the article appears to be divisive 'left unity' and illogical. (Left unity is one of the main aims set out in the CP programme The British Road to Socialism and an aim, I understand, shared by the International Socialists.)

That the Communist Party co-exists with capitalism internationally is a fact of life today. That this co-existence is peaceful is questionable, bearing in mind the shrinking capitalist world and the imperialist struggles taking place in hot or cold form today. To say that the CPGB is immersed in the system and collaborating with

capitalism is incredibly naive.

The CP has never placed the main emphasis on economic demands and the role played by the party in the struggle for equality for women, the recent Ford strike and the continuing struggle to defeat anti-union legislation in whatever form, gives the lie to this allegation.

The battle to build up levels of political and class awareness is constantly enjoined by CP members in and out of industry, but if at any given time this level is not high enough people with socialist intentions, whatever their fundamental differences in approach to achieving this end, take time off to attack one another.

Then the struggle of such groups as the building workers and dockers cannot be successfully linked. Tom Hillier should know that this was attempted and by the same token people will march behind Enoch Powell, Mosley or Jordan not because of any pandering to existing levels of political awareness but because it is a fact that the job of socialist enlighten-

ment is not complete.

I am curious about the alleged desire of the CP for 'acceptance within the existing framework of the trade unions'. Does this mean to campaign to end bans and proscriptions in union rule books, surely a laudable socialist aim? As to immersion in the system, respectability, the parliamentary road and the abandonment of the class struggle, the criticism is pathetically uninformed.

The need for socialist/communist MPs and socialist/communist leadership in working-class institutions are tactics in the current situation not scorned by IS, so why the attack on the CP?

Can't the readers see the establishment and the CIA rubbing their greedy claws together as worker turns against worker and the 'left' disintegrates? I have marched with IS and IS comrades have marched with the CP, sometimes to our mutual surprise, I must admit. But the smashing of capitalism is the priority and in the process the 'steel of socialist Britain will be tempered'. E. J. SHOREY, Benfleet, Essex.

JIM LAMBORN (June). Worse, piecing together of half-truths a policy at Ford most worth Socialist Work ed.

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THE COMPROMISERS

THE ROLE OF THE 'LEFT' UNION LEADERS DICTATES A CONSTANT BALANCING ACT BETWEEN RESPONDING TO RANK AND FILE PRESSURE AND ADAPTING TO THE DEMANDS OF CAPITALISM

by
**Laurie Flynn
and
Sabby Sagall**

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favour of socialism at Labour Party and TUC conferences. But he also finds it possible to attack absenteeism in the Clyde shipyards or to accept wage cuts and increased shift working imposed by the shipyard bosses.

The recent jockeying between the government and the TUC over the disciplining of unofficial strikers is the logical outcome of a process of active class collaboration begun long ago. Over the last 30 years, we have seen the increasing concentration of economic power, the new role of the state in lending economic stability through massive arms expenditure in peacetime as in war.

The new monopoly capitalism, underpinned by the state, found it necessary to integrate the unions more closely into the state machine. In 1931-32 there was only one government committee on which the TUC General Council was represented. By 1934-35, there were six and the number has been steadily increasing ever since.

RESIST

The rise of trade unionism is a contradictory affair. On one hand, it arose out of mass struggles expressing workers' determination to resist the employers' attacks. On the other hand, the union leaders developed into a parasitic group above the workers, feeling their overall social interests to be closer to those of the capitalist class than to those of the rank and file.

Their income was incomparably higher than that of the average worker, they were encouraged by the ruling class to mix in an upper middle-class environment, and with full-time officialdom they acquired positions of status and privilege which clearly set them apart from their members.

The economic basis for the emergence within the British labour movement of a labour bureaucracy with its distinctive social interests was the expansion of British capitalism during the 19th

century in spite of regular crises and depressions. The ruling class was prepared to make economic concessions to the extent that their rising level of profits allowed them to do so.

These concessions enabled them to draw most of the trade union leaders closer to the system and to instil in them an ideological acceptance of capitalism.

In order to preserve their own positions of power, trade union leaders must be seen to defend working-class interests, especially at times of crises when workers' living standards are under attack. Indeed, if the material standards of the working class are being attacked, this is a potential threat to the privileged position of the labour bureaucrats.

There have been periods, as after 1918, when the leaders have either had to mobilise their rank and file, or lend support to a rank and file already mobilised. But when the struggle with the employers reached its climax in 1926, the manner in which the TUC General Council called the General Strike was at best half-hearted.

And when the government treated the strike as a revolutionary challenge to its authority, the union leaders collapsed ignominiously after nine days.

MOTIVES

In a period such as our own of intensifying capitalist crisis, the trade union bureaucrats, especially the 'left' leaders, are caught between two sets of conflicting motives. They would like to maintain the independence of their unions from the state, but if this can only be defended by activating the rank and file, they will prefer some compromise such as the TUC proposals.

When the system's growing crisis expresses itself in ever harsher attacks on the workers, such attacks can only be fought off by the mass mobilisation of the rank and file.

The 'left' bureaucrats differ from the right-wing bureaucrats because they feel it necessary on occasion to respond initially to the pressure of the rank and file, as during the recent Ford strike. But their role as labour bureaucrats dictates that all improvements and defence of the workers' conditions and standards be achieved primarily through negotiations conducted at the top.

They are imprisoned within an outlook and practice that seeks to limit the activity of the workers themselves. Ultimately, they are afraid of workers acting for themselves as this is always a potential

threat to their privileged positions in capitalist society.

In the Ford strike, Scanlon and Jones took up the struggle which had been launched from below. They were immediately subject to powerful counter-pressures from the employers, their press, the government and the right-wing within their own unions.

Such pressures could only have been withstood and the Ford penalty clauses completely smashed if the political implications of the struggle had been developed, the fighting strength of the rank and file really consolidated, and the strike spread.

The leaders were unwilling to do this — especially when it came to a direct confrontation with the state. Too close an involvement in a struggle on the part of the rank and file can raise their confidence to the point where it can spill over into a serious fight for democratic control of the unions.

FACADE

Scanlon and Jones had to present a facade of militant leadership which gave both an appearance of complete support for the rank and file and also enabled them to control the strike and contain the potential militancy of the Ford workers within safe limits.

Because these leaders are 'left' in name only, they do nothing to develop the rank and file politically, to reduce the gap between the members and themselves. Jones and Scanlon were not seen at the Dagenham picket line. The consequence of this is that the 'left' leaders end up by being forced to concede vital principles, such as penal clauses or the TUC disciplining of unofficial strikers. The 'left' leaders face an inescapable dilemma. Even if they wanted to raise the level of militancy and political understanding of their members, the relative passivity of the rank and file could equally endanger their positions of power within the unions.

Undoubtedly, leaders like Scanlon and Jones are in theory more 'left-wing' than the vast majority of their members at present. But so long as the mass of workers remain politically apathetic and do not develop the confidence to decisively challenge capitalism, any serious attempt by the 'left' leaders to activate them politically can result in their own isolation within the union hierarchy.

VICIOUS

They would expose themselves to vicious attacks from the right-wing within their own unions, and if they were not immediately backed up by a militant rank and file, they would jeopardise their positions as leaders.

At least one Ford shop steward at Dagenham was replaced and others threatened with replacement in departments where the men had been hostile towards the strike. Not only, therefore, are the 'left' leaders imprisoned within their reformist ideology they are also prisoners of their union machine and their desire to retain control over it.

As the capitalist crisis sharpens, the 'left' leaders may be driven to oppose the government. This will only be



Scanlon (left) and Jones have to present a facade of militant leadership to give an appearance of complete support for the rank and file which enables them to contain potential militancy



because their need to retain a 'left' image requires a response either to actual rank and file pressure or to any undercurrent of unrest that threatens to overflow beyond the limits of their control.

But they are also motivated by a genuine distaste at complete incorporation into the state machine. They will avoid at all costs a final showdown with the state, the success of which depends on the active mobilisation of the rank and file, and the result of which must be to pose the question of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

DICTATES

Their role as union bureaucrats dictates a constant balancing act between responding to rank and file pressure and adapting to the demands of capitalism. Such a delicate balancing act inevitably produces vacillation, contradiction and compromise at every stage of the class struggle.

In the final analysis, when the workers are ready to make a decisive, revolutionary challenge to the system, there should be no illusions that this will be met with uncompromising hostility on the part of the 'left' bureaucrats. The struggle for workers' power will then be clearly seen to be inseparable from a struggle against the dominant

ion of the unions by reformist leaders.

In the meantime, sharp splits can take place within the trade union bureaucracy as a result of the intensifying attacks on the working class. The 'left' leaders strive to maintain their reformist intentions in contrast to the right-wing officials who openly side with the government and employers. Right-wing leaders are conscious of their role as upholders of the system, whereas the 'left' leaders are unaware that ultimately they too fulfill this role.

But in the present period it is rank and file struggle alone that not only extracts new gains but has to defend the old ones. At such a time, the left postures of the Scanlons and Joneses provide an opportunity for socialist militants in industry to put them to the test to expose where their real political loyalties lie.

REMOULD

As the capitalist state increasingly attempts to remould the unions into the policemen of the working class, so the strategy that flows from this is to gradually remove all local bargaining power from shop stewards and to place it in the hands of 'safe' union officials.

This trend will widen the scope for militants to raise

demands for democratic control of the unions.

In the period ahead, militants must fight to expose the shallowness and danger of reliance on the 'lefts' in the bureaucracy. They must concentrate instead on unleashing the latent energy of the rank and file by demanding mass union meetings of the members.

Such meetings can become part of the process of building a real revolutionary leadership in the unions.

EXPLICIT

General, political demands, such as the call for nationalisation of the Clyde shipyards must be raised as explicit alternatives to the acceptance by the union leaders of the present drift towards the corporate state.

The time is ripe for systematic attempts to mobilise rank and file feeling. Only in this way will the phoney strength of the union bloc vote be transformed into a real fighting strength increasingly capable of challenging capitalism.

Laurie Flynn is a member of the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades. Sabby Sagall is a member of the industrial sub-committee of the International Socialists

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Please send further details of the meetings and activities of the international socialists to

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Moss Evans reveals that he still lives with the shadow of 1962, but the crucial fact as union officials are concerned is that Baker and Young are still in the background on the negotiating committee over parity, while the TGWU and AEU are badly under-represented.

Furthermore Halewood in 1962 was not the plant it is now. As far as we are concerned, Halewood policy is TGWU policy. If the TGWU has backed down, Halewood has backed down and that, as the militants know, is impossible.

Halewood led the strike, this year, and is leading with the demands. As for Moss Evans, we prefer him to Kealey. If he is going to sell us out it will be over productivity and strings to any new pay deal. Our job as socialists and militants is to give the sort of perspective which will help defeat productivity, not to write articles which discredit Socialist Worker, a paper with some standing at Halewood.

ALAN WILD, Merseyside IS, 12/62 Branch, TGWU.

UNION FUNDS BUY £16,000 HOUSE FOR AEF OFFICIAL

SW Reporter

TWO LEADING right-wing trade union leaders who are outspoken critics of militant strike action to achieve better wages and conditions have just won expensive improvements in their style of living.

Mr Jim Conway, general secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering and Foundry-workers, has purchased with union funds a £16,000 house in a Kent area known as Millionaire's Row. The house is described as an extensive mock-Tudor property with a big garden and double garage.

The union executive was not consulted before the house was bought, Mr Conway will live rent free, the union paying his fuel, lighting and gas bills as well as the rates, which are more than £150 a year.

Change opinion

Living in such opulent splendour at the expense of AEF members, Mr Conway may care to change his opinion on the merits of rank and file activity. It is unlikely. Writing in the May issue of the union journal he said:

'If by workers' control it is meant that the workers should control the factories with, perhaps, every decision subject to a referendum before implementation, where all authority lies within the work people in the factory and the managers merely being there to offer specialist advice, then I am against workers' control.'

He probably isn't too keen on the Squatters, either.

Salary increase

Second horny-handed toiler is Mr Sidney ('flippin' strikes') Greene, general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, who was voted a 30 per cent salary increase at the union conference at Llandudno this week.

Outstripping the government's 'guiding light' for increases by a mere 26½ per cent, Mr Greene's salary goes up from £3706 to £5000 a year. Other senior officials get substantial increases.

It is not known whether any productivity strings were attached to the increases. Perhaps Mr Greene will have to call 30 per cent more strikes — after all, what's 30 per cent of nothing?

But as Mr Greene was recently voted one of the best dressed men in Britain (he spends at least £1000 a year on clothes, more than most railway workers earn) he will probably be nipping round to Burton's for a new three-piece.

NOTICES

SOUTH LONDON IS: Sunday July 20, 7.30pm, Nigel Harrison Imperialism and the 3rd World, Wilton Arms, Thomton Heath Street.

BIRMINGHAM Sunday July 20: Irish civil rights rally, Digbeth Civic Hall, 8 pm. Spkrs. Bernadette Devlin, MP, Tom Mitchell and Lew Lewis. March from Sparkhill at 2 pm. Organised by Birmingham Irish Civil Rights Group.

IS BOOK SERVICE would like to hear of any book shops prepared to sell IS books and pamphlets. Anyone who knows of such shops should send details to 90 Mountview Road, London N4.

STRIKES ROCK ITALY

FROM PAGE ONE

Strikes of civil servants, magistrates and prison governors show a lack of confidence in 'democratic' methods among sections of the population that are normally conservative.

But the fascists, though stronger than they were last year, are not strong enough to have a decisive impact. There



Metal workers form combine in bid to win strike

Alan Woodward

ENGINEERING WORKERS at Johnson Matthey metal works in Enfield are in the fifth week of their strike for recognition of their union, the AEF. The dispute is now official and pickets are stopping most lorries from entering and they follow out the few remaining vehicles to ensure goods are blacked at their destination.

The men took things into their own hands while the strike went through the long process of being made official. A combine committee has been set up for Johnson Matthey companies and its first aim is to give full support to the Brimsdown (Enfield) men.

At Harlow in particular, as well as at Royston, Wembley and Hatton Garden, goods have been blacked and money raised. After separate stoppages, a one-hour strike at all plants was arranged that coincided with a demonstration outside the JM headquarters.

Solidarity

The stoppage was a mark of the solidarity of JM workers and the combine committee is determined to face the company with a united demand for a common wages policy throughout the group.

It has become clear to the strikers that whatever needs doing has to be done themselves. The AEF district committee has been helpful by quickly approving the men's action, but it took the union executive more than a month to make the strike official.

This has caused obvious hardship and, at the start, weakened the effectiveness of the picket.

A really effective method is needed to gain the support of local factories both over blacking and raising money. Despite a 24-hour picket, some material finds its way in and out and drivers must be tackled whether they are union members or not. There is also a need to collect money from branches and factories to ease hardship and show solidarity.

The political level of all workers must be raised to make these demands possible and to enable them to see through the cautious policies of some national union leaders in order to act jointly with any future strikers.

UCS sparks walk out

GLASGOW: In the first major strike at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders since November, 450 electricians employed at the Govan division (formerly Fairfields) walked out last Thursday demanding re-instatement of a member dismissed for alleged bad time-keeping.

At a meeting in Govan on Saturday on the advice of ETU full-timer Joe Black, the men agreed to return to work on Monday and allow officials to press for re-instatement, but indicated they would be back out if the officials were unsuccessful.

The strike indicates the feelings of unrest in the yards, where workers are beginning to realise the full meaning of the concessions granted to the management by the unions.

In Fairfields staff men at vantage points near gangways and toilets watch out for 'malingerers'. This is a first step in a campaign to 'soften' up workers for pay-offs due in August when absentees and bad time-keepers will be first for the boot.

The sparks are on the right track but should take their demands further and insist on no redundancies and work within the yards to convince other trades to follow their lead.

'We want work' — Irish marchers

Sean Reed

'THE CIVIL RIGHTS movement must turn left or fall,' urged Bernadette Devlin in Newry last weekend. She was speaking at the end of a civil rights march through the centre of the town.

The 2000 strong march, organised by the local Civil Rights Association, was supported by Derry Labour Party, Derry Housing Action Committee and Peoples' Democracy from Belfast and Armagh.

The parade marched along a route which was banned last January.

Then the local people retaliated by burning eight police tenders.

Last weekend the march succeeded with only a few minor incidents. One of these was when a gang of Union Jack waving Paisleyites hurled fire crackers as the procession reached Sugar Island, the point at which January's march was ended.

The absence of violence this time proved the point made by the CRA that the police had organised the violence in January. Even the small gang of Paisleyites, headed by John McKeagh of Belfast, had to be imported.

Speeches at the rally centred on the question of discrimination in jobs.

Throughout the march a large section of the crowd chanted 'We want work' and at the end of the meeting sang the Internationale

Busmen work to rule to win more pay

NORTHAMPTON: 100 bus crews in the depot of the United Counties Omnibus Company are involved in a dispute over the difference between their pay and conditions of employment and those of bus crews on Northampton Corporation buses.

The United Counties busmen get £3 a week less for a 40 hour week than their municipal counterparts. They have no pension scheme and many retired crew members are employed on part-time cleaning jobs at the depot.

The Northampton crews are 100 per cent TGWU but their action — a work-to-rule where the United Counties and municipal routes overlap within the borough boundaries — is not official.

The dispute has been going on for a week and militant action is needed to win for the crews the conditions they demand. United Counties depots at Kettering and Stoney Stratford are supporting the Northampton crews and taking similar action.

SQUATTERS

FROM PAGE ONE

army camps at a time when the housing system was in a chronic state. In England and Wales 1038 camps were occupied by 39,535 people. The Labour government, harried from every direction by working-class unrest, admitted defeat immediately, although the reactions of local councils varied according to their shade of blue.

In Birmingham and Sheffield, Squatters battled with the bailiffs. But this was an exception, for throughout much of the country Squatters met with overwhelming public support and official assistance.

The mass squatting of August, which local Communist Party branches aided, was extended on September 8 when the London District Committee of the CP organised the seizure by 300 Squatters of the Duchess of Bedford's house. This embarrassed the government and forced them to reassess the squatting movement, since private property, not government property, had been occupied and had put the middle class in a panic. It further embarrassed the government because troops and police helped the Squatters in and made arrangements for a system of food supplies.

The Communist Party did not try and extend the horizons of the squatting movement to an attack on private property. Harry Pollit, general secretary of the CP, said that squatting would make everyone aware of the gravity of the housing problem and of the need for everyone, government and building workers, to buckle under and increase the number of new houses being built. Nothing about the distortion of the building programme which favoured the rich idlers who could afford the fantastic cost of post-war building.

But the token of squatting by the Communist Party in 1946 had far more advantages than squatting in 1969. Squatting then began as a mass spontaneous movement which itself was part of general working-class unrest. Squatting today in Ilford began with the direct action of a small number of people without the background of a militant working class movement.

After 20 years of economic expansion and capitalist propaganda, only the most advanced of the homeless refuse to admit that they are to blame for their circumstances and a lot of sympathy and encouragement is needed to draw these vast ranks out of their dejection.

Factory propaganda

The tenuous contacts with the homeless is matched by the lack of any real contacts with the working class. Such contact can be attempted in two ways. First, the political link between housing, the capitalist market, and conditions on the factory floor can be spelt out to militants in industry, so that possible support is recruited on the basis of revolutionary socialist propaganda.

But if this were attempted, it would draw the fire of Redbridge's bluer-than-blue council, and make it difficult for the squatting family to reach some worthwhile compromise. The individual priorities of the squatting family tend to dampen down political commitment so that it becomes a virtue to duck political issues. (The Squatters' slogan is 'Families first, politics second.') The immediate tactics of squatting tend to dominate and displace a revolutionary strategy.

Instead it is the second approach of an emotional appeal to the public and militant protection of occupied houses from police and bailiffs which has been adopted by the Squatters in an attempt to provoke a social base.

But what can be done? With no real social base, besides their own muscles, the Squatters' only real strength is with the local press and mass media. As long as their sympathies can be courted, Redbridge Council must watch its step in this third stage in the struggle.

After the complete capitulation of the council there was no response at all from the other London boroughs to make use of Ilford's council-owned empty houses. In some warped way, the strong-arm lobby in the Tory ranks thought that this vindicated their previous attitude of complete condemnation of the Squatters so that by the end of April they had again reversed their policy and escalated their tactics.

A number of families were forcefully evicted with court orders by the council's bailiffs. But a court eviction order takes a little while to get through the legal machinery and the frowns on Tory faces turned into a snarl. They sent word for a new get-tough policy of illegal evictions.

With public sympathy rather than working-class roots, the future of squatting in east London is extremely unstable. To overcome the legal stalemate the council want a quick killing from their strong-arm men. Nobody, not even the Tory press, will shed any tears if they are repulsed by the Squatters. It all depends on the role of the police in the whole business. Should a member of the police force be injured then a great hue and cry from both council and press will jeopardise public support, the one strength of the Squatters.

Only a social base among hundreds of homeless and active working-class sympathisers can act as a ratchet to counteract both the combined opposition of council and Tory press. In its absence there can be no discussion on political lines, only fairy-step tactics edging towards the housing of the homeless.

Ford pension scheme is poor deal for workers

SW Reporter

THE FORD MOTOR COMPANY has a pension scheme with capital and assets worth £20,000,000 which dates back to the merger with Briggs Motor Bodies at Dagenham and Eastleigh in 1958.

The scheme is completely unsatisfactory from the workers' point of view. The company has contracted out of the state graduated pension scheme and has made membership of its fund an obligatory condition of employment.

The worker has 2½ per cent of his basic pay deducted each week, plus the state's national insurance deductions and a penalty of two-fifths added to the insur-

ance contribution for belonging to a 'contracted out' pension scheme.

The pension a Ford worker receives is based on 1/120th of a week's basic pay for each year of pensionable service on a mean average of the best five of the ten years before retirement. The average pension falls within the range of £2-£3 a week.

Staff employees' pensions are calculated on 1/60th of a week's basic pay. They therefore receive double the pension of the men on the shop floor, who put most of

the money into the fund. The company balance sheets show that the fund makes an annual profit of £2m. It seems Ford is more concerned with investing with fellow capitalists than with the welfare of its workers.

Ford profits up

THE FORD MOTOR COMPANY'S trading profits were published last week and showed that profits in 1968 were double the figure for 1967. Trading profit in 1968 was £75.11m compared to £33.04m in 1967.

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