

THE WORKER



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OPPOSE THE ACT OF TERRORISM

Introduction of the Act entitled "Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) is ostensibly aimed at those perpetrators of the cruel, senseless, wanton violence against the civil population here in Britain. But no-one should be fooled by its temporary specious nature. In truth, it is a further attack upon civil liberties and the right of freedom here. Neither will it do anything to stop these mad cowboys who are now characterised as the IRA - for which there is no evidence. Though we did believe it was a break-away section, self-styled provisionals, who carry out these senseless acts.

NO SOLUTION

This Government and its spokesmen should never be under-estimated. They have already made claim in the divided cry to bring back hanging that such would not end stupid and cruel acts. Indeed they have suggested that such would accelerate. We agree with this. But since this is true and from their own mouth they equally know that this law will do nothing to stop the non-political waging of war on a civil population here in the mainland.

The word 'terrorism' has ever been used and abused as a perjorative term by imperialism throughout the world. The imperialists themselves are the most guilty of terrorism in all history. But everybody knows, who has any political nous whatsoever, that acts of terrorism in the true political sense do nothing at all to advance the cause of freedom and of liberation.

It is self-evident that all nations shall be free and independent and that acts of oppression, a people's war, may have to be waged to vacate the aggressor, the occupier, the imperialist force. But to ape the methods of cruelty and export the lessons learned by the aggressor back to the place from whence they came only underlines that reaction abroad breeds reaction at home and that this law is reaction in the extreme against the people and their civil freedom.

That the British people have permitted the perpetual occupation of Ireland, have neither fought sufficiently nor campaigned for the freedom of the Irish people is a deficiency for which they now suffer. Ireland is one nation. The people of Ireland must fight for national liberation, must struggle in their homeland for freedom and unity of Ireland. That is their Cause. It is our duty here to demand the exodus of British troops from that part of Ireland artificially partitioned. Such partition brings about the stupidity and the problem that the Irish people and the British people now suffer.

OUR DUTY

The British people must struggle for the repeal of this pernicious Act in their own interest, not to condone imported violence but as part of the struggle that all men shall be free. We must insist that the first step in the solution of this problem is that British troops must be out of Ireland. It is for the Irish people alone to resolve

the difficulties that are resident there. They must secure unity and independence as one nation.

LIBERTY

To use the Act self-styled as Draconian, in specious protection of British society is a lie, for it will yet be used, unless it be abolished, against the struggle of the British people here, and above all, the British working class, in their need to rid themselves of the ruling class here who are the exponents, the acme, of imperialism in Ireland. For a Labour Government on the suffering of ordinary people, the maiming and the killings as in Birmingham, to extend police powers here in England is not only hypocrisy but downright oppression. Those measures against the Irish people in the name of British imperialism in Northern Ireland today not only stem from here in England and in our name but will be used against ourselves if we tolerate such things.

No people can be free themselves if they permit the oppression and lack of freedom of other workers in other lands. Let us not be pushed into a situation that in the name of the law we shall be abused as defenders of those cowards who instead of fighting for freedom for Ireland seek to terrify our own home because there is a law. But neither let us in panic and hysteria believe that the British Government through all history has ever been sincere in the desire for the unity of Ireland. This

can and will be achieved by the Irish people alone. They can do so the quicker, the sooner, we here insist on the the Government withdrawing the British Forces from Ireland. An end to artificial partition, an end to aggression against the Irish people.

Down with all who seek to frighten us here either by law or by cowardly indiscriminate acts of violence. Both are synonymous in philosophical intent though the one may operate under the law of the land in the name of armed might. Both abuse and operate against the social law, the law of freedom itself.

It is lack of political understanding and inability to have faith of revolutionary cause, that of freedom itself, to respond by sneaking little letter bombs, to seek to blackmail and terrify the innocent citizen by surreptitious placing of parcels in the market place of the working class.

NO PARTITION

The British working class will not be frightened either by unjust law or by senseless killing. But they must gird their loins in struggle for their own freedom, understand that this is an equal thing, that all men shall have liberty, all shall have dignity that no foreign aggressor shall occupy a land and that we can only be free when all are. And this cannot be so if in our indifference, in our political cowardice or even in our fear, we permit others to bully our Irish brothers and sisters.

Labour Party Conference : FORUM FOR THE CORPORATE STATE

"Everyone is involved in the Social Contract, Government, industry, trade unions, local government. Every citizen has his part to play if inflation is to be overcome and a high level of employment maintained. The Social Contract was devised as a whole and it will stand or fall as a whole." So said the Labour Party chairman James Callaghan, in opening the Party's annual conference at the end of November.

"The Social Contract was the chosen instrument to contain inflation and it was fathered by the movement, not the Government." Callaghan's appeal for the active approval of the whole working class was echoed by Prime Minister Wilson in his address to the conference. But Wilson had first to explain that the course of inflation had changed. Before the Labour Party came to office - "... it was prices that gave the twist to the inflationary spiral with wages, statutorily controlled though they were struggling to keep pace."

Now it is different. According to Wilson it is the organised working class that is causing inflation. "The big battalions may feel that they can protect themselves. They can... in the short term, but at a cost to those with less bargaining muscle. Ultimately it would be

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ON THE INDUSTRIAL FRONT

Ford workers fight on

After workers at Fords, Dagenham, had forced a new agreement and a cash increase in defiance of the tottering social contract, the company tried to introduce some obscure efficiency clause onto the shop floor.

After attempts to sell the idea to conveners and shop stewards, the firm circulated a letter which called on employees to increase productivity. It also tried to introduce a threat by predicting a poor trading year to come because of petrol at 75p, a gallon and the cheapest Ford model priced at well over £1000.

Fords will try to pass on any hardship to the labour force. But in the Foundry they'll come unstuck, workers are prepared to resist fiercely any efficiency cum-productivity drive. When the crunch comes, the fight must be waged on the shop floor.

Oil rigs

The big multinational companies, prospecting for oil in the North Sea, are refusing facilities for the Local Trade Union Committee (composed of officials from AUEW, the Boilermakers, National Union of Seamen and the TGWU) to go on board and organise workers.

The Companies have suggested that officials should meet workers at Aberdeen Heliport when they return on leave from the rigs. Union officials say that the men returning from the rigs on leave are too exhausted to want to talk about joining trade unions.

There are over 1000 workers on 26 rigs. Earlier this year Unions threatened to take action if they are not given access to these workers and are also allowed to inspect safety measures.

Brighton bus workers

Following continuing lightning strikes by Brighton Bus Workers, the management have retaliated by sacking the union branch secretary for alleged dishonesty over a sixpenny ticket. Southdown's management stated this case has been treated as would any other - he just happened to be a union branch secretary. A "mere coincidence". The truth is he happened to be a worker fighting for a decent and just living wage, a thorn in the employer's flesh. The management, not able to combat the tactics employed, try to divert workers from their struggle. To this violence by management, workers answered with mass industrial action and stopped work. The workers stated that until Southdown's management reinstates the man in his former job as a driver no bus will run in Brighton.

Power supply

1000 power supply workers, members of the AUEW, EEEPTU, TGWU and GMWU are conducting a two-day per month stoppage in five power stations in South Yorks.

The AUEW has called for basic-rate increases of £13.50 per week from National Negotiations due to begin early in the New Year.

Shipyards

Lay-offs at Swan Hunter's Tyne-side yards have risen to 1600. Many more people will be made idle because of a fortnight's lock-out by management of 500 electricians for imposing sanctions in pursuit of a wage claim.

They are not the only workers in dispute with the company. 4000 other skilled workers are banning overtime and working to rule, seeking a minimum basic rate to bring them in line with other shipyard workers at: Sunderland Shipbuilders and Austin and Pickersgill who have a £50 a week basic rate.

Cammell Laird made a fresh offer to 2500 craftsmen and ancillary workers on strike at its Birkenhead shipyards.

Foremen to the forefront

At Birmid Qualcast in the Midlands 500 foremen, members of ASTMS, have taken industrial action to fight for a 20 per cent wage increase and better redundancy payments. They also demand the return of a full week's holiday reduced by the company to 4 days.

Throughout Birmid Qualcast - a huge combine employing 20,000 men and supplying motor heads and car parts to the whole country - production has been hampered. In some plants production has been brought to a total standstill enforced by a firm picket line and the whole hearted support of the labour force.

These foremen know they belong to the working class and are continuing in the militant tradition of the Birmid shop floor.

Rolls Royce Motors

Production workers at Rolls Royce factories in Willesden and Hyde Road, London, have been laid off for over a week. This was management's response to a strike by panel beaters seeking parity with Coventry workers subcontracted to do Rolls Royce work.

The £10 sought by the panel beaters must now become an issue for all production workers, developing the unity shown in the victimisation dispute in August.

Health

The attacks of the State have brought into struggle many new sections of workers - one of the most recent being hospital doctors. The NHS is under attack and the Junior Hospital Doctors' Association has agreed that 'trade union tactics have got to be used to convince the Health Department that the good will and devotion of junior hospital doctors can no longer be exploited.' The JHDA's National Executive, on instructions of the National Delegate's Committee, is to find out what action the vast majority of junior doctors would be prepared to take to 'face their ruthless and parasitomorphic monopoly employer as one united force.' Hospital doctors are not slow to learn about class struggle and have exposed the Government's tactics of phasing out pay beds as 'the politicians' way of deflecting public attention from the crisis in the NHS.'

SCOTTISH TEACHERS

Insult Means War

"A derisory and disgraceful insult to the whole educational system." This was typical of Scottish teachers' reactions to the interim award offered by Lord Houghton and William Ross acting in their capacity as enforcers of Labour Government policy. The insulting offer, which would have amounted to about £55 after tax and spread over all the weeks since May, represented less than one tenth of the sum required to keep the wage at the effective level of ten years ago.

The General Secretary of the main union, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), stated that "It meant a war between the teachers and the government". The insult was the signal for the start of the most serious and effective teachers actions ever in Scotland. The national strikes in the first week of December, involving 47,000 teachers and one million school children are the first steps in an escalating campaign. This will include the disruption of the certificate examination system ('O' Levels, 'Highers', 'A' Levels, etc.), an unprecedented move.

The first real fruits of these events are apparent in the heights of consciousness achieved, of struggle and class, and in the formulation of objectives and tactics used, areas where the mass of teachers have been fully active. Guerrilla action over five weeks during October and November (such as rotating 3-day strikes) did not leave the teachers exhausted and morale is very high.

Now the EIS is considering spreading all over Scotland the guerrilla methods initiated at first by only a few schools: a schedule of rolling strikes in which only the number of teachers required to end effective education at each school would withdraw their labour. The rest of the teachers would attend, be paid, but would refuse to teach any classes that were over or not their own. Where this has happened, headmasters have sent all pupils home. This also imposed a unity among teachers.

The interim Houghton Report on teachers' salaries for England and Wales is out. The question now is what the rest of the country's teachers will do.

THE WORKER INTERVIEW

For the first-time in the history of National Cash Registers (NCR), the makers of all forms of financial aide from computers to shop tills, a national strike was called by technicians and maintenance men in pursuit of a wages claim. The Union, ASTMS, called the one-day strike after demands for a 30 per cent wage increase had been rejected and a derisory 10 per cent offered by the management. In what is only a recently unionised industry (just twelve months in certain parts of the country), the strike has received overwhelming support from the members involved.

In an interview with "The Worker", the Branch Secretary and several members of the West Park NCR depot in Leeds put their case:

Q. What is the background to your struggle?

A. 'At the delegates' conference on the 19th October, a proposal demanding a 30 per cent increase across the board for all grades was put and passed. On 15th November this demand was put to the management negotiating committee. The demand for the 30 per cent increase was rejected and a counter offer of 10 per cent was put forward. This was rejected by the union. The management believed we were bluffing about fighting for our claim - this strike shows how serious we are.

We believe that unless we make a point of pursuing this claim we will be sidetracked. For example, in June this year a 15 per cent award was made to the men. 7 per cent was paid and the threshold agreement was used to make up the difference to 15 per cent. So in fact the management evaded full payment of the award. In practice this means 8 per cent is still outstanding besides the new claim we have put in. Present grades range from £1225 - £2100. In the present situation, to make ends meet, we have to pursue the claim all the way."

Q. What tactics have you used?

A. 'This is the first strike at NCR. ASTMS has existed in London NCR depots for about three years, but only for about twelve months here. We are new to this game. We are having this one day strike, to be followed immediately with a ban on overtime and stand-by duty. We will use the ban until some settlement is reached. We will step up our action depending upon the situation. As most of our work is related to repairing customers' machines, such action should tell quickly.'

Q. What success has the strike had so far?

A. 'Out of thirty-four technicians, thirty are out on strike, the other four are non-union members. Reports nationally show success throughout all depots. Support for the strike locally is unanimous amongst union members. Pickets will remain all day.'

Q. What do you see in the foreseeable future?

A. 'At present the company has made no response. Time will show the effectiveness of our actions. We are very optimistic. We will continue our actions until we have won the basics of our claim.'

Shrewsbury picket

The fact that the Appeal Court refused to cut the sentences or dismiss the charges against the two Shrewsbury pickets, should come as no surprise. What we must now be asking is how this came about. Not just why the appeal was dismissed, but why they were arrested and sentenced in the first place, with very little protest from our class. While it is true that there was some movement and campaign to free the pickets, the fact is that it was too little and too late.

Site Power

The employing class chose its victims well. The very state of the building industry, with 'lump' working and weak Trade Union organisation made it a prime target for this kind of attack. While the response of organised building workers to this attack was good in places, the leadership that emerged did little or nothing to involve the rest of the class. They hoped at best for some spontaneous movement, and put far too much faith in their officials, the Labour Party and TUC. The struggle for wages and conditions by building trade workers in 1972 was at their place of work, on the building sites. In the same way the struggle for the release of the pickets should have been concentrated at the place of work, and moved from there to involve other sections of our class. If the number of resolutions passed in support of the pickets had been acted on with conviction at our places of work where the real power of our class resides, the pickets would not even have gone to court.

Students' National Conference

After a term of determined struggle against educational cut-backs, the National Union of Students met in conference over the weekend of Nov 29th to Dec 2nd. For the past months, fights over hall fee and catering increases, closure of courses and colleges and for a better standard of living in general have been the order of the day.

The key debate was on Grants and Educational Cut-backs. The Conference resolved to continue the national campaign realising that its success depended on local colleges using the tactics appropriate to their own conditions. It was encouraging that all paper 'militancy' was rejected. After two years of consistent fighting

students have learnt to distinguish between correct and incorrect forms of struggle. The Conference voted overwhelmingly for the amendment calling for equal priority for all our demands, so showing its realisation that only through our unity will we be successful. Full grants for all full-time students and an increase to bring us back to the true value of the 1962 level, the consistent policy of our Party, was yet again adopted by the Conference.

It was disappointing, however, that only six of the amendments tabled were discussed. This was due to the time-wasting tactics of some elements. It was all the more disappointing as amendment seven called for the complete

rejection of the Social Contract. It was significant that only our Party called for this policy, all others choosing to avoid the issue.

The need for debates on the funding and structure of our Union reflected the qualitative change that has come about within the student movement. As our ideas and practice have developed so must the form of our Union. As yet there is no agreed formula. This must be part of an on-going debate so that the great advances in our movement can best be served.

Despite the many disagreements within the Conference, it finished in a mood of confidence that our unity and determination will make 1975 a year of victories.



Picture shows the achievements of 30 years of socialism in Albania.

ARMS AND IMPERIALISM

Talks on arms limitation, such as the recent Ford-Brezhnev meeting are taken with more than a pinch of 'SALT' by any country likely to be on the receiving end of their missiles. The imperialist United States and the social-imperialist Soviet Union are both trying to expand and defend their control over foreign markets and sources of raw materials. To maintain their 'spheres of influence' they need to spend enormous sums on military weapons. Possession of these weapons, particularly nuclear ones is used to blackmail the peoples of the world into keeping quiet.

A 'no-war no-peace' situation as in the Middle East, provides an ideal opportunity for the imperialists to sell more arms to the respective sides, and to increase their dependence on the superpowers. Arms production and sales are increasing - the US sold 8.5 billion dollars-worth in 1973-1974, not including free arms for Israel, South-east Asia and elsewhere. No wonder Kissinger emphasises that 'the programme for foreign aid is an irreplaceable instrument of US policy.' Russian arms trade in the 70's has increased to 37.5 per cent of the total world trade in arms. Profits from such sales give an important boost to the economies of the superpowers. At the moment the Russians and Americans play out their rivalry through intermediaries - in Vietnam, the Middle-East or Cyprus.

Why then do Brezhnev and Ford need to get together? The answer is that the capitalist and revisionist ruling classes need each other's help to survive. Politically they have a common interest in opposing any country's move for real independence which would threaten their economic and political control. Economically, the Soviet Union has to buy American wheat. It is begging for 'most-favoured nation' status and is willing to bargain away its Jewish citizens for this. It cannot provide investment to tap its natural resources, so it must attract US capital. The United States needs oil, so it sends its monopoly oil companies into the oilfields of Siberia.

Both countries have a common interest in maintaining a monopoly on nuclear weapons, and opposing China's or Australia's nuclear tests. 'Detente' is essential to the economic interests of the US and USSR, so is arms expansion. Talk of 'peace' is vital to their propaganda, rivalry between them is inevitable. That is a contradiction of imperialism.

But there is a perpetual danger of a third World War between the two superpowers, particularly as the changing world situation and deepening capitalist crisis make their positions more desperate. It is irresponsible for any true socialist to minimise this danger and fail to expose the illusions put about by the Russians or Americans that they are 'for peace'.

Freightliners Men Go Back

The recent strike at the Garston Freightliner-Terminal in Liverpool was brought to an end because the 140 men involved decided that to remain on strike when all the other main terminals had gone back to work, would be likely very protracted and costly and therefore against the men's own interests.

Extravagant

The Garston men have thus followed the workers of Willesden, Glasgow and Trafford Park in accepting the employers offer of £40 basic (40 hours). The employers had made extravagant claims that the new wage offer represented an increase of something like £13.50 on the basic rates, in fact it amounted to about £4.70. The employers had made this offer on condition that the men would stop what they call 'restrictive practices' which by definition of course only restrict greater profit and greater exploitation by the bosses.

Shortlived

Judging by the mood of the men at Liverpool, the 'calm' at the terminals around the country will only be shortlived as the men are determined to continue the struggle to get a more decent standard of living for themselves and their families.



Wages, strikes and unemployment

As inflation increases daily, the complete inability of the employing class to come up with any plausible remedy grows more and more obvious. This requires the working class, who alone suffer the consequence of inflation, to seek its own class remedy.

One Capitalist spokesman boasts of her hoard of food bought at lower prices and advises others to follow that example. Some advice that for people who are hard put to buy enough each day for daily needs let alone buy more to hoard. The working class fights by action to secure redress for higher prices through higher wages but are counselled by the Government to stop this.

When the Government protests that it is doing its utmost to keep prices down and stave off unemployment as a matter of national policy they must think workers suffer from amnesia. It was a Labour Government that not so long ago coined the term "shake out". It took measures to incite employers to sack workers including the imposition of Selective Employment Tax. At the same time the employers were incited to pass this tax on to the consumer in higher prices. They needed no incitement; they passed it on and more besides. This is evidence that the Government was quite prepared to give the inflation spiral a twist as well as cause unemployment.

The question of wages, unemployment and strikes are closely linked. Workers cannot accept that their legitimate wage demands are the cause of inflation or that by dropping their demands and desisting from struggle that inflation will cure itself. So there will be strikes because they are a weapon in the working class armoury.

Class Weapons

Unemployment and strikes are both class weapons. They will continue to be used by the classes as long as there is a class society. There is no morality about it. The very people who moralise about strikes and the power of the unions when used against the employer can see no wrong in sackings. The contradiction of dismissing from employment the very people who alone through work produce everything is one they cannot even begin to resolve.

Of course the working class will not cure inflation or shield itself from its effects by winning higher wages any more than the employers will end strikes by inflicting unemployment on the workers. But both weapons will continue to be used as long as capitalism lasts.

Capitalism is in world crisis. No capitalist nation in the world is escaping and it is the workers of the world who as ever bear the brunt. Fortunately the whole world is not under the yoke of capitalism. Here is surely a lesson to be learned by workers the world over - be they famine stricken in India or unemployed in the industrial nations. For it is no coincidence that two countries suffer neither affliction. China and Albania alone are unaffected by unemployment. Why would they be? Unemployment is a weapon against the workers and the workers are in control. They have no problem of inflation. In both countries economic growth continues year by year and the workers get the full benefits in improved standards of living. They are not cheated either by taxation or price increases. They have no strikes either for the same reason as they have no unemployment. The strike is a weapon of the workers; they don't use it against themselves. They are in power.

The working class has to find its own cure to inflation, unemployment and all the other ills of capitalism.

HIS FAIRER SHARE

The Chairman of the Royal Commission on the distribution of income and wealth, Lord Diamond, receives a salary of £16,350, plus threshold payments. (from The Guardian)

Prices

"A general rise in the rate of wages would result in a fall of the general rate of profit, but, broadly speaking, not affect the prices of commodities." (Karl Marx: 'Wages, Price and Profit')

Labour Party Conference

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at a heavy cost to themselves." "It would be an illusion to believe that big-money wage settlements gave protection from rising prices. They made their rise faster." Wilson did not say that if workers were to entirely forego their wages prices would vanish and everything would be free! Indeed Wilson must have sensed that few would be impressed by such feeble arguments. The country would be dragged if it did not consent. So, after rejecting the 'solution' of unemployment "emphatically, decisively, once and for all", he emphatically and decisively threatens that if the working class is restive - "Then the only choices facing a democratic government are grave: either deflationary measures involving a reduction in public expenditure, which means cutting the social wage, or an increase in taxation, which if it meant direct taxation, would be a straight cut in the take-home pay, or, if by means of indirect taxation, would mean a cut in the purchasing power of the pay that was taken home. And both these remedies would result in unemployment for our people."

Responding to the threat of unemployment the Conference approved the Budget and the Chancellor's £1 bn handout to "Industry". And it listened as Wilson told of the looming State mammoth: "... where private investment falls away, or even if it is not falling it is on a scale far too small to ensure a high level of employment and modernisation, public investment is enlisted to make the goods with which Britain could pay its

way in the world and modernize. Public investment would be specifically directed for the regeneration of British industry and the creation of a sharper cutting edge on the markets of the world."

Both Wilson and Callaghan expressed fear of the present situation. Callaghan spoke of "growing signs of breakdown in the market economy" and said that authority is no longer obeyed for its own sake.

He is haunted by the spectre of communism. Speaking of 'freedom' he says - "The nation must beware of replacing it by a form of collectivism that would owe little to the preeminence of Parliament or the rule of law."

The Conference approved of the presence of troops in Northern Ireland and approved too of the 'draconian measures' introduced by the Home Secretary, aimed really against the organised working class.

In 1935, Georgi Dimitrov, in surveying the rise of fascism said that this victory "on the one hand bears witness to the weakness of the proletariat, disorganised and paralysed by the disruptive policy of Social Democracy, by its class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and, on the other, expresses the weakness of the bourgeoisie itself, afraid of the realisation of a united struggle of the working class, afraid of revolution, and no longer in a position to maintain the dictatorship over the masses by the old methods of bourgeois democracy and parliamentarianism."

The Labour Party Conference provided a grim reminder of Dimitrov's words.

Craftsmen Strike At Imperial Tobacco

The craft union at Imperial Tobacco recently had to take strike action to further their claim for negotiating rights separate from production workers.

Prior to the strike full negotiating rights were the property of the Imperial Committee which was made up of delegates from the non craft unions, the Tobacco Workers Union being the majority union.

The wages system was based on Job Evaluation and had recently undergone a review, the result of which made it apparent that the craftsmen rates of pay would not be enhanced beyond that of the highest paid production worker.

The Wills craftsmen based at Bristol approached the Company on the principle of separate negotiating rights. This was refused and the Wills craftsmen took strike action.

The strike lasted a fortnight and ended when an agreement, yielding separate negotiations was made. This agreement was signed by the Company and the craft unions and the Chairman of the Imperial Committee.

The agreement allowed for a period of three months during which a series of meetings were held between the Company, craft and non-craft representatives. The purpose of these meetings was to draw up a negotiating agreement acceptable to all. Having arrived at an agreed document a meeting was called to finalise the agreement and when the delegates and Company representatives assembled the Tobaccos Workers refused to sign. The Company stated that in view of the incompatibility which existed between the craft and non-craft union, they too must refuse to sign.

The craft unions answer to this was notice of immediate strike action and in all units of Imperial Tobacco countryside the craftsmen withdrew their labour. After a week all production had stopped at Wills. A meeting of the union was arranged and the results of the meeting was that the principle of separate negotiations was won by the craft union. This meant that the craftsmen having held meetings at all units decided on an immediate return to work.

Timber Hoarding Rewarded

The Chancellor's budget has saved many of the larger timber merchants whose speculations had turned rotten. The tax relief given on large stocks relieves the cash shortage they have been experiencing as a result of their massive investments of capital in timber. When the price soared they bought large stocks of timber in the expectation of big money as prices rose. Unfortunately for them prices fell, despite the reports of "disappearing forests" and the advice of the financial pundits on the prospects of the "commodity" markets. Thus they were left with timber they could only hoard or sell at a loss.

The fall in prices was not due to some fast growing trees. House building has decreased and with the lowering of workers living standards the market for timber products such as kitchen cabinets has shrunk.

NEW US PLOTS AFOOT

There are new plots afoot in the fanatical attempt to keep the war in South Vietnam alive. The US is looking for new allies. At a secret meeting held in October in Paris under the auspices of the World Development Bank, the US administration appealed to other capitalist countries and international banking organisations to supply the aid which progressive opinion in the US is preventing.

For 21 months the US has been pouring in arms and munitions to Thieu in direct defiance of the Paris agreement. In the fiscal year 1974 alone, aid to Thieu amounted to 1/3 of all US aid to foreign countries. To date the US keeps 25,000 military advisers in the south in civilian guise - maintaining effective direct control and command of the Saigon armies.

But in the US there is growing opposition to the continued military involvement and intervention in South Vietnam, such opinion reaching even to Congress level. Under pressure, the US administration has had to cut aid to Thieu by a third.

15 countries attended the Paris meeting organised by the US administration - among them Canada, Japan, Italy, France, Holland, some Scandinavian countries, and last but not least, Britain. Only Sweden offered immediate and strong opposition. Canada and Japan offered immediate and strong opposition. Canada and Japan offered support. The French were 'wisely silent' and the British 'cautious'.

If aid from such a meeting is forthcoming, the slaughter and oppression of Vietnamese people will be prolonged. It props up an otherwise politically and economically bankrupt enemy. The last three months in particular has shown the scale and vehemence of the struggle to topple Thieu by South Vietnamese people of all political and religious persuasion - actions on a gigantic scale spreading throughout all the towns and rural areas of the south. Two demands unify them all - that Thieu must go and that the Paris Agreement must be implemented.

In a statement from the Foreign Ministry of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the North joins with their compatriots in the South to call "on all peace and justice-loving countries in the world not to be involved by the US administration in the criminal plan."

"It is another new serious step in violation of the Paris Agreement on Vietnam. The conscience of progressive mankind will not tolerate any government or any organisation intentionally or unintentionally supporting the warlike, corrupt Nguyen Van Thieu fascist clique to inflict more sufferings and disasters on the South Vietnamese people."



South Vietnam - armed forces and people working side by side on the farms. But peace has still not come to Vietnam.

Bakers on Strike

In the baker's strike the pace has been set by the mass.

In Basildon, for example, about 250 bakery workers at Bartons Factory, have been on strike in support of their claim for £40 for a 40 hour week instead of the £24 they have been getting.

A demonstration was held in the town centre and a 24 hour picket has been manned outside the factory gates since Wednesday 28th November. One of the pickets told our Worker Correspondent "We have come out on strike and will stay out until we get our fair demand of £40 for a

40 hour week."

The Union's Executive Council recommended that the bakers accept the employer's offer of £30 which included threshold payment of £4.40. The fact that these threshold payments were included in the £30 was carefully left out by the capitalist press and T.V.

Ignoring the Executive Council's recommendation to settle, more and more bakers joined the strike and forced the Executive Council to follow the lead of the rank and file and call for a national strike from Tuesday, 3rd December.

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Be Flexible

Priestman's, a Hull excavator and crane manufacturer, finding their orders slack due to the depressed state of the civil engineering market, attempted to cut their costs by not paying agreed threshold payments. When the 300 Boiler-makers, TGWU and GMWU members in the factory went on strike the employers were 'only too happy to lay off the rest of the workforce' (GMWU official).

The AUEW workers, realising that the employers welcomed the strike as a cost-cutting expedient at a time of bad trade, demanded the right to work, but were laid off though plenty of work was available for them. The strikers soon saw what the boss was up to, and returned to work to fight from within the factory.

INDIA

In the face of internal famine, the Indian Government continues to pursue policies of external expansion with a five-fold increase in defence expenditure in a decade.

With 60 per cent of the population facing starvation, the price of rice continues to rise. In some areas the ration is now 2.2 lbs per month.

At a mass demonstration over 100,000 people in Calcutta demanded that the Government supply grain.

Faced with starvation as a very real prospect the people in many areas have seized grain from private and Government stores. Similar struggles of organised peasants are being waged in other areas, notably Khargapur and Midnapur.