



PHOTO: John Smith (IFL)

# JOIN FIREMEN'S FIGHT: BREAK LIB-LAB COALITION

The biggest danger facing the firemen's 30% pay claim is their union leaders.

These officials have consistently refused to spell out the implications of the claim which brings firemen into conflict not with their employers in local authorities but with the Lib-Lab coalition government, determined to enforce its 10% limit on rises.

### Blessing

And they have given their blessing to the use of 12,000 troops in a massive scabbing operation matched in scale only by the 1926 General Strike.

Despite this kind of leadership, firemen have responded with virtually 100% solidarity to the official strike call. Driven into struggle by rigid pay restraint, the firemen

now reflect the militancy on wages that runs throughout the working class.

Their strike is the first major test of the 10% policy in the public sector. Already thousands of workers in private industry have won settlements in excess of the 10%.

Now the government is determined to use the public sector as a last bulwark against a huge surge of wage claims.

Under these conditions the role of the NUM leadership in delaying action on their 95% claim is criminal. Left-talking Yorkshire president Scargill may prattle about burying the 10% but he pulled back at a crucial point—when the miners could have been brought into action alongside the firemen.

And NUPE leaders, who today rejected a 10% offer for 1 million manual workers in local authorities, are also

consciously holding back on action—leaving the firemen to fight the pay code alone.

By forcing the firemen into strike action, the government has shown it is prepared to see people maimed or killed in fires and accidents rather than workers regain their living standards.

In this they are eagerly applauded by the CBI and by leading Tory spokesmen.

*Sunday Telegraph* columnist Peregrine Worsthorne, a supporter of the Chilean coup, this week praised Callaghan as the best Prime Minister since Churchill because of his stand on pay.

### Deaths

And throughout the press and the media every report is loaded with hysterical lying propaganda to suggest that it is firemen, not the coalition government's policy of wage control that are responsible for the deaths.

The untrained army scabs with their antiquated vehicles are a vital part of this propaganda war. The government knows that troops cannot do the firemen's job. They offer no protection to anyone.

### Opposition

The main object is not to fight fires but to pile pressure on the firemen's leaders.

Home Secretary Rees and other Ministers have carefully noted FBU General Secretary Terry Parry's opposition to the strike decision, and his attempts to head off action.

They are cynically confident that Parry will do nothing to strengthen and extend the scope of the strike.

They expect that a few rapid deaths will assist him in pressing his members to drop the claim and return to work, with the 10% limit intact.

The firemen's claim, despite its lack of any call for

protection of wages against future inflation, represents a vital challenge to the pay limit and to the very existence of the Lib-Lab coalition.

If the 10% limit is broken, so will the confidence of the Liberal Party and the Tories in Callaghan's ability to attack the working class.

And workers could grasp the opportunity to break the coalition once and for all.

### Millions

The firemen's 30% claim could create the bridgehead in the 10% limit through which millions more public sector and other workers must pass if they are to achieve their own pay demands.

Firemen must therefore see their struggle as a part of the battle of the whole working class against wage control.

They are not a 'special

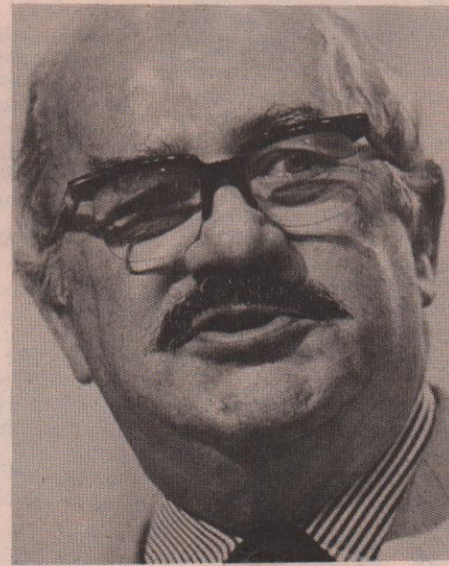


PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Parry

case'. Like thousands more workers they have a legitimate claim that must be won in full.

### Councils of Action

In every area the FBU must call on support from the local labour movement.

There must be a fight to build councils of action bringing together delegates from local union branches, tenants committees and working class political organisations, with a perspective of mobilising full support to the firemen and urging other sections of workers to press ahead with their own wage claims in defiance of the 10% limit and the 12-month rule.

In particular local NUPE and NUM branches must support such moves and demand their own leaders call them to immediate action alongside the firemen.

Amid the hysteria of the Tory press, 15 Labour 'lefts' are claiming to support the firemen's claim. The Tribune group have typically claimed that the firemen are a special case.

But if they seriously want to see the victory of the firemen, these MPs should begin by voting against the wage-cutting Lib-Lab coalition government and its use of troops to break a vital pay strike.

### Exposed

They should be fighting throughout the labour movement for the removal of the Callaghan-Healey leadership.

But their past record indicates that these 'lefts' will take up no such fight.

By their deeds in the dispute the established leaders of the working class both 'left' and 'right' can be exposed as inadequate to workers' needs.

The need is for a revolutionary leadership based on the fight for the complete political independence of the working class and a social programme to regain and defend living standards.



# WORKERS RISE AGAINST

# S. AMERICAN DICTATORS

The great majority of Latin American countries are at present ruled by reactionary military dictatorships who compete with each other in brutality in their suppression of the labour movement and all forms of popular resistance.

Yet despite the severity of the repression, despite the support these political gangsters give to each other and receive from the imperialists and the Stalinists, they have not been able to crush the fighting strength of the working class.

### Courage

Over the last few months almost daily proof has come of the courage of hundreds of thousands of workers in maintaining their organisations under appalling conditions and in taking bold actions when they know that such action carries the risk of death.

The last few months have shown that none of the dictatorships is safe from the resistance of the working class.

In both Colombia and Peru, general strikes have taken place against the anti-working class economic policies of the governments.

The Colombian government, though nominally a democratically elected one, rules through states of emergency in much the same way as the military dictators.

The latest reports from Colombia indicate that the death toll in the one day general strike of September 14 was 33 killed, of whom 30 were in the capital, Bogota.

### Jailed

24 people have so far been given prison sentences for helping to organise the strike and at least ten unions which do not belong to the yellow 'union' federations run by the bourgeois parties have been banned.

They include the Bogota bus drivers' union. Hundreds of workers have been sacked for participating in the strike.

This degree of repression, however, has not stopped the upsurge of action by the Colombian workers. Since the general strike there have been several important prolonged strikes in various sectors, including the militant teachers.

A major strike of oil refinery workers has caused problems for the government since August. The police laid siege to the town where it took place and arrested most of the leaders.

### Nationalised

The demands of the strike, which came to at least a temporary end last week, have been not only for increased wages to protect workers against the cost of living which is rising at about 40% a year, but also that the nationalised oil industry should not be handed to the private sector.

Neighbouring Ecuador was

the scene last month of a massacre of workers unparalleled in the country's history since the infamous massacre in Guayaquil in 1922.

### Occupied

The scene this time was a sugar plantation only a few miles from the same town. 1700 sugar workers had gone on strike in support of higher wages and several hundred of them had occupied the administrative buildings of the plantations.

The police invaded the building and drove workers and their families out towards a deep irrigation canal into which many of them fell to their deaths.

The Interior Minister admits that 24 people were killed but claims that the strikers "committed suicide in order to promote unrest in the country".

The unions say that 120 were murdered in the massacre and others have been killed in anti-government demonstrations which have followed the massacre in most of Ecuador's main towns.

### Blackout

The extent of the mass demonstrations against the massacre is hard to assess because of the news blackout imposed by the dictatorship; and the same problem exists for other parts of the continent.

But reports leaked out this week of a renewal of workers' action even in Chile where a complete generation of workers' leaders were slaughtered after the 1973 coup.

A strike over pay is reported from the 'El Teniente' copper mine, the largest in the country, where at least 25% of the labour force were refusing to work.



Demonstration in Colombia.

In the last three weeks it is in Argentina that the most dramatic upsurge of workers' struggle has taken place.

The major strikes in the railways and the Buenos Aires Underground spread to other public sector workers—to dockers in Buenos Aires and Santa Fe, to electricity and water board workers in Rosario, Santa Fe and Buenos Aires and to workers in the state oil company.

### Gunpoint

The strikes did not stop there but went on to affect a number of major firms in the private sector—the Alpargatas and Alpasa textile factories and the Peugeot car works.

The public sector workers were reportedly driven back to work more or less at gunpoint.

A strike leader on the Buenos Aires Underground was also shot dead by the security forces. This incident was publicised half-hourly on the radio with the threat that the same fate would await any other striker who did not return to work.

### Kidnapped

The authorities appear to have kidnapped a large number of other strike leaders and their fate is unknown.

Even if the current strike wave has been temporarily controlled, it has shown up the critical position of the

Videla regime and its inability to implement its pro-capitalist economic policies, which require a total repression of all workers' struggles.

Its repression in fact was not sufficient to get the latest strikes called off. It was also forced (without apparently even being able to consult



Chilean butcher Pinochet

with the Finance Minister Martinez de Hoz who was on one of his begging missions in Europe) to grant some wage increases which broke its own limit of 40%.

This is a symptom of the regime's weakness, though the concessions were minimal compared with the demands of the workers. They are demanding increases of 80%-130%.

These are modest demands in view of the fact that since January 1976 real wages in Argentina have fallen by over

60% and the massive rate of inflation shows no sign of being cut below its present level of well over 100% a year.

The reduction of the working class to abject poverty is intensifying the economic crisis since it has virtually destroyed the internal market for a wide range of manufacture.

The regime looks for its economic salvation to the IMF (and thus to the imperialists) on the one hand, and to expanding export markets, especially for agriculture on the other.

Here it has found ready assistance from the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Cuba.

While police and troops were shooting and kidnapping strikers, the Soviet government and the other Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe were welcoming a high-powered trade delegation from the military junta.

New agreements were signed with Poland and Rumania and that with the USSR was reinforced.

So in addition to their criminal open political support of the murderous regime of General Videla, the Stalinists continue to build up their material aid to these hangmen of the working class.

The events of the last few weeks have shown, however, that the dictatorships in power in Latin America, despite their powerful imperialist and Stalinist friends, despite their unswerving repressive intentions are far from invincible.

It is a decisive moment to build up the struggle inside the British workers' movement and solidarity with the working class of Latin America through economic and arms boycotts against the dictatorships to be imposed by working class action.

## ZIONIST GANGSTERS GUN DOWN CIVILIANS

In writing last week of the recent changes in the Israeli administration we referred to them as a government of former gangsters.

Events of the last week have clearly shown that Begin and his accomplices remain as much gangsters as they ever were.

The air raids on villages and refugee camps in Southern Lebanon on Wednesday 9 November which razed a number of small settlements to the ground and killed over 100 people was a clear part of the normal Zionist tactic of improving its diplomatic position over heaps of dead bodies.

During the previous week the Israelis began to bombard the town of Nabatieh, still largely deserted since the civil war in the area.

When a number of people were killed, Palestinian forces

retaliated by directing Katyusha rockets into the northern Israeli town of Nahariyah.

After two civilian deaths, the Israelis then retaliated with their bombing raid.

They razed to the ground a number of hamlets such as Hazzleyah, just south of Tyre.

Nearby orchards were avoided and delayed action bombs, a favourite device of the Americans in Vietnam, were left for those who survived the morning raid.

The purpose of this calculated and deliberate carnage was to prepare the way for the 'peace' proposals of the Zionist government.

Lebanese fascists issued statements blaming the Palestinians and calling for them to be driven out.

However, the most important aspect of this was to get US President Carter, who has been making accommodating statements about the Pales-

tinians, to admit that he could not condemn the Israelis who had been 'under severe provocation'.

Furthermore, the Israelis were able to time their raid for the same day as the statement of President Sadat of Egypt that he would attend the Knesset, Israel's parliament, if necessary, in order to negotiate 'peace'.

Such a visit would naturally pay nothing more than lip service to the interests of the Palestinians.

Sadat, under strong pressure from Saudi Arabia and the USA, has now clearly become the front runner in efforts of the Arab bourgeoisie to ditch the Palestinians and settle with the Zionists.

In further bombing raids as we go to press Israeli forces have killed another 11 civilians. These moves show the lengths they are prepared to go to in order to reinforce their version of "peace"

## IN BRIEF

### INDIA

Ex-dictator Indira Gandhi was slightly injured during a Janata Party demonstration in South West India against her continued tour of the country to win back support.

### SPAIN

Enrique Lister, Secretary General of the minute pro-Soviet Workers Communist Party has been permitted to return to Spain by the Suarez government.

He immediately launched an attack against CP Secretary General Santiago Carrillo whom he called a "political gangster".

Carrillo had himself just returned from Moscow where he had been prevented from speaking at the anniversary celebrations of the Soviet Revolution.

This was, Carrillo says, for political reasons. The Soviet leaders say it was because he arrived too late.

Carrillo has basked in the attacks from both Lister and Moscow. He is proud, he said, to be Spanish. And for good measure he lauded Premier Suarez too as "a good Spaniard and a good democrat".

### BANGLADESH

92 Soldiers have now been sentenced to death and others to prison terms after the October 4 mutiny which followed the attempted coup on October 2.

### GUYANA

The government of Forbes Burnham has been forced to withdraw 300 strike-breaking troops which were being used against a strike in the sugar industry which has lasted for 3 months. The climbdown followed an embargo on oil shipments to Guyana imposed by oil workers' trade unions in Trinidad.

### PANAMA

The treaty which allows the United States to intervene after its formal occupation of the Canal Zone ends in 2,000 was approved by 66% of the electorate in a referendum. This, however, was less than the Torrijos dictatorship hoped for and it is clear that resistance to this imperialist treaty is far from finished.

### TUNISIA

A wave of strikes swept across the country last week after a reported attempt to assassinate the leader of the state "trade union" Habib Achour. Though he claims his relations with President Bourgiba are still "excellent" there is suspicion that Bourgiba's regime might have had something to do with the attempted killing after Achour's "union" took the unprecedented step of calling a one-day strike of phosphate workers on November 3. This split at the top of the Destour Socialist Party reflects huge working class resistance to Bourgiba's semi-dictatorial regime.



Pickets demanding restoration of right to demonstrate and organise free trade unions in Queensland, Australia.



# INTERNATIONAL WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT SPAIN'S SOCIAL CONTRACT

## Stalinist leaders — eager acceptance



CP leader Carrillo with Francoist leader Suarez.



Carrillo welcomed by fascist leader Fraga to the exclusive Siglo XXI club

Santiago Carrillo: "No party could find its whole programme in the pact but we can and will find a part of our programme, together with concessions we have had to make... The agreements of Moncloa are a step towards social justice".

Mundo Obrero, (weekly organ of the Central Committee of the Spanish Communist Party):

"Note that, contrary to what happened in other European countries at the end of periods of fascist dictatorship, here, since the elections of June 15, no dominant political force, or alliance of forces, has emerged.

"No political party can legitimately say: the electorate has given a majority mandate for this or that particular programme, these solutions, these methods.

What the election did show was a mandate for democracy.

"But a democracy to be constructed in the actual conditions and in a struggle with vested interests, positions of strength and habits from the immediate Francoist past.

"In the context of these concrete aspects of the problem, the discussions and agreements between the government and the political parties in the parliamentary spectrum constitute an important democratic triumph..."

Marcelino Comacho (General Secretary of the Communist Party-dominated Workers Commissions):

"With one hand Felipe Gonzalez signs the Moncloa Pact with the other he pushes Nicolas Redondo to attack the Pact. That shows the

internal incoherence of the [Socialist] party and the diversions within it."

Biltzar, (fortnightly journal of the Workers Commissions):

"Politically speaking, it is easy to recognise the positive nature of this agreement at a time of renewed violence and old threats, but the key question which has to be asked of the trade unions is different: does the declaration mean a step forward for the workers? The Workers Commissions have answered at all levels: we believe it does.

"We think that even though the document talks of sacrifices, although it has insufficiencies (on unemployment), serious omissions (pensions, minimum wage) and even frankly unacceptable measures (a maximum wage increase of 20-22% and the threat to cut down manning by 5%).

"In spite of that we still think the agreement is positive for the workers.

"Because it affirms that sacrifices have to be made by all.

"Because it recognises the CODE OF WORKERS RIGHTS and WORKERS' CONTROL in the working out of measures to deal with the crisis, and in key organisations such as SOCIAL SECURITY.

"Because it recognises the need for CHANGES IN THE PRESENT FRAMEWORK OF LABOUR RELATIONS.

"That is decisive. Because IF IT IS PUT INTO PRACTICE it would mean democracy would enter the factories, would reach the power centres of the economic bunker and open up a new model of growth."

## Socialist Party — two faced opportunism

El Socialista, (weekly organ of the Socialist Party (PSOE)):

"Our country is going through a difficult period in the political field, related to the problems of transition from a dictatorship to a fully democratic situation; and in the economic field because of the inability of the previous government to introduce a coherent economic policy, something for which the socialists, of course, bear no responsibility whatever.

"At this difficult moment and given the incoherence of the government, the socialists were faced with two options equally unacceptable, though for different reasons.

"On the one hand a deepening of the social crisis with the idea of later enjoying the power today held by others; but the relation of forces in this country today make that option unviable.

"On the other hand the acceptance of what has been called the "Social Pact" which would make the workers pay for the whole of the economic crisis, which would be inadmissible.

Both options, as we said, are for different reasons unacceptable to the socialists.

"For us the way out of the crisis has to be by a different

route so that the burdens do not fall as they always do, on the working class.

"So that these burdens be equitably shared and at the same time enough is got in return from the government to justify the sacrifices which are asked for.

"We socialists have discussed the programme presented by the government, we have improved it and sent it back where it came from so that the government, under parliamentary control, can administer it.

"Will they know how? In any event the historic change which our time demands will not permit manoeuvres whose only objective is mere survival in power."

Nicolas Redondo (Secretary general of the UGT, the Socialist trade union).

"Flexibility in the size of the workforce (ie uncontrolled sacking) is unacceptable and we maintain our reticence about the wage ceiling imposed in the Moncloa Pact... The UGT cannot psychologically [sic] accept this pact for the reasons already indicated, though that doesn't mean that the UGT is going to maintain a combative attitude towards the economic pact".



In cahoots: Suarez with PSOE leader Felipe Gonzalez

# ZIMBABWE — THE PLOT THICKENS

Field Marshall Lord Carver is the man that British Foreign Secretary David Owen wants to install as the military dictator of Zimbabwe.

His role is to oversee the imposition of a neo-colonialist constitution and the disarmament of the black freedom fighters.

Last week Carver flew off to Africa to try to get himself accepted in this role.

Reports of his efforts could hardly be more contradictory. According to his own version, the trip was a glittering diplomatic success and everyone was on the point of agreement.

### No progress

According to racist leader Ian Smith, no progress whatsoever was made.

According to the black nationalist leaders they do not acknowledge Carver's right to intervene.

And according to US diplomats Carver's trip was one long diplomatic bungle!

Carver's wanderings seem to be a bit of a sideshow since in other ways the imperialists' efforts to impose their plan are going ahead.

It appears increasingly likely that some general plan

at the secret 2 am meeting of Smith and Zambian President Kaunda organised in Lusaka in September by international capitalist "Tiny" Rowland.

(Rowland is the boss of Lonrho which has major investments on both sides of the Zambezi).

### Alternative

It appears that what was discussed at this meeting was an alternative to the Owen plan, in which some alliance of "safe" nationalist leaders would take over the government in Zimbabwe without the intervening stage of Carver's military dictatorship — which is supposed to convene elections.

Robert Mugabe's ZANU has seen the Lusaka talks as a plan to exclude ZANU from the final settlement, which would install Nkomo (of ZAPU), perhaps in an alliance with the "internal" leaders Muzorewa and Sithole.

Mugabe has even accused Nkomo of having attended the talks. Despite denials from both Nkomo and Kaunda, the suspicion is strong that Nkomo was at least associated with the meeting.

### Split

Mugabe's accusations have



Carver

open split in the Patriotic Front in which ZANU and ZAPU have been involved since last year.

The failure of Carver's mission was swiftly followed by the dropping of the British plan to hold a new Rhodesia Conference in Malta this week.

Owen and the Americans are very fearful of losing the initiative as arbiters in southern Africa even though at present that initiative may be seized instead by a reactionary alliance of Smith, the "front line states" and sections of the black Zimbabwean leadership.

Either way the democratic rights of the Zimbabwean workers and peasants will be suppressed in the interests of



## Phony embargo

No resolution of the United Nations has ever advanced the struggle of the workers and the oppressed classes of the world.

The "mandatory arms embargo" on South Africa will be no exception.

The ban doesn't cover existing contracts. In any case, it will be easy to evade.

South Africa already has its own armaments industry (established of course with the help of the imperialist countries).

Large quantities of ammu-

materials like oil have already been stockpiled.

The South African defence minister claims, probably without much exaggeration, that the country is about to start exporting arms.

But the ban, for which even the US imperialists voted, is not designed to have any effect on South Africa.

Its purpose is to allow the imperialist governments to give some appearance of fighting racism while in fact continuing their full backing for South African capitalism and the racism upon which

Even resolutions only slightly 'tougher' in tone submitted by African states were unhesitatingly vetoed by the imperialists.

No sanctions against South Africa can achieve anything unless they are imposed by the labour movement itself — not in the form of occasional token "weeks of action" so dear to trade union bureaucrats but in the form of all-out indefinite embargoes on supplies of arms and all other trade with the racist regime.

### Nonchalant

Until that happens the South African regime will continue to look nonchalantly at UN sanctions and continue its present murderous policies.

Certainly it was no weakening of Vorster's repressive intentions that prompted the announcement that the existing pass laws would be abolished.

The existing passes are to be replaced by travel documents issued by the "independent" Bantustans.

This is no concession. Urban blacks will find themselves under as much surveillance as ever.

But it is a move to reinforce Vorster's apartheid plan which attempts to ensure that the only black organisations to have any legal standing in South Africa are the stooge Bantustan governments.

The new move, therefore, is exactly in accordance with last month's banning of all black political organisations...

# BOSSSES ANSWER TO HEALEY'S PAY LIMITS

If you judge your economic news from the look on the face of the TV newsreaders then its nearly all good these days.

The reserves reach for the sky; the exchange rate of the pound goes up; and the rate of inflation is coming down to levels unheard of for nearly a decade.

Inflation in the last six months, they have started to tell us, "really" is down to single figures. And the message is clear: be content with a single figure wage increase.

Workers and their families who have to pay the prices, however, must be instinctively incredulous in the face of these economic "facts".

## Several rates

And a close look at what the figures mean certainly justifies the incredulity.

In fact the government and the capitalist press have several "rates of inflation".

Each of them is calculated in a different way and they can be publicised very selectively according to which one is moving most closely to what the government wants the working class to believe is "really" happening to inflation.

There is, therefore, plenty of chance for sleight of hand.

The first trick is to publicise "rates of inflation" which refer to prices which no consumer ever pays.

So, for instance, there are two figures which at the present time are getting a lot of publicity.

One is the rate of increase of "manufacturers' output prices" and the other the rate of increase of price rises notified to the Price Commission.

## Mystification

These rates of inflation at the present time are showing a yearly rate of increase of 6.1% and 7.3% respectively.

This, we are invited to believe, is "the real underlying rate of inflation" or some such mystification.

Manufacturers' output prices refer to the wholesale prices of all manufactured goods—not merely goods for consumption.

So it includes many things which do not enter into workers' cost of living.

And it excludes even more things which do affect the cost of living (all fresh foods, rent, travel, fuel etc).

The prices reported to the Price Commission are misleading partly for the same reason but also because only certain firms (the large ones) have to report increases.

## Statistical trick

The low rates of inflation which both these figures point to at present are affected by another statistical trick—taking a recent period of six months and saying

at the same rate for a year).

So, for instance, in the last year manufacturers' output prices have gone up by nearly 20%.

But over the last three months they have risen by under two percent so this is called an annual rate of 6.1%.

## Price code

Hence this statistical device alone makes it look as if inflation is falling much faster than it really is.

But two other things make these inflation figures look especially favourable at present.

One is the fact that the new government Price Code came into force just over three months ago.

Although the Price Code does nothing to control prices in the interests of consumers it does make the increase of prices a more cumbersome

And the (hardly publicised) official Treasury estimate of inflation is that it will not fall to single figures before the end of 1978 at the earliest.

Even by the government's figures the present time is far from being the best moment for years in respect of inflation, it is the worst: the gap between earnings and price increases over the last year is at a maximum—indicating a drop in average living standards of at least 8% over the past year.

It is important to say at least because the basic defect which all these measures of the inflation rate have in common is that they are calculated by an agency of the capitalist state, behind the backs of the working class whose cost of living they are supposed to measure.

The amount of statistical trickery to which it is possible to submit such



TGWU Conference delegates — one-third voted for the sliding scale of wages procedure for capitalists.

There were advantages, therefore, in putting up prices before the new code came into force.

That means that a range of price increases which would have come anyway over the last three months were simply brought forward.

And so the last three months inflation rate is misleadingly low.

Secondly, in an effort to dress up the inflation rate as much as possible during the first part of Phase 3 of the wages policy the government imposed an unannounced (and strictly temporary) freeze on price increases in the nationalised industries.

## Phoney truce

The announcement of new 16% fare rises by British Rail last week shows that this phoney truce is now coming to an end.

If we look at the price index which the government says is its estimate of the cost of living of working class families, then this still shows that, despite all the talk of single-figure inflation, prices

figures means that the pursuit of the sliding scale of wages by the working class must always be tied to the control of the calculation of price rises by the working class itself through its own independent trade union and housewives committees.

## Appearance

The importance of this becomes all the more plain when certain sections of the bourgeoisie are seen making use of something which has the appearance of the sliding scale for their own purposes.

Historically the capitalist class has in periods of falling prices forced a capitalist downward "sliding scale" on the workers.

During the Second World War in Britain many wages were tied to a cost of living index which was then flagrantly rigged by the Churchill government.

## Indexation

So it was not too surprising to find the *Financial Times* main economic commentator, Sam Brittan, arguing last week for the

the cost of living.

Brittan's objective is very clearly stated: not the maintenance of the living standards of workers but how to keep wage increases to a minimum.

He criticizes the coalition government; pay policy because he argues, it will lead to a faster rate of increase than there would be without it.

## Low increases

To Brittan, indexation of wages would be a tactic designed to "bribe" unions to accept a very low annual increase in wages in exchange for later increases as the cost of living rises.

The fact that sections of the bourgeoisie want to use inflation-linked wages in this way should be a clear warning to workers.

The fight for the sliding scale of wages—for an inflation-proof standard of living—must be linked not only to workers' control of the estimation of price increases but also to the demand that before a new sliding scale begins, wage levels must be increased to restore the ravages which inflation has

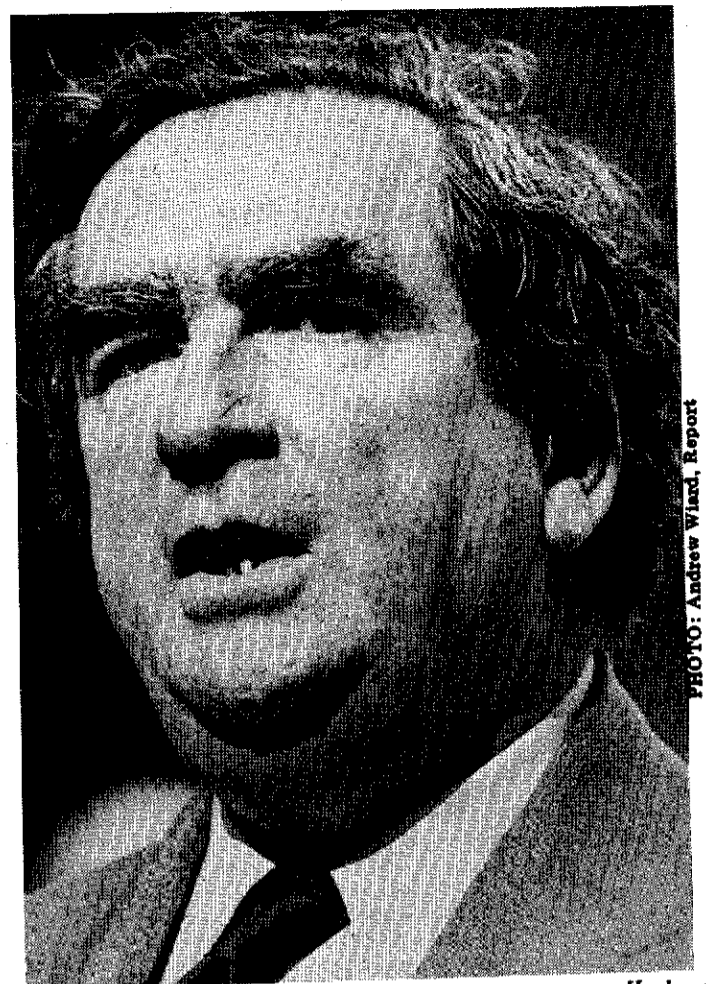


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Healey

imposed on living standards the last two years.

## United

Capitalist commentators like Brittan may dispute with Healey over the best tactic for keeping wage increases down but they are completely united in declaring any attempt to restore living standards to be impermissible.

Workers, however, need no cost of living index to tell them the importance of that fight today.

Restore and defend living standards!

For a sliding scale of wages under workers control!

Break the 10% rule!

Destroy the coalition government!



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

# NUSS fights drive by fascists

Schools have never been the most pleasant places to work in, but over the last few years they have become increasingly worse as enormous amounts of money have been hacked away from the educational system.

Today when school students leave school many find not jobs but only the dole queue.

## Age limit

It is with this in mind that the National Front have decided to lower their minimum age limit from 16 to 14 and to set up a youth section—the Young National Front.

schools have become fertile ground for breeding racial hatred and fascism.

Their aim is to divide the working class by blaming the crisis onto black people or the "reds".

## Initiative

This new threat from the NF has to be fought through the teachers' unions and the National Union of School Students.

The NUSS has already taken the initiative by producing a leaflet which was given out outside certain London schools last week (including some which have had the misfortune to receive the YNF's paper *Bulldog*).

There are also plans to produce a national NUSS leaflet to be distributed

NUT leaders however have done nothing worth noting so far in the fight against the YNF.

But we are told that the YNF is likely to be the subject of motions at next year's national conference!

Anti-fascist committees of teaching unions and NUSS in schools must be established where the YNF or NF have attempted to gain a foothold.

Wherever possible, action must be taken to stop *Bulldog* being distributed.

## STILL AVAILABLE

The Fight Against Youth Unemployment  
A Policy for Youth  
Price 10p plus 7p p&p  
A WSL Youth Pamphlet

From WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5.

# LABOUR'S 'DISSIDENT' STRIPPED OF POST

Alex Kitson, leading 'Broad Left' TGWU official, has been deposed as chairman of the Labour Party's Organisation Committee and replaced by right winger Brian Stanley of the Post Office Engineers Union.

Behind this move is the furore kicked up by Labour right wingers and even by some 'lefts' about remarks made by Kitson about the Soviet Union.

## Achievement

In a speech on the 60th Anniversary of the October Revolution, Kitson made the unchallengeable point that the Soviet economy, with in particular its elimination of unemployment, had already achieved "much that we are still far from achieving".

Speaking as a representative of the Scottish TUC, and as an observer from the Labour NEC, Kitson also praised the "unswerving growth in the living standards of ordinary workers" in Russia.

Both points of course contrast vividly the state of affairs in Russia with the vicious attacks against workers being carried out by the Lib-Lab coalition government administering capitalism in Britain.

## Embarrassment

Kitson's remarks could only be an embarrassment to 'lefts' like Eric Heffer who have doggedly supported the Lib-Lab deal and the policies that flow from it.

It was Heffer who made a point of raising discussion on Kitson's speech at Labour's International Committee meeting last week.

Heffer's position was paralleled by Labour's crypto-Tory extreme right wing.

Recent deserter Reg Prentice called at once on Callaghan to act against Kitson. And Prentice's cronies and admirers in the Manifesto Group as well as Neville Sandelson MP rushed to denounce Kitson's mild statement.

## 'Drift to the left'

Tory defence spokesman Sir Ian Gilmour even claimed laughably that Kitson's speech had been a stark demonstration of the Labour Party's "drift to the left".

*Socialist Press* would of course criticise Kitson's speech. He clearly made no call for the independent struggles of the Soviet working class to overthrow the Kremlin bureaucracy in political revolution.

This is a reflection of Kitson's position as a top bureaucrat. His Broad Left accommodation to the Stalinism of the Communist Party of Great Britain and his hostility to the political independence of the British working class make him incapable of putting a principled position on the Soviet Union.

## Defended

But he must be critically defended against the

Labour's crypto-Tories and their tame 'lefts' like Heffer.

CLP's should demand that in putting his case to the Labour NEC, Kitson must draw the logical conclusion of his Moscow speech: he must take up a fight to improve living standards and

end unemployment in Britain.

This could best begin by Kitson moving a motion on the NEC for an immediate break in the Lib-Lab coalition and the expulsion of the Callaghan-Healey leadership.



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

As Home Secretary Merlyn Rees pitched into the firemen last week in Parliament, he predictably won the support of Tory spokesman William Whitelaw and Labour's coalition partners in the Liberal Party.

Eric Heffer, however, embroiled in his moves against Alex Kitson, made sure he did not overstep the mark by supporting the firemen's claim.

Instead he simply called on Rees to "intervene and intervene" until a 'settlement' was reached.

The fruits of Rees' 'intervention' will be seen as 12,000 troops wheel out their antiquated strike-busting equipment this week.



Kitson

# Benn tour to boost mines incentive plan

Energy Secretary, Tony Benn, emerged black faced from Parkside Colliery last week to tell the world outside that a head on clash between the miners and the government is out of the question.

"Anyone who thinks this is a re-run of 1973-4 with Mr Heath has completely misunderstood what is going on" he said.

Since the government has no intention of getting within a 100 miles of the miners £135 claim, Benn has pounced on the complete failure of Scargill to push for a strike vote and has again backed the twice rejected productivity deals.

## Exposed

Benn's 'left' reputation has already been exposed time and again but his alliance with the right wing leadership of the NUM takes him to new depths.

Before the ballot this 'silent revolutionary' had urged the miners to vote for the speed-up and abandonment of their wage claim.

His 'no confrontation' speech came after he had been told that the NUM executive had decided to investigate productivity deals for areas that had voted in favour.

Benn is not just openly and actively campaigning in

democracy in the NUM.

It was the right wing who insisted on holding the ballot after the annual conference had voted against productivity deals.

If the right wing had won that ballot they would have enchained the left with their majority.

Now they have lost they seek to back right wingers who wish to opt out.

If it were not for the press and Tory MPs continuing to apply left and Marxist labels to Benn his role would be exposed for what it is—a cover for the policies of Healey and Callaghan.

Like the 'nice and nasty' policemen who work in pairs on reluctant prisoners, Benn's role is to soften up the miners for the open assaults of Callaghan, Healey and Daly.

No amount of soot on his face or subterranean expeditions can disguise it.



# Housing Labour's Record Slammed



PHOTO: Mike Tomlinson, (IFL)

Benn speaking to left admirers

A meeting called by Islington Federation of Tenants Associations on 8 November laid bare the inability of even the most well-intentioned Labour councils to solve the housing problem.

Margaret Watson, housing chairman, gave a glowing account of Islington's housing programme; its capital budget of £58 million is by far the largest in London.

But her fine words fell flat against the storm of criticism which followed from tenants and building workers.

She admitted to being unable to control the cowboy tactics of private building firms and the subcontracting system.

£4 million is already scheduled for repairing defects on new estates. And new conversions lie empty for

legal department battles for the making good of major faults.

Speaker after speaker clamoured for a massive build up of the Direct Labour Force as the only solution—to ensure good standards of building, to provide proper apprenticeship training and secure employment conditions and to create jobs for the unemployed.

Ms Watson boasted of the Council's record in winning large grants from central government to maintain the housing programme.

In fact its capitulation to Healey's cuts has meant that the demolition of 3,600 flats on inter-war estates has been postponed for 5-10 years. Their redevelopment was previously declared an 'absolute priority'.

The Communist Party dominated Tenants Federation joined enthusiastically in

# Hiding from a fight on racism

Faced with the twin threats of racialism and fascism the Labour Party has turned towards the security of the Liberals and Conservatives to protect them from principled opposition.

Although some Labour Party wards have been won to support for effective anti-fascist campaigns based on the working class, the Labour Party leadership has refused to take any stand against racialism or fascism.

Its campaigning has been left to speech days and holidays where immigration and import controls are not mentioned.

Now the Labour Party is to give official backing to the newly formed Joint Committee Against Racialism.

*Labour Weekly* reports "Liberals and Conservatives have been approached and are thought likely to get involved."

These will make fitting bedfellows for the racials in the Labour leadership.

*Labour Weekly* also gives support to the newly formed 'Anti-Nazi League' a group set up to oppose left groups initiatives against the National Front.

Apparently this group-backed among others by Lawrence Daly, Alan Fisher and the Coventry *Evening Telegraph*—reflects a bureaucratic feeling that:

"Too much of the anti-Front campaigning has been left to small splinter left groups whose activities have sometimes been both divisive and counter-productive."

From the Crossman diaries Wednesday May 29, 1968:

"I stayed behind to discuss with the PM Mr Callaghan's notorious speech to the firemen's union. This had been causing a tremendous sensation. He had apparently told them without any qualification that there will be no more legislation on incomes and prices.

"Harold said: 'That fellow's getting above himself. We must teach him a lesson.'"

Council.

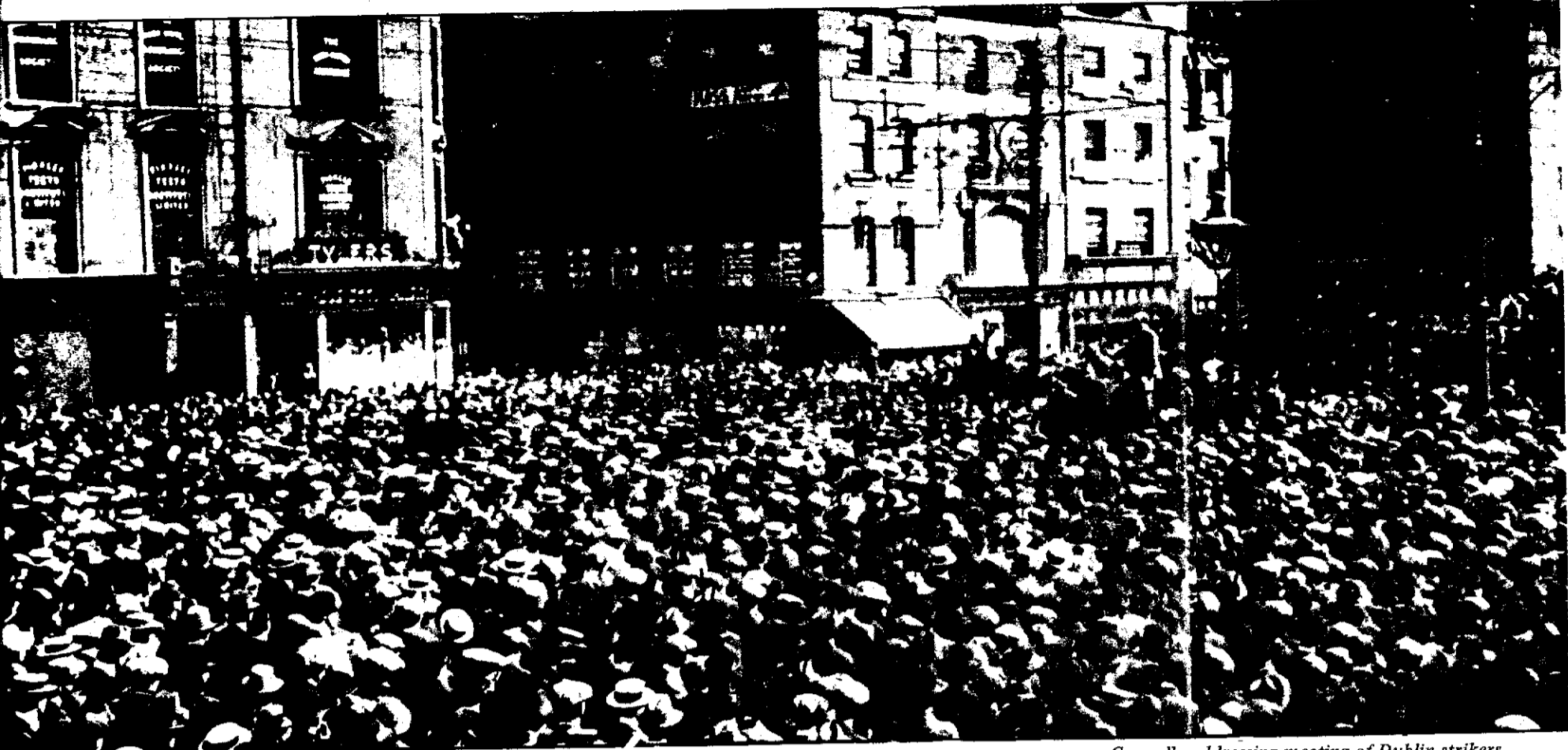
Its true colours were shown however in the total absence of any proposals for a fight back.

It was left to a WSL floor speaker to call for a plan of action by building unions and the Trades Council to force the council to build up the Direct Labour force immediately.

That reason advanced the need for such action is illustrated by the action of mothers on Blythe Mansions one of the inter-war estates, who have barricaded council workmen off the estate.

They are opposed to patching up repairs and instead demand immediate demolition.

Nearby is a brand new GLC estate, parts of which are now completed, which the GLC is leaving empty while it declares its intention of selling off the flats and



Connolly addressing meeting of Dublin strikers



Parnell urges peasants to withhold rent

# Ireland

## ROOTS OF TODAY'S CRISIS

### PART 3: The emergence of the labour movement

The formation of a labour party in England was in Lenin's view an enormously important step.

Organising the English proletariat separately from other classes represented, as he put it, 'a half way house to a genuine proletarian political party'.

In Ireland, however, the struggle to create a labour party took place in the very period that the Irish nation was being created.

As a result two classes—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat—found themselves entering the stage of history at the same time.

#### Middle class

Of course the spokesmen for the middle class never ceased to stress to working class audiences that as far as Irish national aspirations were concerned their interests were identical. In 1909 the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, John Redmond assured the Irish Trade Union Congress that his party will in the future as in the

Ireland... the function of a labour party'.

From history however, the Irish working class had examples that pointed in a rather different direction.

Urban workers, mainly protestant, had been prominent in agitation in the late eighteenth century to restore Parliamentary independence to Ireland.

#### Anti-union laws

Yet, once this was achieved, the middle class used their militia the 'Volunteers' to disperse assemblies of workers protesting against poor working conditions, and the new Parliament was to pass the first anti-union combination laws.

The defeat of the rising of the United Irishmen saw the subordination of Ireland to England by an Act of Union in 1801.

The craft workers of Dublin, partly concerned with protection, supported the campaign of Daniel O'Connell for legislative independence. But in return for their support O'Connell attacked trade unions as

union itself in causing the economic decline of Dublin.

James Connolly rightly said of O'Connell that he was 'the most unscrupulous and bitter enemy of trade unionism that Ireland has yet produced'.

A later nationalist leader, Parnell, took a similar position when he said

'What is trade unionism but the landlordism of labour. I would not tolerate if I were at the head of a Government such bodies as trade unions'.

Chartism made little advance in Ireland even though one of its leaders, Feargus O'Connor, came from Cork. O'Connell was hostile to the movement because like his successors in the national movement Isaac Butt and Parnell he preferred to try to seek accommodation with the English ruling class for a settlement.

#### Politics shunned

No settlement was forthcoming however and with the failure to secure repeal of the union there was a shunning of politics.

This meant that when the Dublin United Trades Association was founded in 1863 it limited its objectives to

'co-operate for the protection of trade and the promotion and encouragement of local manufacture'.

Its successor was the Dublin Trades Council which preoccupied itself entirely with the protection of skilled workers.

The Irish Trades Union Congress explicitly excluded political matters from its annual conferences from its formation in 1894.

#### Gas workers

With the craft unions trying to ignore politics the initiative for a nationally based independent party for the working class fell to the Dublin branch of the National Union of Gasworkers and General Labourers who in 1891 invited all trade unions in the country to an organising convention.

The craft unions stayed away and the attempt came to nothing.

successful labour body was formed based on the Irish branches of English-based amalgamated skilled unions.

Only Belfast refused to participate in this movement, which was inspired by a feeling that Irish affairs were receiving insufficient attention by the parent body in England.

In Belfast developments were moving in a different direction. In 1892 Ireland's first local labour party was formed and affiliated to the ILP the next year.



ILP branches were also formed in Dublin and Waterford in 1894.

A local government act of 1898 eased restrictions on candidates, and labour-sponsored ones achieved successes in Dublin, Limerick, Dundalk, Waterford and Castlebar.

This development considerably alarmed the nationalists who had no desire to see the emergence of independent working class candidates.

'Labour and nationality must march together,' insisted John Redmond, who feared that independent workers' parties might disrupt the Home Rule movement.

In fact these workers candidates elected to local councils achieved little. Many especially in Dublin, were bought off by the very corporation they had set out to clean up.

#### Not accountable

No Party... actions. They were... able to... dismal performance... reaction...



James Larkin

1903, when in the main their working class electorate rejected this.

Only Belfast escaped the debacle, because there the candidates were carefully chosen and under the tight discipline of the Belfast Labour Party which in turn was controlled by the Belfast Trades Council.

**Independent**

The Irish Parliamentary Party in an attempt to deflate the pressure for an independent workers' party permitted one or two of their nationalist MPs to be chosen from labour ranks.

They would then regularly address the annual congresses of the Irish TUC and advise that body to maintain its reformist outlook, to avoid the perils of socialism, and to support the IPP.

This sentiment did not go unchallenged, because as well as the pro IPP position there was a body that believed that the unions should stay out of politics altogether while the Belfast delegates urged affiliation to the British labour movement.

**Affiliate**

At first the Congress took a pro IPP line while at the same time supporting the Belfast proposal that all Irish trade unions should affiliate with the British Labour Representation Committee.

Only in Belfast was this proposal acted upon, by William Walker contesting the

North Belfast constituency in three consecutive years 1905 to 1907.

**Insistent**

He didn't win, though he polled well. As Belfast's urgings upon the need for the Congress to establish political machinery grew more insistent so too did the nationalist supporters inside the Congress vigorously deny the need for such a party.

They also conjured up the fear that Home Rule would be less likely to be conceded if such parties were formed.

This argument was undermined by the Liberal leader Asquith in 1909 when he included Home Rule in his programme.

A far more important development that year was the formation of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union.

**Socialism**

It was the first successful attempt on a large scale to organise the unskilled workers.

The craft unions succeeded in keeping it out of the Congress until 1911, but its strength, organised and led by Jim Larkin, could not be resisted for long.

When it entered it quickly took over and transformed the Congress, by its explicit commitment to socialism, its belief in Irish unions for Ireland and its aggressive advocacy of labour political action.

# BUREAUCRATS MANOEUVRE TO HEAD OFF MASS MOVEMENT

**Slammed by jobless**

As the scale of working class resistance to the Moncloa Pact, Spain's equivalent of the 'Social Contract' steadily grows, the bureaucratic leaders of the mass workers organisations face serious problems. Every demand put forward by the workers—to defend and improve living standards, defend all jobs, and ensure full freedom of workers' organisations to organise without legal interference—brings them into conflict with the Francoist regime. Yet the labour bureaucrats have staked everything on the preservation of this regime and on a perspective of simply "pressuring" it for minimal reforms within the framework of capitalism.

For this reason the bureaucrats have been forced to adopt a method of heading off the mass movement which while identical in content, is different in form from the brazenly strikebreaking stand adopted by their British counterparts. The major leaflet on the giant 200,000-strong march against the Moncloa Pact shows this clearly. There is no reference in the leaflet to the collaboration between leaders of mass workers parties and the "big capitalists" verbally attacked in the first paragraph. The Moncloa deal is not even mentioned. There is no call for action against the Pact, except the talk of the "possible holding of a one-day general strike"—a policy restricted to one of protest and pressure.

And in the call for "support for small and medium factories against the interests of Big Capital" the road is being opened up for a class collaborationist "democratic" alliance with small scale capitalists.

But the pressure of the mass movement is reflected in the advanced nature of the demands spelled out by these reformist leaders—demands amounting to a sliding scale of wages under workers control, and steps towards work sharing on full pay.

Fought for and developed by a principled leadership, such demands could provide the basis for a massive political step forward by Spanish workers.

On this page we reprint (below) the main leaflet of November 5, as well as (above) another leaflet which briefly and sharply attacked its central thrust.

To the whole working class and people of Viscaya:

We, the workers of Euskadi and of the whole of Spain, are living through decisive moments during which the economic situation gets worse day by day, and in the face of which the big capitalists and the government, instead of solving the grave problems, are making them worse.

Unemployment continues to rise precipitately as do consumer prices; and an attempt is being made to impose a wage freeze on us.

**Big capital**

We see that Big Capital is trying to keep going only those businesses which are profitable to them and abandon those which, having exploited to their maximum, are no longer of any interest to them.

These measures are only designed to see that the burden of saving the country from this crisis falls on the backs of the workers.

Pursuing the defence of our interests against this plan, we are opposed both to the closing of factories and to the measures taken by factories in a state of economic crisis which are placing the workers of Viscaya in particular, in a dramatic situation.

**Demands**

To combat the measures they are trying to impose on us, we demand:

- \* An emergency economic plan which guarantees a reduction in the rate of inflation and includes the progressive creation of new



Part of the November 5 demonstration

- \* Support for small and medium factories against the privileged interests of Big Capital, since they account for 80.5% of the work force in the whole country.

- \* Against the crisis measures; not a single redundancy!

- \* For unemployment insurance to hundreds of unemployed workers during the entire period of unemployment.

- \* Workers management of all firms in crisis, to avoid all types of fraud.

- \* A ban on overtime working.

- \* A 40 hour week. 35 hours for firms in crisis without loss of pay.

- \* Pensions on full wage at the age of 60, 58 for firms in crisis.

- \* Wage increases by at least the increase in the cost of living index, which should be under the control of the trade

- \* Unrestricted trade union freedom and suppression of the law which permits uncontrolled sacking.

We workers are aware of the difficulties in implementing our programme.

**Basic support**

But we are also aware that we represent the basic support of the country and are the major force in it.

Guided by these considerations we must resolutely confront this position which, though today it more directly affects firms in crisis, is something which affects the whole of the working class—since it is Big Capital and its government which is entirely responsible for the situation.

**Coordinate**

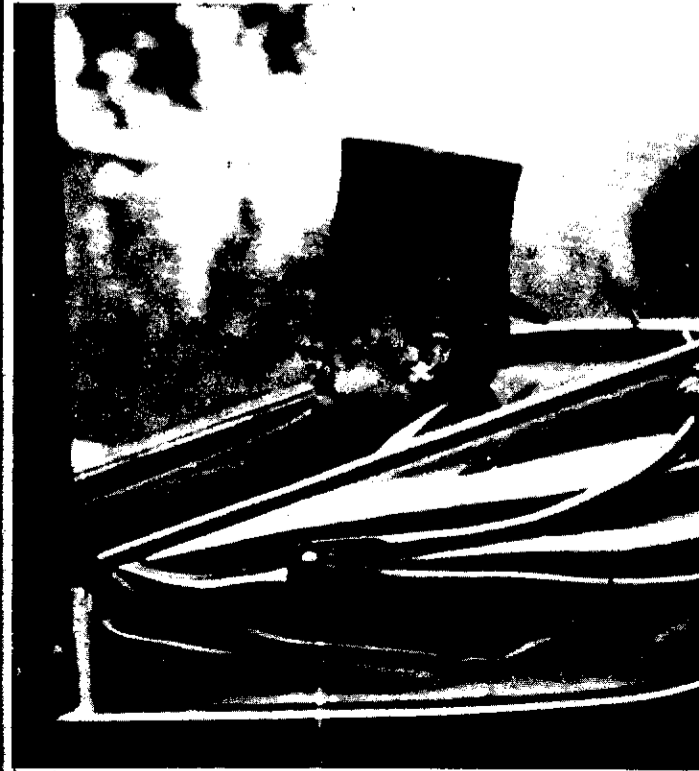
So as a beginning to the building of active solidarity of all workers, we call today for a series of actions in the zones of the city, designed to co-ordinate workers of the firms in crisis and alert public opinion.

gigantic demonstration on November 5 at 1.30 in the Park of Bilbao, as well as the holding of factory and workshop mass meetings to discuss seriously the possible holding of a one-day GENERAL STRIKE throughout Viscaya.

Only the decisive and widespread struggle of the working class and of the people can guarantee the successful defence of our jobs, the re-employment of those made redundant as well as the purchasing power of our wages.

- \*Against the crisis measures.
- \*Against the wage limits.
- \*Against the high cost of living.
- \*Against unemployment.
- \*For the defence of jobs.
- \*For the immediate implementation of a labour amnesty.
- \*Long live the unity of the working class!

Co-ordinating Committee of Firms in Crisis, Commission of Unemployed, and UGT. LSB-USO, CNT,CCOO. LAB. CSUT SUELA STV(A)



Nationalist leader John Redmond

# IN REVIEW

## 'THE HERETIC' — CONFUSED ATTEMPT TO VARY A WELL-TRIED FORMULA

By Elizabeth  
Thompson

The centre-piece of 'Exorcist II' ('The Heretic') is a long, screaming ride into a disease ridden city in the African desert, on the back of an enormous beast. The scene is repeated, with stimulating variations, several times, reaching finally a terrific pitch of excitement.

Unlike the toy monsters of old-time horror films, this is the real thing, wonderfully magnified, shot from above and behind, so that the audience feels itself riding with him.

Pretty scary.

The *Heretic* is aimed, it seems safe to say, at a 'popular market'; though considering the rate at which the audience deserted during the showing I attended, the term seems a little misplaced.

Still, the theatre started out full; the type of movie attracts audiences, even if the particular film fails to keep them.

### Horror

The type can be generally described as horror/disaster films. Into this category come not only the earthquake and air-crash films, but monster films like *Jaws* and *Grizzly*, as well as the 'nameless-menace' type, whether the menace is spiritual (as in the *Exorcist*) or physical as in the new *Rabid*. It is tempting to relate them to the economic crisis; the bourgeoisie under seige, in the throes of a terrible chaos, watching image after image of its undoing.

There is a related interpretation of the demon-child motif in films such as *Exorcist* and *The Omen* as a part of the backlash produced by the women's liberation movement ('This is what you'll get, if you don't stop snivelling about day nurseries!').

### Deep crisis

But while it is certainly true that these films would not have been produced and could not have been popularly received, except in a society in a state of deep crisis, it is important to stress that works of art—of any quality—do not simply imitate the social situation in which they are produced, or simply resist it.

Cinema in particular has a history of its own; as is well known, the rise of television as an advertising and cultural medium in the fifties and early sixties precipitated an enormous decline in Hollywood revenues.

### "Bankable"

The limited recovery of audiences in the late sixties and early seventies has been hedged in by more general economic difficulties.

One result of this has been the 'formula' rather than the 'star' film.

Even those stars that remain 'bankable' are dominated overwhelmingly by formulae: how many times have Robert Redford and Paul Newman made the same film?

The formula is used to control expenditure: after it has been made once, its costs can be predicted.

The calculations are simple then—Karen Black for three days at so much. Shelley Long for five at so much



The greatest disaster movie of them all—King Kong.

this form.

Special effects dominated, the actors blended into the background.

The script shunted them tidily along from one eruption of green vomit to the next, never raising tiresome problems like motivation, or the relationships between characters.

### Disaster

The slick smart, successful disaster film reduces characterisation to a conventionalised minimum—in the threatened plane, on the sinking boat, there is always an appealing small child, always an alcoholic, always a plucky invalid or terminal cancer case.

In *The Exorcist* and *The Omen* the 'spiritual dimension, while it relies of course on the marketability which occultism has acquired since the late sixties, is really simply scooping up the 'spirit world' and its effects and dribbling them over the rest of the confection.

### Haywire

In the successful disaster film, it is the immediate physical world of the characters which goes haywire, which becomes unstable and

*The Heretic* despite special effects which are far superior to any thing in the earlier film, and despite a series of glossy, scary, brilliantly designed sets, loses its way just at this point.

Picking up the story of *The Exorcist* at a point four years later in time, it decides to take a stab at becoming a kind of psychological thriller.

And while maybe Hitchcock could break the rules in this way, John Boorman can't.

Good thrillers have the same lack of interest in personal relationships that disaster films display, but they do interest themselves in the origin and nature of the particular violence on which they're centred.

### Shell-shocked

Disaster films can't investigate themselves in this way; they can only display, and display.

Richard Burton as the priest goes through the film burnt-out, shell-shocked, stumbling along and muttering unconvincingly about 'the soul' and 'evil'.

The film keeps interrupting the wonderful scenes full of locusts and other devilish creatures to

psychiatrist (Louise Fletcher) as the personification of religion and science.

Science presumably wins out in this debate, since the priest goes down fighting with the demon while the psychiatrist waits, trembling outside the wreckage caused by the struggle for the soul of the exorcised child, now a bouncing teenager, Regan.

### Grinning

In fact the film speaks not for science but for self help.

Regan saves herself, as she has brought the possession on herself, by her own spiritual powers; which are such that she can heal the sick merely by grinning at them.

This, of course, is the last straw: Part I was careful to display no interest at all in the source of Regan's troubles. But tearing around as it does in search of a theme *The Heretic* finally opts for the hostility-of-the-modern-world-to-the-spirit.

It goes down heavily with it.

For while Ms Blair (who having played Regan I was presumably the only choice for the role) has a certain hamsterish charm, ethereal she isn't.

### Nightgown

teenager traipsing through Penn Station in her nightgown does not evoke notions of the frailty of the spirit in this weary world.

### Locusts

*The Heretic* keeps wandering off with Burton and Blair into realms of phoney spirituality, there to lose itself.

And to lose the audience too; which is too bad, in a way, since the final whirlwind of locusts which destroys a substantial section of the elegant Washington suburb of Georgetown, was well worth staying for.

**NEXT WEEK**  
'Socialist Press' will next week contain a review of the pamphlet published today by the Hotel and Catering Workers National Action Committee, 'The Hotel Strikes—Lessons for Unionisation'. The pamphlet recounts the struggles for unionisation at the Trust Houses Forte hotels in Oxford, Sheffield and Birmingham and the Linton

## PRESS GANG flames of wrath

The pay issue has been firmly linked by the Press to the publication of an opinion poll showing that 88 per cent of the 1,000 or so people asked, favoured a tough line being taken against the miners.

*The Daily Mail* November 11 'Let there be light' linked the poll with the collapse of the power workers action, claiming the poll as

'new evidence that the public simply will not stand for pay blackmail'.

This poll conducted by the Opinion Research Centre 'independently' was, says the *Mail*, financed by 'about 250 industrialists'.

The effect was the same as asking well chosen people during the power workers' action whether they were pleased about their lights going out!

The opinion poll in this context is just one more instrument in the propaganda war.

Firemen have often in the past been boosted by the Press, particularly in Northern Ireland, where the dangers that they face have been used as part of the propaganda war against the IRA.

*The Times* sees dangers 'If the firemen's strike were at all effective, it seems inevitable that, whatever makeshift measures the Government may take with the Services and other resources, there would soon be a major tragedy.

In such circumstances it is by no means certain how public opinion would react. There might be increased pressure on the firemen to reach a settlement within the guidelines.

On the other hand since firemen in general enjoy a large degree of public admiration, the reaction might be against the Government.

(November 12)

*The Sun*, adopting a tone of whimsical appeal towards the firemen started its front page story: 'Will you really let the children and the old folk burn?'

They keep tactfully silent on the fact that the Government and the TUC leadership are both clearly prepared to see major disasters rather than allow the firemen to win their demands.

*The Guardian* (November 11) headlined its story 'Cabinet relies on public opinion to get firemen back'. It contained the following piece of Westminster cynicism:

'Some MPs think that the firemen might be persuaded back to work by the force of public opinion if deaths occur which are blamed on the strike.

'It's a macabre thought', one MP said, 'but if one or two old people die because there is no professional fire fighting in their area it could end the strike quicker than any number of negotiations'.

This Government through its public spending cuts has left old people without ambulances or proper medical care; it has ensured that thousands live in poverty without being able to warm themselves or feed themselves.

Why should it care if a few more are burned to death?



# OUR POLICIES FOR A SLIDING SCALE OF SPENDING

A new series on the fight for Transitional Demands

By John Lister

Wage cuts, cuts in manning levels throughout industry and cuts in government spending are the three principle prongs of the strategy of the Lib-Lab government for driving up the rate of profit in British capitalism.

By cutting government spending, particularly on the social services, Callaghan's axe-men seek primarily to avoid imposing increasing taxation on private industry and the middle class for the finance of services largely used by workers.

## Waiting Lists

In fact the cuts have the added effect of forcing even some workers to resort to private medical treatment—where waiting lists offer only years of agonising delay in

“non-urgent” operations. The defence of jobs and conditions in health, in education and in other social services is not as straightforward as the struggle in manufacturing and service industry.



Clive Jenkins, leader of ASTMS. He has continually sabotaged the fight for the implementation of the sliding scale of public spending

In other sectors the primary requirement is defence of every existing job

against management moves for speed-up or rationalisation involving closures.

But in the public sector it is vital that the service itself be defended, and extended and that any cutbacks are fought—whether or not jobs are cut.

The manner in which the cuts are being pressed home indicates the way the fight must be directed.

Healey's strategy has been to impose an overall reduction in budget for the social services, linked to rigid cash limits.

## Magnified

In this way the comparatively small initial cuts in budget totals are magnified massively by the working of inflation, which daily increases the running costs of the service while only a fixed sum is available for finance.

Under such a system cuts

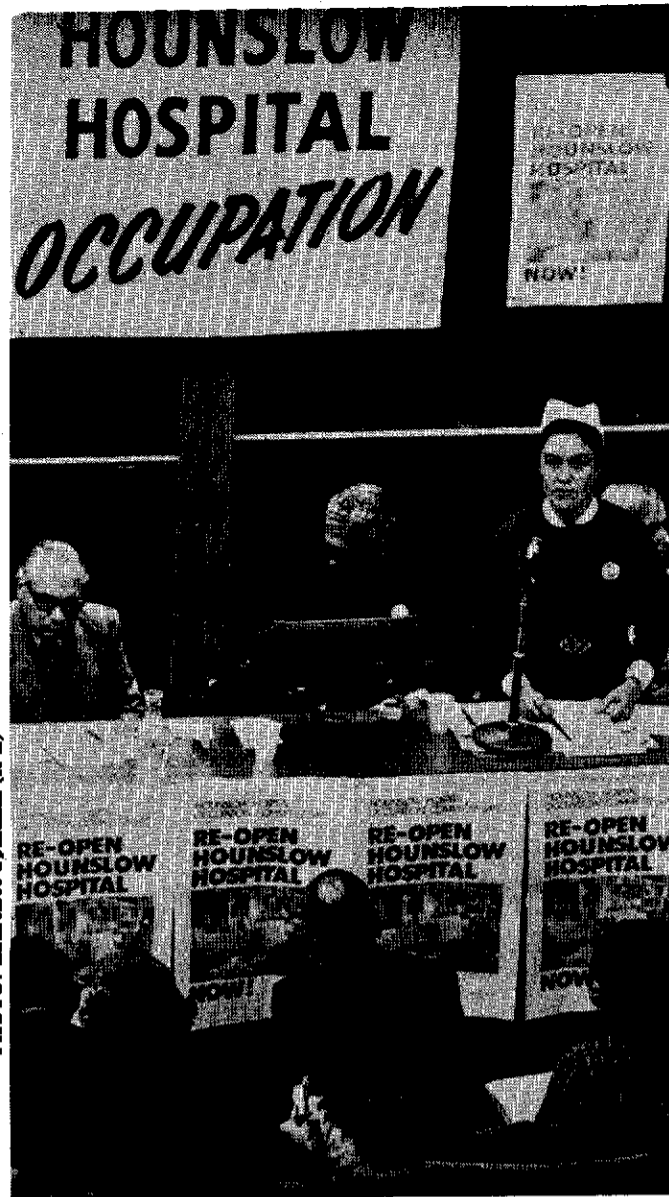


PHOTO: Laurence Sparham (IFL)

are automatically imposed at the full rate of inflation.

Without challenging the system of cash limits, and advocating a policy that will defend the social services against the effects of inflation, no consistent fight against the cuts is possible.

## Full access

Elected committees of trade unionists—both social service workers and users of the services—must fight for

full access to the finance books of the administering authorities, in order to assess the real impact of inflation and the financial needs of the service in each area.

This fight must be combined with the struggle for the abolition of cash limits, the restoration in full of all cuts and the implementation of a sliding scale of social service spending, rising in pace with increased costs in materials and increased wage

bills.

Such a demand flies in the face of the main focus of government policy, and raises the need for a break in the reactionary Lib-Lab coalition, which stands as a barrier to socialist policies.

## Nationalisation

The scale of these increased costs, publicised throughout the labour and trade union movement and linked to an exposure of the profits made from the social services in the private supply and construction industries, will illustrate still more clearly the necessity for the nationalisation of these firms under workers management, as part of a planned provision for social needs.

The Workers Socialist League has fought for the sliding scale of spending since its formation in 1974. At the ASTMS Conference in 1975 the sliding scale of Health Service spending was adopted as national policy against the opposition of the union's National Executive.

The ASTMS NEC have since taken no action whatever to carry through this policy, and sabotaged repeated efforts to raise this betrayal at subsequent conferences.

## CLASH

Meanwhile the policy has been also adopted by the Committee of London Area Stewards in the Health Service (CLASH), which has played a key role in supporting the EGA work-in and the fight to defend the Hounslow Hospital.

Coupled to the fight for all-out strike action to stop the cuts, the sliding scale of spending demand points the way forward for all workers in the social services, health and education.

# LEST WE FORGET REFORMISM

It's Poppy Day again—that season of the most cynical breast-beating and biggest crocodile tears on behalf of the British bourgeoisie, and their errand boys who lead the Labour Party and the unions.

All of them cultivate a show of concern for the fate of the hundreds of thousands of British troops who were among the millions who were slaughtered in the course of the first imperialist world war while bankers and industrialists totted up the profits and contended against other bankers and industrialists for a lion's share of a redivided world market.

## Treachorous leaders

The crucial role in enabling the 'War to End all Wars' to take place was played by the treacherous leaders of the reformist social democratic parties in each country.

Sooner than break from their position of privilege based on class collaboration with their own capitalist class these leaders voted almost to a man to support their own employers in imperialist war.

As a result of their be-

haviour, the workers' parties of these countries did not oppose the governments' criminal conduct, but called upon the working class to identify its position with that of the imperialist governments.

The leaders of the International committed an act of treachery against socialism by voting for war credits, by reiterating the chauvinist ('patriotic') slogans of the bourgeoisies of their 'own' countries, by justifying and defending the war, by joining the bourgeois governments of the belligerent countries, and so on and so forth.

The most influential socialist leaders and the most influential organs of the socialist press of present-day Europe hold views that are chauvinist bourgeois and liberal, and in no way socialist.

*Bolshevik Resolution 'The War and Russian Social Democracy'.*

## Descendants

It is this betrayal by social democracy that finds the most striking echo in today's situation in Britain—where their descendants, the Labour leaders, in coalition with the bourgeois Liberal Party, is at present preparing to use the standing army in a bid to smash the

firemen's strike.

As the ceremonial parades are stood down, 12,000 troops will be mobilised in one of the biggest ever scabbing operations organised by social democracy.

## Credentials

If the First World War was the first decisive means of exposing reformist leaders as recruiting sergeants for the capitalist war machine, they have ever since proved their credentials as the most dedicated servants of finance capital.

The millions of workers used as cannon-fodder in wars, the countless hundreds of thousands who have died, suffered internment, torture, and repression under fascism, and been dragged into vicious speed up and wage cuts by 'peaceful' capitalist exploitation as a result of reformist betrayals fill not 'one corner of a foreign field' but miles of ground in every country of the world.

And while it is trendy these days for liberals to criticise the 'incompetence' of the First World War General Staff or the 'senselessness' of war, only revolutionaries today can pinpoint the real reasons that brought millions of brave working men needlessly to shoot each other down in



A Soldiers' Committee. The Bolsheviks fought for the independent mobilisation of the working class against the war.

those obscene mud trenches sixty years ago.

And only revolutionary Marxists are able to bring those lessons into today's struggles.

Now, as then, the working class has no interests in propping up the bourgeoisie of any capitalist state.

Millions of war-time corpses are witness to this.

Workers have no interest in assisting that same bourgeoisie in imposing nationalist import controls, speed-up, or rationalisation.

And they have everything to gain from assisting workers in colonial countries to break free from imperialist domination.

The real enemy in each country is the capitalist class at home.

The fight against that capitalist class demands the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

Only in this way can the slaughtered millions be avenged and the capitalist system that generates war and destruction be swept away.

# INDUSTRIAL NEWS



Journalists lobby the NEC for added support for the Darlington strike.

## JOURNALISTS REJECT 10 PER CENT LIMIT

In a decisive week for provincial journalists the National Executive of the NUJ is to be reconvened over the Darlington closed shop dispute and a new campaign is to be launched against the 10% limit.

The moves came from a first ever meeting called of delegates from every chapel in the country in Birmingham at the weekend.

About 150 chapels responded—despite a refusal by NUJ finance committee to meet travelling costs—and they voted overwhelmingly to reject the 10% offer by the Newspaper Society.

The NUJ claim for a £23 a week increase, an extra week's holiday, a 35-hour week including meal breaks, better maternity leave, paternity leave, London weighting and other benefits was treated with contempt by the Newspaper Society negotiators.

### Hypocrisy

They told the NUJ that all government advertising would be withdrawn if they broke the ten per cent limit.

Their hypocrisy was revealed at the Birmingham meeting. When the chairman called for delegates whose members had received under the table payments to come forward one tenth of the

delegates rose to queue for the microphone.

In some cases these payments were up to £15 a week extra, paid weeks before the votes at mandatory meetings on the pay offer.

In other words the Newspaper Society was prepared to break the 10% limit in selected areas to buy off national actions on the claim.

Don Sutton, chairman of the Provincial Newspapers Industrial Council, weakly told the meeting that he had not known about the deals.

Rightly the PNIC took a hammering from the floor for its handling of the claim. Without launching a campaign, without explaining to the membership why further meetings with the employers were pointless (which they were) the PNIC told chapels to vote on all out strike action over the claim.

### Campaign

In confusion many chapels who opposed the 10% offer voted against strike action.

The voting showed 124 chapels for a strike, 128 against and a staggering 100 chapels did not meet at all on the question.

The meeting has called for a campaign to be followed by a new meeting of delegates to reconsider action.

NUJ General Secretary, Ken Ashton, came under pressure from Mike Duggan of Darlington to reveal details of the NGA 'proposals' which have held up spreading strike action throughout Westminster Press.

### Beginning

He point blank refused saying that they were a matter for the National Executive.

It was left up to 'left' talking Denis McShane, Vice President, to declare that he would see that a National Executive meeting was reconvened immediately saying 'I don't want to see Darlington treading water for a fortnight'.

He finished the meeting declaring that on pay the NUJ stood "at the beginning of the fight, not the end of it".

Without a sharp, sustained fight against the vacillating leadership the campaign's end will be as inglorious as its beginning.

\*No to wage controls!  
\*Spread the Darlington strike!

# NUM LEADERS PREPARE TO ACCEPT 12-MONTH RULE

The decision of the National Union of Mineworkers National Executive last week not to push forward in pursuit of their £135 pay claim exposes the complete weakness of the union lefts.

Arthur Scargill stormed out of the meeting lashing out at the decision to investigate local productivity deals despite the overwhelming ballot against them.

### Playing down

But Scargill, taunted by right wingers in the Executive who dared him to back a ballot for strike action, refused to do so.

Instead, his public utterances are now concerned only with playing down talk of

confrontation with the government pay limit.

The NUM Executive is still to decide on its attitude to the 12 month rule. But confusion sown by Scargill can only reduce the confidence of his supporters—who last week were convinced that a strike poll was a formality.

### Gauntlet

Len Clarke, Nottinghamshire right winger, threw down the gauntlet to the left by proposing an immediate strike poll.

His fellow right wingers were horrified. An immediate poll could not fail but reflect the vote on the productivity deal.

But Clarke had calculated correctly. Scargill stayed quiet and the motion fell by default.

The move came after three hours of bitter argument in which Gormley backed his claims that Scargill's campaign had been "worse than Goebbels".

Company director Gormley, furious that his



Scargill

dictates on productivity deals were rejected, is now going ahead with moves to initiate productivity deals in areas which had majorities locally.

It is for this reason that no delay can be allowed in the miners' fight for the £135 wage.

Scargill fought hard against the productivity deal but is now behaving like a man surprised to win—and frightened by his responsibilities.

Socialist Press last week correctly warned that the right wing policy would be to delay action on the claim until the spring and that Scargill would be unable to fight the manoeuvre.

It is not a question of his subjective militancy but his lack of a clear programme to counter the right wing.

Scargill must demand that the 12-month rule is fought, and a strike ballot called.

Meanwhile miners can afford to put faith neither in the company director right wing nor in the militant left.

If evidence is needed of what so called lefts can be reduced to, Mick McGahey, Communist Party member and once feared by the capitalist press, has now himself supported increased productivity—with no pay increase!

The union Vice-President said after the Executive meeting: "It's nonsense to talk about confrontation and bringing down the government. That's all pure speculation when we haven't met the board yet."



## Women fight for unions

Two long running struggles for unionisation are taking place in Wolverhampton.

13 women workers at Tunncliffe's sporting darts factory have been on strike for six weeks demanding reinstatement.

Management sacked them after they joined the General and Municipal Workers Union.

They have been offered reinstatement if they agree to leave the union.

And at Gorman's Pork Products, women workers are in the fifth week of a struggle against the sacking of 10 new recruits to the TGWU.

Management conducted a "ballot"—by calling in scab workers individually and

port, TGWU District Officer Littlehales is allowing two TGWU-organised firms to continue supplying Gormans—without even notifying them the dispute was on.

Some welcome backing however has come from students at Wolverhampton Polytechnic who have voted to support the picket lines and fight for a black on Gorman products.

The local labour movement must demand full scale official support for these actions, which indicate the growing resistance of working women to management oppression.

Finance is urgently needed and should be sent to: TGWU, Mrs. S Moseley, 3, Tewkesbury Road, Mossley Estate, Bloxwich.

# CARETAKERS STRIKE SOLD OUT

The four week strike by GLC caretakers was called off on Friday 11 November, not by a vote of the caretakers but by the instruction of the NUPE Disputes Committee.

Many of the men were extremely bitter about this. They were also angry at the role of Divisional Officer H. McCartney and their own strike leaders who came from negotiations at County Hall having agreed to a miserable £71.67 gross and 27 hours pay for dealing with four weeks backlog of work.

This is to be paid over the

next three weeks.

Even this amount had to be squeezed out of the Tories who are pushing ahead with their plans to dismantle the public housing sector and all associated services.

It was to fight these cut-backs that the caretakers took their action under severe provocation.

The dispute began on the Ranwell Estate in East London when one caretaker and a relief porter were left to run an estate normally requiring seven men.

These men refused to be responsible for implementing this cut.

The union involved, the

National Union of Public Employees, stated that their members were subsequently locked out.

Approximately 600 GLC caretakers, all NUPE members, joined the action and held meetings on many of the estates to explain their case to the tenants.

In 1970 the GLC employed 1390 caretakers—which was nowhere near adequate. But today there are only 1287 GLC caretakers and the council insists that it will not spend the money on employing more.

Moreover, all weekend overtime is to be stopped in a further drive to worsen the service for tenants.

This will also mean a drastic cut in wages for caretakers who are on a basic £32 per week and rely on the extra to get by.

### Mass lobby

Councillor Ken Livingstone stressed that it was not good enough to blame everything on the Tories who had been in since May.

He called for a mass lobby of tenants and caretakers at the next GLC on Tuesday to stop the Tories getting into County Hall.

The meeting voted to support this lobby and the caretakers' action and to demand a rent rebate for the failure of the GLC to provide their services.

The bitterness of many caretakers has led some to talk of leaving the union. This offers no answer at all.

The need is to fight for a principled leadership to



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

London members of the Society of Civil and Public Employees during their half day strike for the restoration of

## Fight Sheffield sackings

Boilermakers at James Engineering, Sheffield, are still picketing the factory in a dispute that began on September 20 when management sacked three painters for refusing to work in dangerous fumes.

23 workers took strike action in defence of the three, but despite the claim by Boilermakers' official Nuttall that the strike is official, they are receiving no strike pay.

Nuttall claimed that this would mean they would lose Social Security money!

Meanwhile his main activity on the strike has been to rush around Sheffield seeking alternative jobs for the strikers—in a move that has cut the numbers still out to ten.

The fight for strike pay in this dispute must be taken up at once by local trade unionists.

## Differential dead-end

Another attempt to avoid confrontation with the pay laws failed when skilled workers at Vauxhall's Luton and Dunstable factories, whose three-week strike had stopped much of Vauxhall's production, returned to work last week.

Their claim had centred not on a perspective of regaining and defending living standards cut by wage controls, but on the narrow concept of restoring differentials.

The settlement made a gesture in this direction—but only at a price. Management agreed to grant a 3.46% supplement to skilled men, in return for improved productivity.

## 12-month rule broken

35 ASTMS foremen who imposed an official work to rule and overtime ban at the Osborn Hadfield factory in Sheffield, stepped up their action last Tuesday with the first lightning strike.

Last Friday management backed down and made a £6 offer to the foremen which was accepted—in breach of the 12-month rule.

TASS members, who have been imposing similar sanctions in pursuit of their pay claim, were locked out for refusing to do foremen's work, and staged a ½-day protest strike.

Their pay claim remains to be settled.

# BREAK FROM HOTEL WAGES COUNCIL

The GMWU leadership will enter this week's meeting of the wages council for the hotel and catering industry hoping to put the seal on a month of wretched betrayal by confirming acceptance of a £4 rise negotiated at the last wages council.

Since that last meeting, however, this leadership has been confronted with a movement on wages around the £50 minimum claim which has challenged the whole structure of the wages council and the years of GMWU betrayal in the London region.

### Focus

We have reported throughout the strike at the London Metropole Hotel how this strike, now in its sixth week, has acted as a focus for the resentment of the low wages and poor conditions which have built up in the industry.

With the Metropole workers showing the way by taking strike action, every major GMWU branch in London, Centre, Trust House Forte, Rank and Grand Metropolitan, has taken up the claim over the last two months, coupling it with demands that the union should give full official support to the Metropole workers.

This move has forced the bureaucracy—in the form of full time officials Romp and Tilston—to pursue a conscious policy of sabotaging any prospect of a common claim and generalised strike action.

### Scabbing

First with vicious attacks on Metropole strikers themselves, officially encouraging scabbing on the picket line and attempting to organise a new scab leadership within the hotel Romp and Tilston have been busy attempting to isolate each branch and prevent joint action.

In this policy they have

had a limited success, going as far as appeasing Centre Hotel stewards by lodging a £20 across the board claim with managing director Edwards.

They were careful to ensure that any further discussion on the claim would take place on November 22—after the wages council meeting and hopefully for them after they've driven the Metropole strikers back.

### Negotiations

After sitting on the Grand Metropolitan claim for £50 since August, Romp and Tilston have so far succeeded in preventing an emergency branch meeting called to discuss the claim, and the situation at the Metropole.

In negotiations taking place this Thursday they obviously hope to tie the branch to the rates negotiated at the previous day's wages council meeting.

Despite these moves however the weakness of the bureaucracy is seen in that they have only gained acceptance of the 10% offer at the Rank Hotels branch.

No doubt Romp and Tilston hope to finish the job by presenting the wages council agreement as binding on all sections.

### Insecure

But with negotiations still pending at the Grand Metropolitan and the Centre group, with the Metropole strike still stubbornly continuing and with the immediate prospect of a maintenance workers strike over wages, their position is far from assured.

The task facing those militants who have begun to realise the necessity of fighting the GMWU leadership and the wages council structure is to be won is to continue to press for the £50 minimum wage whatever settlement is reached on Wednesday.

This means that stewards at the Centre Hotels branch must re-affirm their commitment to immediate strike action if their claim is not

met on 22 November.

At the Grand Metropolitan no stage-managed negotiations must be allowed to enforce a miserly 10% increase. An immediate branch meeting must be convened where the £50 claim submitted in August backed up with the threat of strike action must be made binding in any future union negotiations.

It will be on the basis of this leadership that weaker organised groups like the THF branch or those that have grudgingly accepted the 10% like the Rank branch will be mobilised into supporting actions.

In the meantime support has to be organised throughout the labour movement for

those still on strike at the Metropole who for six weeks have borne the brunt of the collective attacks of both union and management.

These workers must not be allowed to be crushed. The 1/524 and the 5/670 branches of the TGWU showed the way last week pledging not only full financial support and support for the picket line but also sending a resolution to the Executive Committee demanding that official support be given to any section of the TGWU in the industry taking action in support of the £50 claim.

This lead must be followed by all TGWU and GMWU branches.

## NUPE REJECTS COUNCILS' 10pc OFFER

The Executive of the giant public employees union NUPE has rejected a 10% pay offer made to 1 million local authority manual workers, in response to NUPE's 30% claim.

This decision is now being submitted for endorsement to their members—but they are not seeking any decision on action. Instead they simply want a mandate for further discussions.

The NUPE leadership is notorious for vainly 'protesting' about the cuts. It now seems to be adopting the same attitude to wages.

Ron Keating, NUPE's national officer heading the negotiations said that as far as the 'political side' of union policy was concerned, it was limited to lobbies like last year's November 27 march.

NUPE's leaders, in other words, are determined not to challenge the coalition government, and to hold their members within the bonds of parliamentary protest, instead

of action along with the firemen.

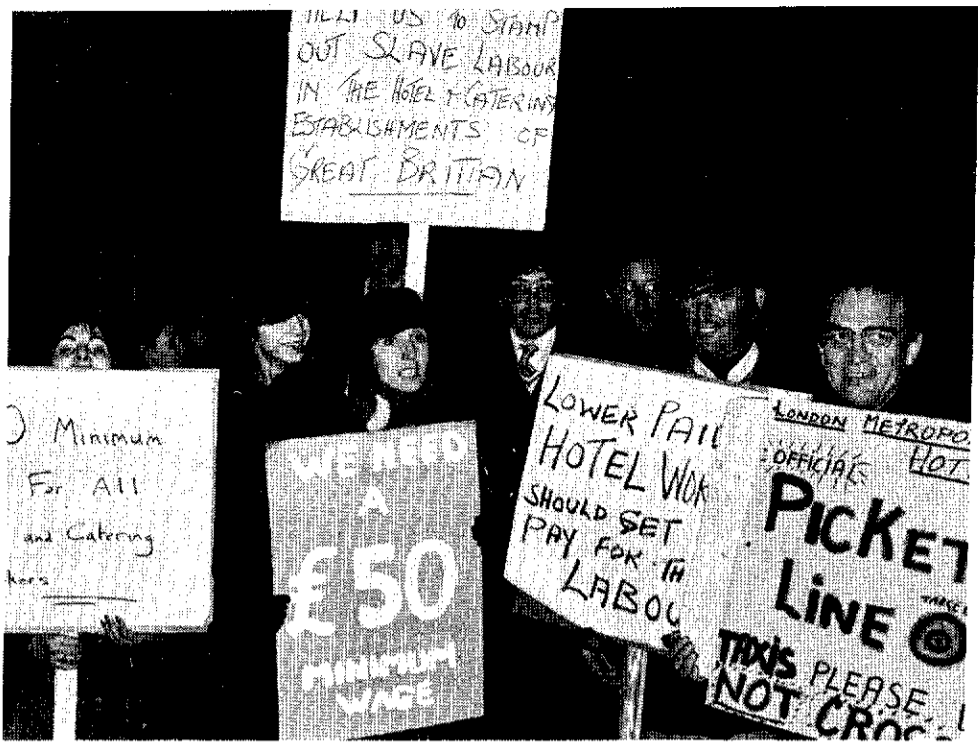
## Don't scab — official

An instruction to hospital workers not even to attempt to fight fires during the firemen's strike was made by COHSE South West regional organiser Steve Grant this weekend.

"This is not only a matter of basic trade unionism, but is also for the safety of our own members who are not trained fire-fighters" he said.

"They will help patients to safety and stop there. They will not risk their own lives just to save equipment".

Similar instructions should be issued by all union officials.



## PRIEST BACKS STALINIST

The right wing TGWU leadership of BLMC's Cowley Body Plant confronted problems at last week's Branch meeting for the biennial elections.

The leadership had managed to regain a certain amount of credibility by campaigning against the company's corporate bargaining proposals.

This had culminated in a mass meeting, reluctantly held, but utilised by the right wing in a bid to regain support.

Under these conditions it was not surprising that convenor Bill Roche JP was re-elected with about 200 votes, against 45 votes for Tony Richardson.

Richardson had stood on a position of opposing 'participation', opposing corporate bargaining, and opposition to the leadership's abandonment of the branch's pay claim for £100 per week and a cost-of-living clause.

For the other positions, Howard Lloyd received 36 votes against around 200 for Reverend T. Williamson in the fight for the chairman's position, and Charlie Train won 44 votes against 200 for Alec Morton JP as vice-chairman.

In the struggle for night shift senior steward a run-off election was held between the top contenders—Stalinist C. Syrett and opposer W. Hillier.

Hillier had refused to fight the policies of the leadership—in fact a number of his supporters voted for the right wing for other positions.

Nevertheless Hillier was seen as an opposition to the existing leadership, and seemed to offer an easier option than voting for the principled candidates.

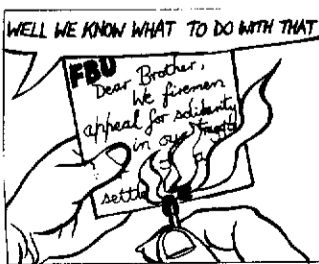
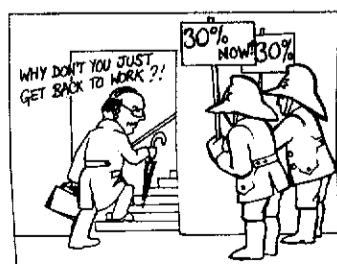
He won 129 votes against Syrett's 130.

As the demand for a recount was immediately made, the opportunist relationship between the Stalinists and the right wing was displayed. Worker-priest Williamson refused a recount, causing a storm of protest.

Hillier led many of his supporters out in disgust.

Cashing in on this, the right wing felt able to propose the calling of a special meeting of TGWU senior stewards in Leyland and withdrawal from 'participation'—knowing that the stewards would vote it down.

But they opposed a motion that the Body Plant branch itself withdraw from participation.



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## MURRAY JOINS ATTACKS ON GRUNWICK PICKETS

Interviewed on television last week, one member of the picket-busting Special Patrol Group described Grunwick pickets as "sub-human".

This, of course, is the SPG's excuse for their brutal assaults carried out on last Monday's mass picket.

But it indicates also the kind of hand-picked volunteer force being welded together in the SPG.

### Violence

The SPG is clearly intended as a highly mobile force, trained as snatch squads and also prepared to use extremes of physical violence against even peaceful pickets.

Their use last Monday was in the hopes that those beaten up would be driven away from the Grunwick gates for good.

But such a force of trained thugs cannot be developed without top-level decisions, and military-style instruction.

In previous mass pickets ordinary police even while using violence have attempted to argue with workers.

### Anti-communist

The SPG however made a special point of attacking anyone who attempted to reason with them or to argue.

They rushed into the attack screaming anti-communist slogans and "Why

## SPG squads show danger of 'third force'



don't you get back to work". As injured pickets protested they were told "It's your own fault for coming".

Police circulars described the Grunwick operation as "Aid to Grunwick", but much more is involved. The mass pickets are being used to develop a skilled anti-picket strike-busting military style force that will be dependable in coming class battles.

In the face of these developments Labour Home Secretary Merlyn Rees defends the SPG's actions and TUC General Secretary Len Murray reserves his verbal attack for the pickets.

Speaking in the right wing haven of Oxford University Labour Club, he described

the pickets savagely beaten up by the SPG as "boot boys".

Murray has lifted not a finger to assist the Grunwick strikers. But he is clearly prepared to be a part of the Labour leaders' cover-up of the SPG and its operations.

While the WSL supports the complete disbanding of the police force as an oppressive arm of the capitalist state, we do not argue that the SPG alone should be disbanded. The SPG, for all its specialised training is simply a part of the forces of the capitalist state now ranged against the working class.

But we must warn of the level of preparation this specially-trained squad—a parallel to the French CRS 'riot police'—has reached.

They must be combatted through the organised strength of the working class.

The next mass picket must be protected by thousands of miners and other organised contingents.

And the coalition government that chose to use these thugs against the working class must be brought down.



SPG at work on November 7.

## NEW HEATHROW CLAIM SUBMITTED

British Airways are expected today (16 November) to offer their engineering employees at Heathrow a 10% rise and a "self-financing" productivity deal with effect from January 1978.

This offer will be in response to a claim submitted by the Joint Shop Stewards Committees of the Overseas and European Divisions for a 25% increase in basic pay; an extra five days holiday a year; a reduction of the working week by 2½ hours; London weighting increases and consolidation of Phase One and Two payments into basic pay.

### Shift pay

The engineers are also insisting that the substantial shift pay award made earlier this year and due for payment from January be paid in full without prejudicing this new claim.

Moreover, union officials are due to sign an agreement today giving engineering workers incremental increases totalling £210 over three years as opposed to the 70p they receive at present. This increment plan is also due to start in January.

If engineering workers are to win even a fraction of this money they cannot avoid a confrontation not only with British Airways but with the Lib-Lab coalition government who have clearly instructed employers in the public sector to offer no more than 10% and, where appropriate, job-slashing "self-financing" productivity deals.

### Rejected

The AUEW engineers have however already rejected attempts to make pay rises conditional on a productivity deal.

British Airways insisted

earlier this year that they would only increase shift pay on the condition that negotiations began on new shift patterns but were subsequently forced to concede the shift claim unconditionally.

### Not paid

The question now confronting engineers at Heathrow is how to respond to the British Airways offer.

A four week strike earlier this year won substantial

than 10%!

If the position of some of the union leaders is anything to go by Heathrow engineers will have to confront them first in order to get the necessary strike action off the ground to win this claim.

A statement from the Chairman and Secretary of the Overseas Division Joint Shop Stewards Committee called on workers to accept a 10% offer and go for fringe benefits and a productivity deal.

### Delay

An AUEW shop steward told *Socialist Press* that as far as he was concerned they wanted their claim in full. If British Airways then wanted to negotiate a productivity deal that would be a different matter.

There has been enough delay over the payment of the shift pay claim. The



Heathrow engineers mass meeting last April

increases in shift pay but not a penny of this increase has yet been paid.

If British Airways try to include the shift pay and increments within the 10% offer this will give an actual increase on basic rates of well under 10%.

This would be more than inadequate for the shift workers but for the day workers would represent a cut in real incomes of more

Joint Shop Stewards Committees in Overseas Division and European Division must now meet and draw up plans for strike action capable of winning the claim in full.

They should also appeal to the other 55,000 workers on the airport to press ahead with simultaneous strike action in support of their own claims some of which are larger even than those of the engineers.

## MONTHLY FUND

With half of November now behind us we are on target for the £600 Monthly Fund. To date we have received a total of £337.51 including donations from: Oxford car workers £22.40; London £129; NHS workers £50; Coventry £6.35; Hull £8.20; Oxford £74.56; Birmingham £16; Aylesbury £9; Leeds £10; Liverpool £12.

There is no room for complacency however if we are to raise the full amount by the end of the month. The launching of the weekly 'Socialist Press' has met with a great response among members and supporters of the Workers Socialist League and readers of the paper. But 'Socialist Press' can only be maintained and developed if we are prepared to fight for the raising of the necessary finance.

All donations should be sent to:

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