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BOSSES' WAR ON MANNING LEVELS

After two years of vicious wage controls and with a 10% limit on rises still in force, workers now face an added threat. Callaghan's Lib-Lab coalition government, responding to the instructions of bankers and industrialists, is supervising throughout the whole of British industry.

Their objective is to significantly increase the rate of profit of private enterprise, and to slash the social services and the public sector in order to minimise the drain on these profits.



Sir Keith Joseph

The effect of each of these moves in the current period of economic stagnation is to throw additional thousands of workers and youth onto post-war record dole queues.

Closest political spokesman for this latest war on jobs is leading Tory Sir Keith Joseph, who spelled out clearly the feelings of major employers in his speech at the Tory Party Conference:

"Oil will not save us, because by overmanning we are blunting our competitiveness faster than oil will make good", he said.

The 'prime reason' for Britain's economic crisis is "overmanning and restrictive labour practices", claimed Joseph, who went on to call for "not redundancies" but a "constructive use of wastage" to cut manning levels and unobtrusively raise productivity.

While Joseph was spelling out this plank of Tory policy, British Leyland management under the watchful eye of the National Enterprise Board and Industry Secretary Eric Varley, were already pressing vigorously ahead with their plans to implement massive speed-up on production tracks.

DISPUTES

Throughout the company, sections of workers have been involved in disputes over new manning levels forced in by management with the complete collaboration of union officials and convenors.

Leyland Cars Managing Director, Derek Whittaker, announced the company's determination to proceed with these measures in a speech on the eve of the Earls Court Motorfair:

"Our problem is not just strikes; strikes are only part of Leyland Cars' disease and only part of the British disease.

"We also suffer as does a very large part of British manufacturing industry from poor utilisation of equipment, from over-manning, and therefore from low productivity...

"Many of the difficulties we have had during the last 2½ years and also recently in a number of our plants, were and are on this issue of productivity.

"We could have avoided them or ended them, by simply allowing an unsatisfactory state of affairs to continue—we have not, and will not, deviate on this key management criteria."

Leyland are ramming home productivity relying entirely on the ability of union officials and convenors to control the hostility of shop floor workers.

CONFRONTATIONS

These moves by Leyland follow on tough confrontations on Fleet Street which brought major attacks on working conditions at the *Financial Times* and *Daily Express*.

Now the *Express* management has announced fresh plans to slash the number of journalists from 600 to 500 and extend the working week from 40 to 45 hours, along with a cut in earnings.

But in some other sections of industry different tactics are being adopted to force in manning cuts.

The National Coal Board, with the assistance of right wing miners' leaders, is...



THERE IS NO PEACEFUL WAY TO END APARTHEID

In the aftermath of the murder of black leader Steve Biko, Vorster's racist government has given a dramatic new turn to the screw of repression in South Africa.

In a surprise move on October 19 Vorster's secret police descended on virtually every black organisation which was still legal.

BANNED

Seventeen organisations related to the 'black consciousness' movement have been banned outright. Just as the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress have been banned in the past. Also banned was the Christian Institute, an event which evinced a protest from as unlikely a source as the Archbishop of Canterbury!

Over forty leaders of the organisations were arrested and a number of others 'banned' (put under house arrest and robbed of all political rights). Those banned

and *Weekend World* as well as the white editor of the *Daily Dispatch*.

This new repression does not mark any qualitative change in Vorster's policy. Mass black organisations have been customarily banned and the arrests and individual bannings which came in the one day added up to what has become normal over a few weeks. For years, no opponent of apartheid, however mild, has been safe from South Africa's daily repression.

But the manner of the bannings, in one swoop, was evidently a conscious change of tactic by Vorster, fearful of agitation over Steve Biko's death in prison about which the banned newspapers have continued to ask increasingly embarrassing questions.

As has been widely observed, the latest wave of bannings makes illegal even those black organisations whose leaders had shown themselves ready to compromise and talk to Vorster and the

alarmed the American and British imperialists and the white 'liberals' in South Africa. They are alarmed that Vorster's actions will make more and more blacks realise that only through anti-capitalist revolution can racism in South Africa be overthrown.

It is this which accounts for the hypocritical outrage from the US State Department and from British Foreign Secretary David Owen. The same fear has led the 'democratic' capitalist press throughout the world to react sharply accusing Vorster of acts of 'suicidal paranoia'.

CONCESSIONS

But it is very unlikely that Vorster's tactic is based on irrationality. While it is true that his racist regime has something to gain from the development of a collaborationist black leadership, such a leadership is unlikely to last very long unless it can hold out a serious prospect of concessions, which Vorster has no

Next Issue

The next issue of Socialist Press, the first weekly edition, will appear on Wednesday November 3.

In addition to improved coverage of home and international news, the weekly paper will carry a regular reviews column and other new feature material.

Starting with the new weekly will be a major seven-part centre page series on Ireland. Make sure of your copy.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

IRISH WORKERS IN STRUGGLE

Since 1968 the anti-imperialist struggle in the north of Ireland has tended to eclipse struggles by Irish workers over wages and conditions.

But with the recent wage settlement at the engineering works of James Mackie and Sons we are reminded that economic questions are indeed very real to Irish workers—particularly when both North and South wages are on average lower, while unemployment and inflation are higher, than that in Britain.

Events in the past couple of weeks, though, show that the Irish working class are as willing to fight on these economic questions as they are to fight army repression and torture.

Last Tuesday week, (October 18) workers at the Tyrone crystal plant in Dungannon (Northern Ireland) occupied the factory and refused to allow management representatives past the gates in a protest against the lay-off of 43 men the previous Friday.

The managing director of the factory is prominent SDLP politician Paddy Duffy, who has denied that the lay-offs are permanent redundancies.

In the South, Duffy's co-thinkers, Fianna Fail—who currently hold governmental office—are likewise pursuing a strident anti-working class policy.

Unemployment is now 17% while inflation is averaging 18%,

with a whole series of wage cutting deals in the pipeline. And in the past week there have been threats by two major imperialist concerns to put the shutters up and pull out.

At Anacotty, Co. Limerick, the Dutch based Ferenka steelcord works is threatening closure with the inevitable loss of some 1,500 jobs.

The ostensible reason for the proposed closure is the strike by 850 workers in the Marine Port and General Workers Union (MPGWU) over union recognition.

Formerly these men were members of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) but transferred to the MPGWU because of the ITGWU's sleepy-headed do-nothing attitude to wages and conditions in the plant.

NO DIFFERENCE

On the basis of the information available, we oppose the decision to switch unions.

There is no qualitative difference between the bureaucracy within the ITGWU and that in any other union. Everywhere these union leaders play a key role in dampening down militancy.

Those warnings however should not divert attention from the

employer's strategy which is to take advantage of the situation in order to close down the plant.

NO COMPENSATION

Workers in Limerick should lay plans now for occupation of the factory with the demand that it be nationalised without compensation and placed under direct workers management.

Another target for such action is the Canadian-owned Tara mines at Navan, where 220 workers have been sacked and a decision taken to close down the £90 million factory there.

The mines, which contain the richest lead and zinc deposits in the world, have long been a centre of militancy in Ireland.

The recent failure to secure acceptance of a productivity deal has obviously precipitated Tara's closure plans.

The task of revolutionaries is to elaborate a programme of transitional demands capable of integrating economic and political questions, and on the basis of such a programme to construct the revolutionary party which is alone capable of ridding Ireland of all imperialist oppression.

AUSTRALIA Call general strike

Intervention by the boss of Australia's TUC, Robert Hawke produced a short lived return to work in the Victoria power workers strike which has now led to half a million lay-offs in the state.

Hawke persuaded the 2,300 maintenance workers that if they went back to work their wage claim would be seriously negotiated. It took four days to see this was a trick and the workers came out again last Wednesday.

The response of the authorities was swift and brings a decisive confrontation closer between the

Australian working class and the Tory government.

The State Electricity Commission sent letters to the strikers saying that if they did not return to work by the end of the week they would be sacked. Advertisements were sent out for non-union labour to fill their jobs.

At the same time the government, threatening to call a 'Who rules?' election on the lines of Edward Heath in 1974, rushed a major anti-union bill through parliament in two days. The bill restricts the right to strike and tries to enforce compulsory arbitration. It widens conditions under which strikers can be sacked, unions can be deregistered and their funds confiscated.

URANIUM

Another set of strikes has broken out simultaneously. Dockworkers have refused to load uranium exports, resumed recently after they had been banned by Whitlam's previous Labour government, unconstitutionally removed from office by the Governor General in 1976. In Brisbane hundreds of striking dockers were arrested and accused of illegal industrial action.

Australia's union leaders must be forced to call a general strike, the objective of which would be to throw the Tory government out of office and install a government pledged to annul all anti-union legislation and wages policy.

POPULAR FRONT REACHES SPAIN

Rabies is not the only deadly disease sweeping across Europe. One other has already crossed the channel; and last week it reached Spain. It is the popular front: that is direct governmental collaboration between parties of the workers with parties of the capitalists.

Just as during the economic crisis of the 1930s so today in many parts of the world, and nowhere more than in western Europe, the capitalist class is looking to popular front alliances as a last resort to impose the burdens of crisis on the working class, before it is forced to turn towards fascism and the physical destruction of working class militants and organisations.

COALITIONS

Today both Britain and Germany are ruled by coalitions of mass social democratic parties with so-called 'liberal' parties of the bourgeoisie. In Belgium and Holland coalitions of the major workers' and capitalists' parties rule even though they are passing through critical times.

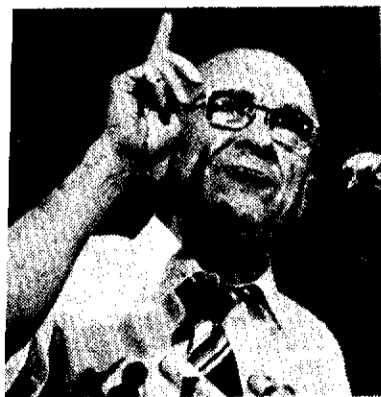
In Portugal the Socialist Party government relies on parliamentary support from the bourgeois parties and there seems a good chance that Premier Soares may soon move towards an open coalition government with the bourgeois Social Democratic Party. The Communist Party has started to call for a 'government of national unity', the fullest possible expression of the popular front. Last week President Eanes made a thinly veiled threat to impose presidential rule unless the parties reached an agreement on programme.

'NATIONAL UNITY'

For the last few months the nearest to a 'government of

where all parliamentary political parties, except the fascist MSI have agreed on a programme of anti-working class measures to be carried out by the minority Christian Democratic Party.

An agreement signed earlier this year guarantees Communist Party support for Italy's Tory government, a giant step towards the



Carrillo

'historic compromise' which the Italian CP proposes: an open permanent coalition government of the Communist Party and the Christian Democrats. That government now exists in all but the formal sense.

SOCIAL PACT

Last week a similar agreement was reached in the Moncloa Palace in Madrid between the shaky neo-Francoist regime of Adolfo Suarez and all the parliamentary parties except for Manuel Fraga's ultra-right Popular Alliance.

Ever since the elections of June 15, from which Suarez emerged with a parliamentary minority and barely one third of the votes, he has been demanding the signing of a social pact. Both the CP and the Socialist Party (PSOE) have stated virtually meaningless 'conditions' for such a pact.

The PSOE leaders have openly



Fruits of the popular front in Italy—Police harassment of students—backed by Berlinguer

with Suarez 'but not yet'; while Carrillo, the leader of the CP has been calling for a government of national unity.

The Moncloa pact is only one step short of the CP's plan. Carrillo triumphantly referred to it as a 'common programme' with Suarez' Francoists. What the pact consists of is a series of measures to protect capitalists from the worst effects of the economic crisis.

Wage rises will be restricted to 22% while inflation at present over 30% is still accelerating. Employers will be given free rein to sack five per cent of workers who get increases more than 22%. The pact also allows reductions in state expenditure.

In "exchange" for this massive economic attack on the workers the CP and PSOE got a promise of various extensions in democratic reforms, none of them very specific, and last week's extension of the amnesty for political prisoners.

The most brazen forms of class collaboration are nothing new to the CP and PSOE leaders in Spain. But Spain now clearly joins the other parts of Europe where euphemisms like 'pact' or 'agreement' cover up what are in reality popular front governments.

The fight to destroy these governments and to assure the complete independence of the working class is the central task of the workers movement throughout



IN BRIEF



BANGLA DESH

In the aftermath of the attempted coup four weeks ago, military dictator Ziaur Rahman has banned all political parties and has put hundreds of alleged supporters of the coup on trial. 37 have already been executed and 20 sentenced to life prison sentences.

PORTUGAL

President Eanes has promulgated the law passed in parliament two months ago giving widespread compensation to medium and small capitalists whose property was expropriated in 1974-75.

ZIMBABWE

The Zambian government has had its second round of talks on the imperialist plan for Zimbabwe with Smith's racist regime. Like the secret meetings between Smith and Zambian President Kaunda, these talks were organised through 'Tiny' Rowland, Chairman of Lonrho, the British multinational which has huge economic interests in Zambia

ICELAND

Transport and other public services in Iceland have been at a standstill for two weeks as a result of an all-out strike of state employees in wage claims of up to 35% with cost of living protection.

THAILAND

The military have deposed Premier Thanin whom they put into office in a bloody right wing coup a year ago. The generals' complaint against Thanin is that he was too thorough in putting into effect campaigns against corruption and the narcotics trade. The Maoist CP announced an agreement with other 'democratic and patriotic forces' to step up revolutionary guerrilla war.

ARGENTINA

The police used tear gas and baton charges to disperse the largest public demonstration since last year's military coup. Several hundred demonstrators were demanding an account of the whereabouts of the hundreds of political prisoners who disappeared in police custody.

WORKERS MUST PROBE STATE MURDERS

Three leading members of the Red Army Faction (RAF), a terrorist unit of so-called 'urban guerrillas', Andreas Baader, Gudron Ensslin and Jan-Carl Raspe, were almost certainly murdered by West German state agents on Tuesday 18 October.

That is the only conclusion we can draw from the evidence surrounding their 'suicides' in Stammheim top security jail.

Irmgard Moller, another member of the gang, although stabbed near the heart is expected to survive.

The deaths came only hours after the joint German/British raid on the hi-jacked airliner in Somalia.

The media throughout West Germany reacted predictably, using the 'celebration' to stir up anti-terrorist and anti-communist hysteria.

CLAMP DOWN

The success of the raid signalled the time for yet another clamp down on already eroded basic rights. Since the kidnapping of the employers' leader Schleyer (a Nazi who was a friend of Goring and organised concentration camp labour) the German government has mounted a massive security campaign against the left.

The bourgeois press the world over welcomed the "destruction of the gang". It was, the *Times* said, "a good day for Germany".

Germany's Social Democratic government were given maximum support during the operation by British Prime Minister Callaghan and his lapdog David Owen.

Not only did they give the strongest moral support to the first West German military operation abroad since 1945, they also loaned members of the British Special Air Service and British equipment for the raid.

It is clear that the imperialists (after recent joint meetings in London) have decided to make these military operations the standard response to anything they choose to label as "terrorism".

REWARD

The Mogadishu raid got the full cooperation of the "Marxist" military government of Somalia, acting in the expectation of a reward in the form of arms supplies from West Germany, Saudi Arabia and other imperialist countries.

Urgent tasks now face the workers movement in Germany. It should demand that Irmgard Moller be transferred to a normal hospital at once and freed upon recovery. All charges against her must be dropped. The evidence she can give must be taken up by an independent workers' enquiry set up to ascertain the events leading up to the deaths.

The 'crime' which the RAF were accused of is one of attacking the symbols of imperialism. But it is the Schmidt government—which viciously attacks even the most basic rights, that expels immigrant workers at will, that blacklists militants and that harbours Nazi war criminals such as Schleyer—that is guilty of the real terrorism.

For the past years the four victims were incarcerated in Stammheim, with no access to the outside world. Two weeks ago a vicious new law was rushed through parliament which allows political prisoners to be held in total isolation, even from their lawyers. This attack on democratic rights was so naked it even led to token protests from one or two 'left' social democratic MPs.

SOLIDARITY

The RAF members have been

MURDERS



Chancellor Schmidt

constantly harassed, degraded and tortured; yet still they have stubbornly refused to waver in their commitment to the cause of armed struggle against the state. They will be remembered for their courage in the face of this attack.

But they will also be remembered as tragic proof that individual terrorism and attempts to substitute for the mass actions of the working class are bound to fail.

What their fate can teach us is not new. Much of the history of the pre-Marxist movement was the history of organisations with aims and methods similar to the RAF's.

Organisations such as Babeuf's Conspiracy of Equals, the Carbonari, the Buonarroti and Auguste Blanqui's Secret Societies all shared what Engels called the "fantastic idea of overturning an entire society by the action of a small group of conspirators."

CHOSEN FEW

Instead of open agitation amongst the masses leading to large-scale mobilisation, these early 'Baader-Meinhofs' opted for agitation behind the backs of the working class, agitation generally confined to the chosen few who themselves kept secret their programme.

Lenin, too, had to wage a harsh struggle against conspiratorial traditions amongst sections of the Russian masses.

Under the Tsarist dictatorship the Russian social democrats:

"... had never dreamed of being able to form a workers' party in Russia legally... they always thought that this fight must be waged not by conspiracy but by a revolutionary party based on the working class movement. They think that the fight against the autocracy must consist not in organising conspiracies, but in education, disciplining and organising the proletariat".

(*The Tasks of the Russian Social*

urban guerrillas turn to other layers to lead the revolution, and in the case of the RAF to carry it out single-handed, is that they share a total blindness to the power of the working class.

Because they see no prospects of harnessing this power by galvanising the broadest layers into action they turn to petit-bourgeois elements to do the job instead.

COMMANDO ACTIONS

The RAF are quite explicit about this. In their 'programme', *Concerning the Armed Struggle in Western Europe*, they say:

"It is no accident that on all fronts young members of the intelligentsia, especially the students, play an important if not decisive role... there is little evidence that anywhere in the world the industrial proletariat is in the forefront of these struggles or has produced new theories or forms of organisation".

For them the revolution will develop "from commando actions... to the formation of a militia and the demoralisation of the oppressive forces through a long drawn out war".

It is with this understanding of the way forward that these misguided comrades came out of the radical Socialist Students Union (SDS) in the late sixties.

FANATICISM

Like present day Maoist groups in West Germany (the KBW, the KPD, the KB etc.) they revert to wild fanaticism rather than the hard work of building a Bolshevik party.

Stunt tactics and bombings are the methods of those that consciously turn from the working class, and the tasks confronting its present leadership both within the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions—leaders who have failed to offer any resistance to the build up of repressive laws in West

BREAK UNION OF THE LEFT

Six weeks after the initial breakdown in talks between the partners in France's Union of the Left the situation seems as black as ever for the parties concerned.

The collapse of the reconvened talks on September 24, and the failure to date to revive them has been compounded recently by announcements from both the Communist Party (CP) and the Socialist Party (SP) concerning next spring's legislative elections.

These divisions are clearly the product of diplomatic manoeuvring within the Union in time for next spring's elections.

The bourgeois Radicals, with only 3% of the vote, have been waving the free enterprise flag within the bloc in an attempt to win support from middle-class elements disenchanted with Giscard and Barre.

The CP have been putting on a militant face in order to hold on to their electoral support within the working class—a support which was threatening to dwindle away because of the CP's open espousal of such right wing measures as the "all round nuclear strike force".

The SP meanwhile have been able to hedge their bets—and currently hold options on either a Union of the Left or a "centre-left" government, should they secure enough votes in March.

There are thus no issues of principle dividing these popular-frontist allies: each is concerned exclusively with playing to its own audience and presenting itself as the best defender of the Union's thoroughly capitalist common programme.

The CP have also to contend, though, with the additional pressure of the Soviet bureaucracy, whose interests in France at the moment seem best served not by the Union of the Left in power but by the present right wing set up of Giscard and Barre.

There can be no doubt that the CP's apparent "intransigence" on a number of questions has damaged the prospects of a CP/SP/Radical unity, and therefore the prospects

of electoral victory next spring.

This would accord with the present state of Soviet diplomacy, and raises the question whether the CP have consciously disrupted the discussions knowing that this could cause electoral failure.

Leading Paris newspapers have been quick to spot Moscow's hand in every CP move, but have played this up for their own anti-communist ends.

ONE-SIDED

The "Trotskyists" of the Organisation Communiste Internationale (OCI) have denounced the CP for the "intolerable and scandalous situation" arising from its "frenetic campaign of division" against the SP. But this denunciation is a one-sided one which lets the SP off the hook.

The OCI have raised the demands for immediate SP-CP unity; "for a CP/SP majority in the legislative elections" in order to "put an end to the Giscard-Barre government and the 5th Republic" (*Information Ouvrieres*, 821, 19 October 1977).

Although the OCI has consistently characterised the Union of the Left as a popular front, its unity call is now hard to distinguish from the Pabloite LCR group's similar demand.

Their paper, *Rouge*, has called for a "reaffirmation of working class unity" (No 473, 12 October), as the answer to the crisis—by which they mean the immediate coming together of the CP and SP.

NO SUPPORT

The WSL is certainly in favour of working class unity, and we are quite prepared to give critical support to candidates of the CP and SP in the March elections.

But such support is conditional on one thing—namely that the CP and SP break not only with the bourgeois Radicals, but also with the Union of the Left and its common programme.

Until that condition is achieved we can give no support to parties in a popular front.

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist organisation fighting to build a revolutionary leadership in the working class to lead the mounting opposition to the betrayals of both 'left' and right wing Labour and trade union leaders and the Communist Party, as they attempt to enforce wage control, sackings, speed-up and public service cuts.

As workers take up the struggle against these policies they are forced by the sheer weight of forces opposing them to confront political questions. Only with an understanding of the role of the labour bureaucracy and a programme to unite the broadest sections of workers in struggle can a way forward be found.

The Workers Socialist League is the only movement that sets out to do this, fighting consistently in the working class for transitional demands, which go beyond simply trade union militancy to raise the political questions to workers and prepare the forms of organisation and the knowledge necessary for the struggle for socialism.

As a result we have been at the forefront of struggles against the cuts, against wage control, for unionisation, and against redundancy. We have done more than any other tendency to fight the introduction of 'workers' participation' in industry. And we have strongly supported the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement, which has set out to show the link between the reactionary policies of the Social Contract and bureaucratic dictatorship in both the unions and the Labour Party.

But our practical struggle for the continuity of the principles and method of Trotsky's Transitional Programme is in no way a task confined to Britain. It requires an attention and involvement in the struggles of the working class internationally, and the fight to reconstruct the Trotskyist Fourth International.

So there has been a consistent drive within the WSL to deepen and enrich the movement's understanding of the history and the present crisis of the Fourth International as an essential part of our initiative towards its reconstruction.

We urge all readers who agree on the need for revolutionary leadership and the demands we put forward to find out more about the

CDLM wages conference

CUT WORKERS

FREE FROM

'COMMON INTEREST' CHAINS



"We are not just a movement for democracy. We show how the attacks on democracy are a result of the attempts to hold back the pressure of the working class."

That was how *Tony Richardson*, from the Organising Committee of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement, drew the relation between the two main themes of the third conference—wages and bureaucratic control.

He told 200 delegates and visitors in Birmingham that the alternative put forward by the CDLM was more than a series of correct demands:

"The alternative we put is that of no common interest with the employer: the independence of the working class from the employer."

OPEN ALLIANCE

It was a theme that was echoed from speaker after speaker who described how strike after strike, whether over pay, union recognition or the closed shop turned the union officials into open alliance with the employer.

Richardson said that the 12 month rule was important because it demonstrated the union leaders' collaboration.

The pressure of the class on pay had forced them to shift towards productivity deals and incentive schemes, used to divert away from major claims.

EXPLOSIVE

The Communist Party had argued for 'unity'. In fact they held back the class while struggles against pay controls collapsed.

The situation remained explosive. Councils of action could be on the agenda, to draw in the whole working class in an area to support struggles over pay.

"You cannot say that tomorrow there will definitely be an explosion and mass struggle in the working class but in no way can it be excluded as a possibility. We put forward a policy that can develop all sections of the labour movement into the struggle."

Alan Gager, treasurer of the strike committee at the London Metropole Hotel, outlined how—with the full support of the GMWU workers there put in a £50 a week minimum wage demand.

TWO QUID RISE

"We were told we were breaking the 12 month rule because we got a two quid rise last March. It was a joke. We didn't even have a union then."

"We learned from day one. We'd never been on strike before. What we are asking is for the strike to be made official and for other hotel groups to put in the same demand as us."

Eric Walters, from the lift section of the EETPU described the official union policy to win their 130% wage increase—imposing an overtime ban!

"How can you work for 40 hours, making the company money

Mick Rawlinson, delegated from the Aylesbury and District Trades Union Council, and a member of the Fire Brigade Union, outlined how the pressure for strike action had grown from the demands of the annual delegates conference in May. His branch would move a demand for a sliding scale of wages to be added to the wage rise at a special delegate conference called for next month.

CHALLENGE

The feeling in the fire service was such that the second all out strike of firemen since the war was on the cards.

"My branch has endorsed the policies of the CDLM and gave me support to take them to the recall conference. The sliding scale of wages will confront the executive of our union with something they have not previously encountered."

"This is going to blow the ten per cent limit sky high. It's going to challenge the government."

Alan Thornett, TGWU 5/293 branch, pointed out that the sliding scale of wages demand—if met since the expiry of Heath's threshold rises—would have yielded pay rises of around £62 a week to every worker.



A section of the 200-strong conference

Grunwick picket support

The main resolutions proposed by the CDLM Organising Committee were all carried. The conference will fight for the working class to struggle against the 12 month rule and the 10% pay limit, putting instead the demand for the sliding scale of wages.

Conference rejected productivity deals and will campaign for the breaking of the coalition and the removal of the Callaghan-Healey leadership of the Labour Party.

It has also pledged itself to fight for the abolition of cash limits in the public sector—to be replaced by a sliding scale of public expenditure to compensate for rising costs.

And delegates pledged themselves to fight for equal pay and a £60 minimum wage.

On recognition disputes the conference called for full support to the Grunwick mass pickets, a campaign for the cutting off of all services to the factory and support committees based on trades councils and labour movement bodies.

NATIONALISATION

In the event of Ward closing the factory the conference calls for nationalisation under workers management without compensation.

The sell out of the Desoutter strike was condemned.

The conference will campaign for intervention into the Rank and File committee to put forward this programme.

The conference called for a London conference of hotel workers to be called by the CDLM to strengthen the Metropole strike and to campaign for other hotels to put in their own wage demands and back them with strike action.

It called for full support for the demonstration in Birmingham on October 29 'for the right of women to free, safe and legal abortion'.

CONFERENCE

The question of a conference to discuss unionisation fights at Grunwick and Sandersons was remitted to the organising committee.

FIGHTING TO SAVE JOBS

A number of delegates and visitors reported on speed up and loss of jobs.

John Plant, from the GLC branch of NALGO reported a Tory move to create 1,300 redundancies in the construction and architecture department before next March.

Despite a vote at a special general meeting for a strike ballot, the national executive—General Secretary Drain in particular—has refused to allow it to be carried out.

The chairman of the conference, *Tim O'Sullivan*, TGWU 5/55 branch, reported on the dispute in the paint shop at Cowley where the management had now ridden over



Colin Kenny the mutuality agreement on speed-up with the connivance of convenor Reg Parsons.

Colin Kenny, ASTMS secretary of the London Health Service Stewards' Committee, CLASH, revealed that defence of hospitals had brought a bitter personal attack on him from the union hierarchy.

He was forced to carry bank statements around with him to show that his union subscriptions had been paid.

DIRECT CHALLENGE

The management attack on the Hounslow Hospital had come because any defence of health service facilities and jobs was a direct challenge to government attempts to carry out its policy of cuts.

AUEW workers betrayed

Jim Black, deputy convenor at Desoutter (speaking in a personal capacity), outlined the betrayal of the strike for union recognition after 20 weeks. The question of blacking and a district levy to finance the strike were continually rejected on the AUEW district committee.

The hypocrisy of those on the committee who voted against it was clearly spelled out.

"I heard one of these same people who had spoken against the levy, on the Grunwick picket line speaking to the mass picket, saying the TGWU and APEX should do everything in their power to bring it to a successful conclusion."

A. Mullarkey, of the TGWU 955 branch—a supporter of the separate section for tunnel miners—told the conference that members of his branch who had occupied the Murphy's site in London faced up to five years jail for ignoring the injunction taken out against them.

But the tunnellers were preparing an all-out strike to win an agreement on the employment of union members. In London alone 220 out of the 300 members were out of work.

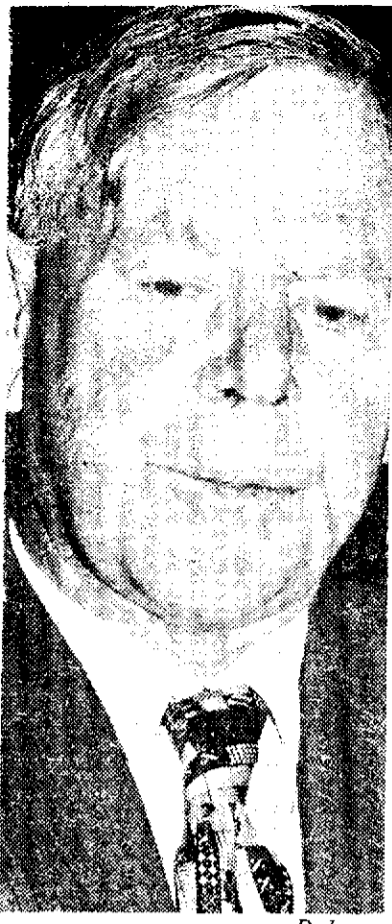
The conference collected £164. Of this £50 was given to the Metropole strikers and the bulk of the remainder was set aside to prepare a leaflet to be distributed in every Leyland factory opposing the Company's corporate bargaining proposals.

The Hotel Strikes pamphlet

The story of four strikes for union recognition in Trust Houses Forte hotels at Sheffield, Birmingham and Oxford and at the Linton Lodge Hotel, Oxford. Essential reading for an understanding of the struggles for union recognition and pay.

Published by the Hotel and Catering Workers National Action Committee, copies can be obtained from the action committee or from Socialist Press, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

Cost 35p each (32pp) plus 15p p&p.



Dobson

BRIBERY, PARTICIPATION... CORRUPTION EXPOSED



The scandal created by the September 22 speech by British Leyland chairman Sir Richard Dobson and his subsequent resignation from the £22,000 a year non-executive post has tended to focus on only a few questions.

Instead of debating whether the

chairman of British Leyland should be an open racist like Dobson or a more tactful variety of capitalist, Leyland workers should be looking into some of the aspects of the Leyland set-up that Dobson's speech unveiled.

One key question is of course the issue of the existence of the hotly denied 'slush fund'. Dobson's speech makes absolutely clear that

bribery is Leyland policy:

"Who would have expected the Daily Mail to have the bloody nerve to bribe somebody £15,000 to reveal the documents (which turned out to be forged) in order to accuse the company of the perfectly respectable fact that it was bribing wogs?"

Attention has of course centred on the racist overtones of this statement. But Dobson says openly that bribery is a "fact" and Leyland "was" doing it.

In the light of this admission, the case for a workers' enquiry to open Leylands books and examine the extent of this bribery is over-

whelming.

But while management corruption is exposed, so too is the corruption and abject collaboration of trade union officials and bureaucratic layers of convenors.

Union leaders, said Dobson: "spend a lot of time saying to people 'Get on with the job rather than walk out. Well now it's all right at the top level. It doesn't work too well lower down.'"

Dobson understands the problems faced by officials and convenors and expands on the conflict between the collaboration of bureaucratic union leaders and the feelings of their members:

"It has caused great internal stresses in the unions and up to a point the unions have come to be identified if not actually with management[!] at least with the Government, and seem to be co-authors of the Government's broken promises."

Management appreciation of the union leadership is shown in Dobson's comments on the working of the Ryder Plan in Leyland—in which the central issue is clearly the slashing of manning levels:

"It's a very good plan. It has three legs. The first leg was that if you had better industrial relations industrial relations will provide a better productivity."

The two other legs are capital investment and the third leg I am not terribly sure of. (Laughter). It doesn't really matter. The point is, the whole thing fails down if you don't have productivity."

And in forcing such productivity onto the shop floor workforce, the Ryder "participation" strategy—sucking key layers of stewards into management roles, is important:

"The higher you get, the easier it is to get rather broad agreement on something or other."

We started by saying we will only open the new Rover factory you may have heard of... if you agree to certain manning levels which are perfectly unlike manning levels so far experienced in the UK motor industry.

So they all sign up. That's fine. I will come back later to what actually happens...

DRIVE OUT NEWHAM LP TORIES

The crisis within Newham North East Labour Party has reached a new stage with recent moves by the extreme right-wing to break up the party.

The right wing infiltrators, led by Julian Lewis from Oxford, called an unconstitutional meeting of the Executive Committee which

'cancelled' the GMC meeting—in effect a sub-committee cancelling a meeting of the committee which elected it.

Left wingers together with former allies of Lewis who have been forced to break from him took the principled decision to go ahead with the GMC.

Where the rule book had failed them, Lewis' gang resorted to other

methods. They changed all the locks on the party premises in order to prevent the GMC from taking place.

When this political tactic had been dealt with by a few well aimed kicks at the door, Lewis and his so-called 'constitutional advisor', Oxford don McCormick, disrupted the GMC meeting with the serving of more writs.

As we go to press summonses for contempt have been served against GMC delegates who took the principled step of opposing the right of the High Court to organise the business of the labour movement.

Action must be called to force the dropping of all charges and the expulsion of the crypto-Tory right wing.

ABORTION FIGHT POSES CRUCIAL POLITICAL ISSUES

The National Abortion Campaign demonstration to be held this coming Saturday in Birmingham brings to the forefront the need to wage a political fight if the right to abortion on demand is to be secured.

It is no use approaching the abortion question as a single issue. It is completely connected as a problem with the cuts in social service spending and the class collaborationist Lib-Lab coalition deal.

CONTRADICTION

Because of this connection, two completely contradictory positions on abortion were adopted at this year's Labour Party conference.

On the one hand, conference voted support for the measures taken by the Labour government and by the current Lib-Lab coalition to "overcome" the crisis of capitalism.

This means of course full support in practice for the devastating cuts that are ruining the National Health Service.

And yet on the other hand delegates voted by a massive 63 to 1 majority in favour of every woman having 'the right to choose' on abortion, and in favour of a campaign for "freely available abortion on the NHS in all parts of the UK".

However the bid, supported by the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign to mandate the whole Parliamentary Labour Party to vote against any move to restrict

abortion rights was heavily defeated on the recommendation of the NEC.

Lena Jeger, 'left' wing NEC speaker on the topic, refused to treat abortion as a class issue in which working class women are denied access to free abortion.

Instead she made a ludicrous speech calling for 'more tolerance' of reactionary anti-abortionists, and attempting to show that the issue was one to be decided by the individual 'conscience' of Labour MPs.

The fact of the matter, of course, is that the Tory anti-abortion bill sponsored by William Benyon which failed to reach a final reading in the last session of Parliament was backed by large numbers of Labour MPs.

And there are now top-level moves under way to draw up an

agreed bill backed by both the Labour leadership and the Tories, with the sole intention of restricting abortion, in a desperate move by Callaghan to cling on to a handful of votes from confused Catholic workers.

This issue must now be taken up in every union branch mandating Labour Party GMC delegates to demand every Labour MP oppose any restriction on abortion.

This must be linked to a fight for strike action to halt and reverse the cuts in the Health Service, and for the protection of the NHS against inflation through a sliding scale of spending.

Such a demand can only be achieved if the Lib-Lab coalition is broken. The National Abortion Campaign has so far shown no evidence that it regards such political issues as important.

But it is only through the turn to these questions that Saturday's demonstration can play a role in the fight for free abortion on demand.



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Robinson

Tantalisingly, however, the illicit recording of Dobson's speech does not come back to "what actually happens". We are left to guess.

But we are given some clues. Dobson's final remarks before the speech became inaudible give a glowing tribute to the management talents of Stalinist convenor at Longbridge, Derek Robinson:

"We are stuck with the unions doing ritual dances. Sometimes they support us and sometimes they don't."

They have various different motives. I happen to know the chief convenor at Longbridge. He is an avowed Communist. I must say I rather like him because he is fairly good at getting people working."

Beside these clear insights into the cosy relationship between management and union bureaucrats combined with an open confession of the use of bribery, Dobson's personal position as Leyland chairman dwindles to entirely secondary interest.

OPEN THE BOOKS

Trade union committees must be elected throughout Leyland, demanding full access to all company accounts and future plans.

The participation set up must be broken up, and Robinson along with other 'participation' advocates must be removed from all positions of leadership.

In their place a new leadership must be constructed in Leyland to defend the jobs, working conditions

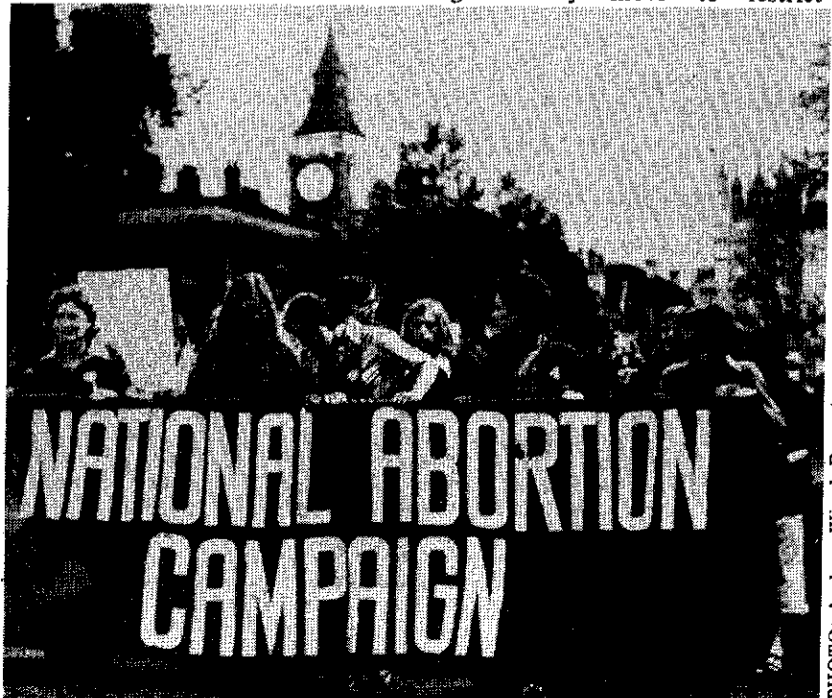


PHOTO: Andrew Wiazd, Report.



PHOTO: Andrew Wiazd, Report.

US STEEL BOSSES DEMAND IMPORT CONTROLS

The steel industry internationally is facing a major crisis which is leading to widespread attacks on jobs and conditions and threatens to unleash a trade war between the major steel producing nations.

Demand for steel has still not returned to the levels which existed before the 1974-75 international trade recession. During 1977 the industrialised nations will make and sell only 85% of the 1973-4 levels.

Projected production figures for this year have been overestimated by almost 10%. In the USA, steel share prices have dropped 33% while the Dow Jones average for all shares has only fallen 11%.

Between 60% and 70% of new steel goes into plant construction. The fact that new plant construction is not underway on a big enough scale despite continual talk of an "upturn", means that steel stock are piling up everywhere.

The lack of capital spending results from the fear that enough profit will not be forthcoming to make the investment worthwhile.

COMPETITION

As the steel sales fall, competition between producers is sharpening and at present focuses on complaints from US manufacturers that European and Japanese companies are 'dumping' on the US market at artificially low prices.

Steel imports have risen by 16% this year and almost 20% of US requirements are being supplied from abroad.

A massive campaign has been launched by the US manufacturers against foreign producers.

Georgetown Steel has announced it is filing an anti-dumping suit against a French steelmaker; US Steel filed one last month against the Japanese and is considering similar action against European manufacturers; National Steel is considering a suit against British Steel.

One of the charges levelled at British Steel by US producers is that it is receiving an unfair subsidy from the government.

In addition to these measures, which use existing anti-dumping legislation, the American producers are pressing for further protection.

In particular, they want exemption from clean air and water laws, new tax breaks to raise profits, government subsidies to modernize ageing plants and an end to criticism of price increases.



**LOCAL UNION 1938
UNITED STEELWORKERS
OF AMERICA
ON STRIKE**

The US steel producers carried their anti-import campaign into the recent meeting in Rome of the International Institute of Iron and Steel Manufacturers which spent much of the time available discussing how to avoid a trade war.

TRADE WAR

Prior to the start of the conference, EEC Commissioner for Industry Vicomte Etienne Davignon addressed an audience which included the heads of nearly all the biggest Japanese, US and European steelmakers:

"For you to believe that you can alleviate the crisis by closing your market is wrong. You will simply create a trade war."

During the conference Eurofer, (the club of European steelmakers) offered a voluntary curb on imports to the USA—if other steelmakers would do the same.

The arrangement would last for 2-3 years and is supposed to be parallel with a Japanese offer which has yet to be accepted by the US.

American manufacturers were reportedly hostile to these offers. They are continuing to press for stricter import controls.

While Japanese and European imports in the US run at around the same levels, the Japanese threat is the greater.

A comparison between the record of Japanese and US producers shows the greater efficiency of the Japanese.

In 1976 the USA produced 302 tonnes per production worker while the Japanese produced 459.

A CENTURY OLD

Only one medium size mill has been built in the USA over the past 15 years. In the same period the Japanese have built 8 giant mills.

Few Japanese plants are over 20 years old while some in the US go back over a century.

The American ruling class is far from united on the question of import controls.

A recent *New York Times* editorial said that:

"Shielding steel does nothing to eliminate basic problems of high production costs."

And it goes on to say that inefficiency would lead to higher prices and weaken American industry as a whole.

The major consumers of steel such as the car industry are opposed to protection of steel for these reasons and like other anti-protectionists would prefer a greater emphasis on rationalisation, leading to unemployment, speed-up, the closing of old plants and the construction of new more efficient ones.

The problems with this strategy are, of course, huge.

Such attacks on the working class would be socially explosive and the financial problems in funding the new plant are immense.

At any rate the whole process would take time. There exists, therefore, the likelihood of a strategy which combines anti-dumping moves with attacks on jobs, wages and conditions.

DEMANDS REJECTED

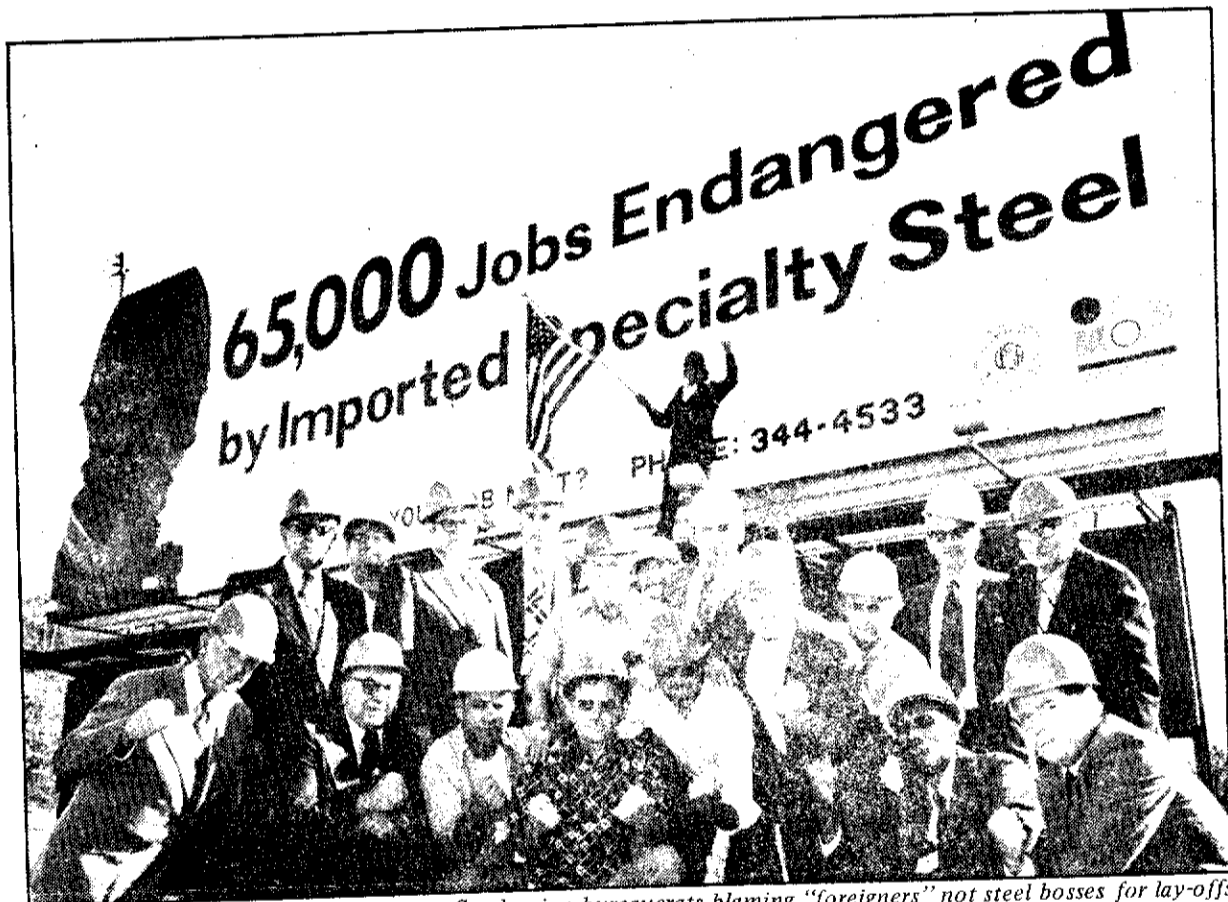
The Carter administration has made it clear that it rejects the steel producers demands for greater import controls.

Carter has pointed to the long-standing chronic problems of steel which had been made worse by the present international situation.

Carter went on to promise tax cuts some time next year.

Crisis of leadership faces steelworkers

By KEITH WHITE



Steel union bureaucrats blaming "foreigners" not steel bosses for lay-offs be in line for partial or complete closure.

This company has also announced 200 lay-offs at its Youngstown plant.

In Southern Ohio, Amco Steel has announced 600 lay-offs at its Middletown plant. 3,000 workers have lost their jobs at Alan Wood Steel, Philadelphia.

Instead of putting forward an independent workers' answer to these threats the leadership of the United Steelworkers of America involved in a campaign amongst its members to raise support for the companies' demands for import controls and exemption from pollution laws.

Wage and Price Stability.

This found that US steel problems are primarily due to structural weaknesses rather than competition from Japanese imports and that there will be little benefit from controls unless prices were allowed to rise significantly.

NO SOLUTION

Significantly the report found that large-scale modernisation of the industry through the construction of new integrated plants would not provide a simple solution due to the high costs involved. The report puts emphasis on the fact that productivity gains have been lower and wage increases higher in steel than in other industries.

Evidently the accent will be placed on speed-ups and lay-offs.

The report found that Japanese steelmakers could export profitably to the US, pay transport costs and existing US import duties and still undercut US steelmakers by about 5%.

The drive for import controls will in no way defend jobs.

Protectionism can only bring forward the threat of retaliation, a reduction in world trade and more unemployment.

Moreover, the companies, in trying to mobilize support for import controls within the workers' organisations are seeking to tie workers to the future of company profits, not defence of living standards.

"FOREIGNERS"

They seek to put the blame for unemployment not on US capitalist production but on 'foreigners'.





Carter



Balanoff

The employers have been resisting negotiations until recently on the grounds that this demand conflicts with the ENA no-strike clause.

TENACITY

The USWA leadership support for the strike has been limited to \$30 a week strike pay.

The tenacity of the USWA strikers in this dispute—the employers have brought a suit for \$1 million a day damages—shows the feeling amongst steel workers which could be channelled into an all out struggle on jobs throughout the whole industry if a clear lead was given by the union leadership.

Not all the union leaders have fallen in with McBride's strategy.

Jim Balanoff, director of USWA District 31 (Chicago) says that there is nothing in the companies' anti-imports campaign for steel workers:

"The fact of the matter is that even if there was no Japan, no Environmental Protection Agency, they would still have closed the Campbell works and moved to Chicago.

I told them installing pollution equipment would have created 5,000 jobs, but they don't really give a damn about jobs or steel workers.

They want import controls only to protect their monopoly price structure and monopoly profits. The companies have prices themselves out of the market, with three price increases this year alone but they are trying to stampede the country into trade restrictions.

We ought to be fighting for a public works programme for those laid off, for legislation against price increases and for some way we can check to see if what US Steel is saying is true."

(Quoted in *Militant*, [SWP])

Balanoff's demand for public works is correct—but it is up to the trade unions to draw up a plan for such works.

OPEN THE BOOKS

The demand for the opening of the steel companies books fits in very well with Balanoff's point about checking the truth of US Steel's assertions.

But the opening of the books campaign must not be diverted into the dead end demand of price restrictions.

The only way forward is the campaign for the nationalisation of steel companies linked to the demand for public works.

This perspective can only be fought for alongside a struggle to build a Labour party to represent the interests of workers who at present are mainly tied to the bourgeois Democratic Party.

Trotskyists in the USA must exploit such correct points as are made by leaders like Balanoff to fight for a correct programme to defend jobs.

But the two major self-styled Trotskyist groups in the US each fail in different ways, to take up a correct fight.

Balanoff is the hand-picked successor to Ed Sadlowski who unsuccessfully fought McBride in the recent USWA Presidential Election.

Fake-left Sadlowski, who led the Steelworkers Fight Back campaign got over 300,000 votes from workers who saw in him someone who would defend their interests against the Abel/McBride pro-company leadership.

The sectarians of the Spartacist League stood outside of that development and refused to give Sadlowski critical support.

NO ATTEMPT

In a major article on steel they mention only the over-pricing comments from Balanoff and make no attempt to draw out the implications of his more useful statements.

The Spartacist policy for the steel crisis consists of plant seizures, a national strike against mass layoffs, expropriation of bankrupt steel companies, maintenance of all jobs at full union wages and conditions and a workers party based on the trade unions.

Yet if these demands are simply thrown in with no method of connecting them to a struggle to remove the current reactionary leadership within the USWA they can lead workers precisely nowhere.

subjective weakness of their union leadership must be bridged by a struggle to expose the real positions of these bureaucrats and a programme that begins from the existing state of consciousness in the threatened plants and directs towards the necessary policies.

Central to such a programme of struggle is the orientation of the Transitional Programme towards workers control. Conspicuously the Spartacists make no call for the opening of company books to trade union committees; no demand for work sharing on full pay; no demand for trade union committees to formulate plans for public works.

But it is only through the struggle for these demands that the question of expropriation can be raised in any other than an abstract way and it is only through these demands that the plant occupations could find a practical way forward.

PRACTICAL MOVES

The struggles around the steel cuts opens up a good opportunity for practical rather than abstract moves towards the building of a Labour party.

Militants taking up these struggles should demand the establishment of labour slates in the elections and fight for that slate to adopt a socialist programme in defence of steel and other jobs.

There is no sign that the Spartacists have any intention of putting their demand for a Labour party forward in such a way.

While the Pabloites of the Socialist Workers Party gave support to Sadlowski and worked around the Steelworkers Fight Back campaign, in many ways they provided the opportunist mirror image to the Spartacists' sectarianism.

While the Spartacists paper *Workers Vanguard* repeatedly stressed solely the reactionary aspects of Sadlowski's platform and campaign, the *Militant*, (paper of the SWP) virtually omitted any reference to these wrong positions, and gave support which was only in the very vaguest sense "critical".

As a result the SWP ended up with a position almost indistinguishable from Sadlowski on nearly every issue.



Sadlowski

Such a position of course flows from the SWP's long Pabloite history of liquidating into 'radical' movements rather than taking a critical orientation towards them.

PROPAGANDISM

But such opportunism does not mean that the SWP is free from Spartacist-like propagandism.

The editorial of the SWP *Militant* of October 7 made a series of abstractly correct demands — including open the books— but it is difficult to find evidence that these correct demands are being carried in practice into the USWA.

And like the Spartacists the SWP's conception of a Labour party is sectarian.

They do not fight for labour slates in elections—but simply stand their own candidates.

The crisis in steel, in short, brings out clearly the leadership crisis confronting the American working class as a whole. The highest point of that crisis is the false method employed by both major 'Trotskyist' groupings in the US.

This problem must be confronted if a way forward is to be found to the construction of Trotskyist cadres in the working class to lead the struggles to come.

IMG DROPS DEFENCE OF USSR

The work of the International Marxist Group in recent months has consisted almost exclusively of attempts to dissolve the remaining differences and "fuse" with the motley array of degenerate centrist and semi-Stalinist groupings that speckle the landscape of the so-called "far left" in Britain.

In pursuit of this objective the IMG has been one-by-one discarding the various outward trappings of Trotskyism and donning instead the multi-coloured jester's tunic of a fully-fledged centrist group.

Still finding it hard to consummate the longed-for "unity" with these groups which balk at the very hint of Trotskyism, the IMG has now gone a bold step further.

In *Socialist Challenge* of 8 October appears a 'Battle of Ideas' article entitled 'A Draft Statement of Aims', in which an explicit break is made from any notion of building a Trotskyist revolutionary party.

As the *Socialist Challenge* editorial board puts it:

"*Socialist Challenge* has consistently campaigned for a unified revolutionary organisation. We do not believe that such a unity can be brought about simply by agreement on the immediate tasks confronting us today. Nor, on the other hand, do we believe that only Trotskyists supporting the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International, which was adopted in 1938, can be considered as revolutionaries."

TROTSKY'S ANSWER

For those who do not agree with the IMG that we should discard Trotsky and Trotskyism simply because Trotsky was murdered in 1940 and the Fourth International founded (on the basis of the Transitional Programme) in 1938, there is a clear answer from Trotsky's pen:

"The Fourth International, we answer, has no need of being 'proclaimed'. It exists and it fights. Is it weak? Yes its ranks are not numerous because it is still young. They are as yet chiefly cadres. But these cadres are pledges for the future. Outside these cadres there does not exist a single revolutionary current on this planet really meriting the name. If our International be still weak in numbers, it is strong in doctrine, programme, tradition, in the incomparable tempering of its cadres. Who does not perceive this today, let him in the meantime stand aside. Tomorrow it will become more evident."

(Transitional Programme, p. 42.) The IMG leadership, however, set Trotsky aside as a diehard old sectarian, and proceed to abandon precisely those aspects of the International which Trotsky described as its key strengths.

In terms of doctrine, the IMG long ago followed the leadership of the 'United' Secretariat in discarding the scientific method of Marxism and embracing in its place analysis based on the most superficial appearances of events, resulting in wild zig-zags of policy.

This abandonment of doctrine means also throwing aside established positions of the Trotskyist movement—in particular the analysis of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers' state which for all its deformations must be defended unconditionally against attack by imperialism.

This fundamental tenet of the Transitional Programme and *In Defence of Marxism* finds no mention in the IMG's 'Statement of

with such bankrupt groupings as Big Flame and the Workers League—both of which reject this Trotskyist position.

The programme of Trotskyism is of course explicitly rejected as nothing but a hindrance to 'unity' by the *Socialist Challenge* Editorial Board, and in place of the transitional demands they substitute a series of vague formulations that most left reformists would accept.

And the tradition of Trotskyism—the decades of struggle against Stalinism and all forms of bureaucracy within the labour movement which laid up the rich heritage of the Fourth International—receives not so much as a mention in the 'Statement of Aims'.

PABLO'S METHOD

As for the 'incomparable tempering' of the cadres of the Fourth International, this is a concept that has never applied to the IMG. Instead the IMG was born in Britain as a movement in the late 1960's, under the leadership of the 'United' Secretariat of the Fourth International.



Tariq Ali

The USFI's main distinguishing characteristic is that it traces its political method not from Trotsky but from the centrist revisions of Ernest Mandel and of Michel Pablo, who was Secretary of the International in the early 1950's.

Pablo's conviction—endorsed by Mandel—that the Communist Parties of East and Western Europe would break from their counter-revolutionary policies and "project a revolutionary orientation" under mass pressure, brought the Fourth International to a split in 1953.

Since then the Pabloite current has looked for similar "ready-made" revolutionary forces among petty bourgeois nationalist forces in the colonial and ex-colonial countries, among students, feminists, black nationalists and now even the "eco-freak" fringe—always avoiding the tough fight for firm cadres in the organised working class.

"CHILDREN OF 1968"

In the search for such "ready-made" revolutionaries, the IMG has now turned decisively towards what the latest *Socialist Challenge* euphemistically terms "the children of 1968"—that degenerate milieu of jaded ex-student "revolutionaries" and armchair theorists that clutter the stage of the so-called "far left". Any attempt to build a movement based on such characters can only result in complete political liquidation and isolation from the organised working class.

The task of building a principled leadership cadre and a Trotskyist party within the British workers movement as part of the fight to reconstruct the Fourth International falls therefore squarely on the shoulders of the Workers Socialist League.

GUEVARA : IDOL WHO OPPOSED TROTSKYISM



Che addressing the revolutionary army.

Ernesto "Che" Guevara was killed 10 years ago by the Bolivian army, after being cornered along with his tiny, exhausted group of guerrillas near the village of Higuera.

His death came only 13 years after the start of his political life.

It marked his final conversion into a political legend. His fellow leader, Fidel Castro of the Cuban revolution said of him:

"If we wish to express what we want the men of future generations to be, we must say: Let them be like Che!"

In Cuba, where Che passed the bulk of his political life, he is revered in a sentimental manner which is reminiscent of a religious saviour.

TEE-SHIRTS

And outside his adopted Cuba it is Che Guevara's face which probably looks out from more student's walls and tee-shirts than that of any other political hero.

It is not necessary to deny his remarkable personal qualities—courage, asceticism, military ability, administrative talent—to dismiss these judgements of Guevara as grotesque idealisation and absurd over-estimation of Guevara's true importance.

But much more serious than exaggeration has been the uncritical adulation of the politics which Guevara represented.

The BBC film shown on the anniversary of his death, though marred by some inane commentary, had the virtue of explaining in some detail what is known about the origin of Guevara's political commitment.

It began, when as a young doctor from a petty-bourgeois Argentinian background, he toured the Andes on foot and by motorcycle and was deeply impressed by the material and moral degradation of the poor Indian population.

INDISTINCT WAY

It was a reaction which no doubt numerous other tourists have experienced. With Guevara the difference was that he resolved in a very indistinct way to do something about it.

His first intention was apparently to do some kind of missionary-style medical work.

But on a later trip Guevara moved in more political circles. He had contacts with the "left-wing" of the Peruvian populist movement APRA. And then in 1954 he was in Guatemala at the time of the American invasion which overthrew the reformist government of Arbenz.

Guevara apparently fought in the resistance to the invasion and then escaped to Mexico.

It was there in 1955 that he made contact with the Castro brothers and their followers. He joined their guerrilla training programme and set out with them to invade Batista's Cuba in the rickety motor-boat, "Granma".

82 men landed from the Granma in 1956 and only 13 survived the first ambush by Batista's forces.

PHYSICIAN

Guevara, who was there in the first place as the rebel army's physician, soon became a military commander and in the last year of the revolutionary war he commanded the important Las Villas front.

In the first year after the flight of Batista, Guevara's role was in the rebel army. But with the end of Castro's coalition with the "liberal" bourgeoisie, Guevara was appointed to the crucial post of President of the Central Bank and was later given special responsibility for the development of industry.

This is the period when Guevara had a major impact on the course of the Castro government.

From a commanding position in the state apparatus he pushed for a more radical nationalisation programme, for a plan for accelerated industrialisation and the establishment of closer links with the Soviet Union.

ON THE "LEFT"

This period was the height of Guevara's political power. He stood clearly on the "left" of the Castro leadership and his policies were largely followed.

But the period also shows up clearly the limits of Guevara's politics.

His conception of revolution was basically a petty-bourgeois idealist one. His period as Minister responsible for Industry was his first intimate contact with the working class.

Guevara's writing during this period was prolific and shows an impressive grasp of theoretical issues about economic questions.

But it fails to avoid an idealistic emphasis. While Guevara cannot be directly held to blame for the economic adventurism and idealism which led the Cuban economy to serious crises in the late 1960s and 1970s, there is no doubt that some of his policies when he held economic power established the precedents on which later disasters were based.

The fundamental problem was not some error of theoretical emphasis but the petty bourgeois character of the politics of Guevara along with the rest of the Cuban leaders.

The Cuban rebel army had based itself on the peasantry and the

urban petty-bourgeoisie and Guevara continued to look to these groups as the material out of which the Latin American vanguard would be built.

Guevara's superficial "Marxism" shows up in his political impressionism and inconsistency.

This was especially evident over the Soviet Union. In 1960 he returned from his first visit to the USSR fired with enthusiasm for Soviet planning methods and became the most notable pro-Soviet protagonist in the leadership.

Stalinism and the destruction of workers democracy in the Soviet Union seem to have posed no problems whatever for Guevara.

The class nature of Guevara's politics is revealed most tragically in his romantic conceptions about the Latin American revolution.

By 1965, Guevara's power in the Cuban leadership had waned.

For reasons which remain a mystery he left Cuba and disappeared from the public eye.

IGNOMINIOUS DISASTER

Then in 1967 he arrived in Bolivia to start a guerrilla army modelled on the war in Cuba.

The ignominious disaster of this venture has been blamed by Guevara's followers on special circumstances and particular mistakes.

But this failure, along with so many other in Latin America, was no isolated accident. It was the inevitable result of the revolutionary strategy (associated primarily with the names of Castro, Guevara and Regis Debray) which begins with the "armed struggle" and invests it (particularly small-scale rural guerrilla war) with almost mystical powers to catalyse a successful revolutionary struggle.

This "guerrillism" turns the Marxist strategy of revolution on its head: armed struggle first, mass struggle second; army first, party second.



PRESS GANG Little boy Blue

At the age of 16, thousands of working class youth face the dole, harassment by the law or a short lived job creation place well below union rates.

At the age of 16 William Hague, from Rother Valley in Yorkshire, has won instant stardom from Fleet Street as the youngest election asset for the Tories.

Hague won his spurs at the Tory Party conference by producing one of the most reactionary speeches of the week, questioning whether the Tory leaders had the will to press through their anti-working class measures.

He was front page news, a new Churchill, evidence that the Tories had captured the imagination of the young.

Front benches flocked to be photographed with him, TV commentators asked him his opinion of the economy, the unions and anything else that he wanted to pronounce on. NAFF recruited him.

Atticus in the *Sunday Times*—annoyed by missing the speech while in the bar—reported acidly on the celebrations.

"Mr. English (editor of the *Daily Mail*) . . . hustled the youth away, seemingly wishing to put him in his pocket.

Wherever I went for the next couple of hours, there was Mr. English producing William as from beneath his coat, to be patted on the head by a photogenic Shadow Minister."

The *Daily Mail* has signed him up to write some union bashing articles and although Hague may not last long, he will be well squeezed before being discarded.

Napoleon said that each one of his troops carried a field marshal's baton in his knapsack. Hague has been presented with Keith Joseph's hatchet in his.

There is however one qualific-

from applying for the job of boy wonder of the Tory Party.

Haig's parents own a soft drink company. Only those with similar qualifications need apply.

The Tory press enjoys the Tory Party Conference. Margaret Thatcher's speech was pushed off the front pages by the sudden death of Bing Crosby, but inside the papers showed their approval.

The *Daily Mail* headlined her closing speech 'Let us restore power to the people—Maggie'. A strapline over the top declared: "Tories clap and cheer as Labour's policies are labelled mean and Marxist".

The *Express* declared her: "Maggie the Magnificent" and in smaller type "Tories acclaim triumph of her working class touch."

Thatcher's contention that the pay controls, cuts, and unemployment of the coalition government are 'Marxist' policies goes unchallenged in her fan magazines of Fleet Street.

The *Express* was its usual model of objectivity. In its main story on her speech (not supposed to be comment), George Lockhead, drooled:

"Mrs Margaret Thatcher took the Tory Party firmly by the hand at Blackpool yesterday and led it cheering back to Power Land.

"That is to say the land of the back streets and the back parlours where Jubilee Union Jacks hang on the wall, and where two pennies have still somehow got to rub together . . .

"It was a triumph of the working class. Her kind of class . . .

"Every aspect of Mrs Thatcher reflected her remodelled authority.

"For example the clothes she wore. She opted for a quite ordinary outfit in navy blue—the sort, one might say, that women often send away for."

Like everything else around Blackpool that week, the Fleet



What has happened to the Crisis?

Suddenly, what has become of the crisis?

Inflation is coming down, the pound has strengthened and Healey starts 'giving away' money.

Every government minister is full of talk of the reward for two years of wage controls, the stable future ahead, if only . . .

The 'if only' is a bit of a drawback. If only the British worker does not wreck it all by demanding too much money. If only some kind of pay policy can be made to hold. If only these spending cuts can be imposed and more jobs axed.

There are other clouds on the horizon. Yes, the unemployment level is on the high side (at 1.4 million). No, industrial output hasn't yet reached a level higher than it was during the three day week. But (we are given to understand) these are only details. So what is the truth?

GAP NEVER WIDER

Inflation has fallen from a peak of 23% at the end of 1975 to give the possibility of reaching 13% by the end of the year. Forecasts of what will happen to it next year vary wildly.

At the same time the gap between pay and prices has never been wider. In the six months to the end of June 1977 incomes fell in relation to prices by 3½% (a fall in real incomes equivalent to 7% in a year).

Their living standards have fallen by more in the period inflation has been falling, than it did while inflation was rising.

Unemployment is still rising. It is now expected to top the 1.6 million figure and stay there even if Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph are not given an opportunity to slash hundreds of thousands more jobs.

SINGLE INDICATOR

For two years the government has directed its whole propaganda towards inflation. Wage controls have been justified in respect of their ability to reduce it, and the coalition government's focus on inflation has been reminiscent of the Labour government's preoccupation with the balance of payments in the 1960's.

An economy cannot be measured by a single indicator. Whereas a workers state can be judged in terms of the living standards of the working class, a capitalist economy is successful in its own terms, according to the rate of profit employers can extract.

"ANTI-INFLATION POLICY"

It is this which has been the real task, first of the Labour government alone, and lately of the Lib-Lab coalition.

Inflation in some respects has been damaging to profits (particularly as Britain's inflation rate has been higher than its competitors)—but the first task of "anti-inflation policy" has been not to cut prices, but to protect profits.

If Healey had wanted to stop inflation he had a simple remedy. He could have made price rises



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report.

Healey at Labour Party Conference

illegal. The effect of this on profits (without a total ban on wage rises) would have been fatal.

The consequences of such a step for capitalism are so far reaching that an all out price freeze is not an option for any government which wishes to manage capitalism rather than to destroy it. (For the Communist Party therefore to ask a Labour-Liberal government to outlaw price rises is akin to asking them to put a stop to capitalism.

The anti-inflation policy is a fraud. It is not designed primarily to reduce inflation but to increase the rate of profit, through attacks on the working class. These attacks encompass wage controls, massive cuts in public expenditure and monetary control which will guarantee more redundancies.

Most new investment now being put into effect is to replace old plant and equipment with less labour-intensive production, either through gradual speed-up or wholesale sackings.

The 'new dawn' is not going to bring an end to any of this. The effect on inflation has come about partly through the low demand of a sluggish economy and partly through the attacks on wage levels, almost as a side effect of the attack

on living standards.

In real terms industrial output is now only 2.7% higher than it was at the beginning of 1970, nearly eight years ago.

It is still far below the level of the three day week and shows only the faintest signs of increasing.

The 16% inflation figure is still staggeringly high and only seems acceptable compared to the 23% rate reached at the end of 1975.

far from being over, is deepening. Capitalism in one country is as unthinkable as socialism in one country and the international crisis is getting worse.

The recovery in the leading capitalist economies has just not taken place. The leaders of these countries still talk about a 'boom'. That boom was confined to the United States for a three month period which is now over and in



PHOTO: Labour Weekly



Thatcher

The demand for a sliding scale of wages to match inflation is not therefore diminished through a fall in inflation which could well turn out to be short lived.

Indeed the decline in living standards has merely highlighted the need for a policy which will protect living standards against inflation.

leading capitalist countries the rate of growth is getting worse.

In some countries output is actually falling but in all of them the trend is getting worse.

International unemployment has also risen sharply. Between September 1976 and September 1977 unemployment in Britain rose from 1.3 million to 1.4 million



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report.

Callaghan

In the same period it rose in France from 900,000 to 1.2 million, in Italy from 776,000 to 1.7 million, in West Germany from just under 900,000 to just over 900,000, and in Belgium from 223,000 to 259,000. One in 20 of the Common Market workforce is now out of work.

International inflation has increased and while world commodity prices have fallen world food prices have risen, by about 20% in the first half of this year.

The crisis of capitalism will take many forms. It has not been resolved because the attacks on the working class have succeeded in partially alleviating just one of its symptoms.

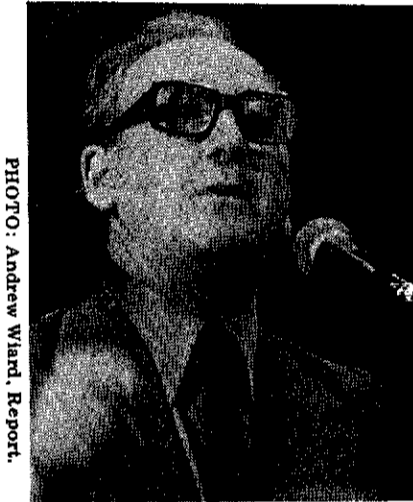


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report.

CP leader McClelland—calling for price controls.

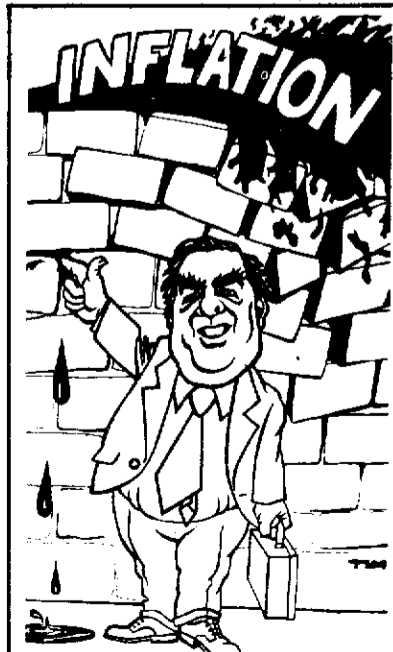
The strength of the pound is to a large extent a result of North Sea Oil which brought a sharp cut in fuel imports and so improved the balance of payments.

The boost from the oil is real enough but how long it will last is almost completely unknown.

It could run out altogether by the year 2000 and be declining fast from 1979 onwards, or, if new discoveries are made, it could continue to give the economy a shot in the arm for much longer. It does not, however, alter any trends.

The propaganda about the economy is just that. Profit levels in real terms have only just begun to show appreciable rises.

For this reason the government is committed as firmly now to holding down the living standards of the working class as it was at the beginning of Phase 1.



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INDUSTRIAL NEWS

CAV offer thrown out

Workers at CAV Acton have overwhelmingly rejected the derisory wage increase offered by the company.

At a mass meeting last Wednesday, workers threw out the offer, which was only 5% plus the possibility of a self-financing productivity scheme.

Instead it was decided to press ahead with the £15 claim that has been submitted.

Management have already rejected the demand. At a meeting between the Executive Committee of the Shop Stewards Committee and management on 16 September, it was made plain that the company were going to adhere rigidly to the government pay guidelines.

In fact their offer of 5% conforms to the now defunct Stage 2 of the Social Contract, let alone the present policy!

Strike action is now very much on the agenda at CAV. GMWU convenor John Coughlan told the mass meeting to be prepared for industrial action later on, but it is now clear that this action will be needed sooner rather than later if workers are to halt the current drop in living standards.

1,000 IN MARCH AGAINST

GLC SACKINGS

Over 1,000 GLC workers demonstrated last Tuesday against the cuts in the workforce announced by the Tory Council.

Since the Tories took office their first attacks have fallen on the architects and the direct labour (housebuilding) force.

A month ago the Tories announced their first cuts—1300 jobs are to go by the end of March.

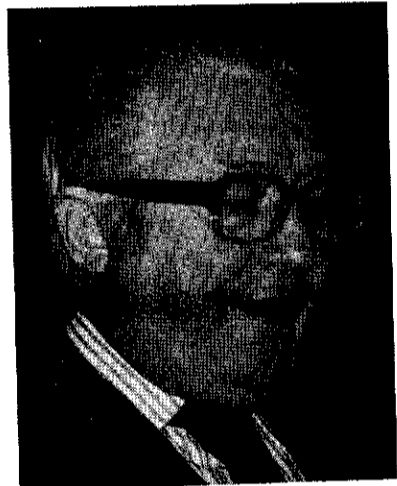
A mass meeting of NALGO decided to proceed with the strike ballot which the constitution requires.

The GLC Staff Association, a large white collar house union under reactionary leadership (which includes a prominent Labour Party leader of Greenwich Council) decided to call only a 'silent lobby' of the next GLC meeting—18 October.

on the grounds that "united action" with other unions was needed.

Thus the stage was set for the events of October 18.

At the NALGO rally, workers carried placards demanding that General Secretary Drain authorise the ballot.



NALGO's Geoffrey Drain

Drain ignored this demand. Positive news however came from Ken Deeves, leader of the NUPE estate workers, who announced they were on unofficial strike

STAGE SET

NALGO, whose leaders are engaged in a merger attempt with the Staff Association, agreed to support this lobby and to hold a meeting of their own.

In the meantime the NALGO National Emergency Committee failed to authorise the strike ballot

LIFT ENGINEERS WORK TO RULE FOR 130%

EETPU lift engineers are now in their third week of a national 40 hour work to rule in support of a 130% wage claim. This call for action on the long standing demand for £3 an hour came from the National Shop Stewards Committee in July.

The same meeting threw down the gauntlet to the union bureaucracy—that if adequate support was not given EETPU members in the lift industry would come off the check off system and form a break away union.

This anger came direct from the sell-out of the 7-week strike in June and July of Otis workers against suspension.

Lift engineers pay levels are made up by long hours of overtime. With cut backs in the industry this overtime is threatened. To maintain living standards, therefore, much higher rates of pay must be secured.

The response of the Federation of Lift Engineers has been to ask for £3 for the top grade workers going down to £1.30 for mates.

Despite the derisory nature of this offer official support has been much less than full.

employers.

The work to rule means that increasingly routine maintenance is not being carried out and only break downs are being seen to.

On the construction side, the employers face large penalties for failing to meet deadlines.

Lift engineers are planning to lobby the EETPU Conference on November 19 in Blackpool.

This claim can only be won if the work-to-rule is turned into all-out strike action, and a struggle taken up against the Lib-Lab government and the EETPU bureaucrats.

This, and not the formation of a 'new' union is the task that confronts the lift engineers.

TGWU officials are remaining silent on the decision by Takiron (UK) to sack 12 workers including the TGWU Branch Secretary Lawrence Jones—a founder member of the union in the factory.

Management claimed the men were 'redundant' but have since begun recruiting new labour to take their place. Meanwhile an immediate strike in support of Jones' reinstatement was squashed by TGWU District Officer Binding, who has proposed no further action.

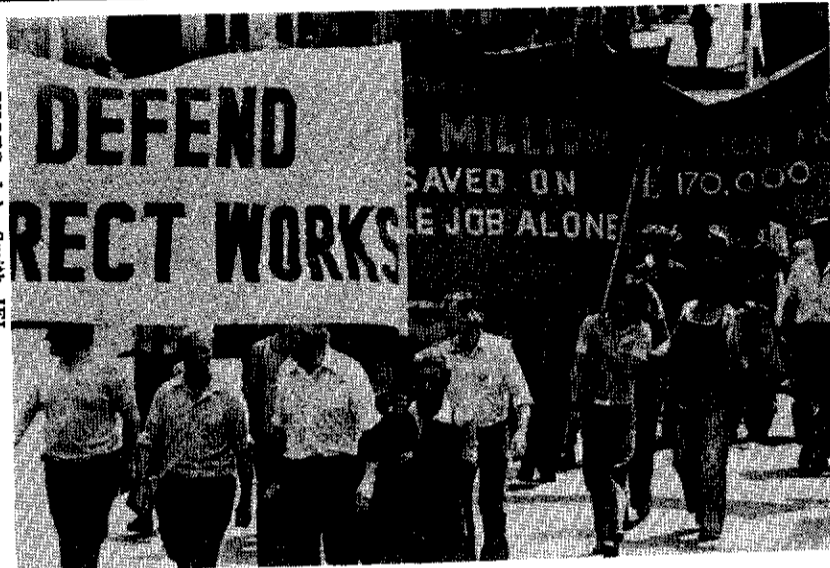


PHOTO: John Smith, IFL

March by direct workers against redundancies in the Midlands

throughout North London because their depleted workforce could no longer cope with the workload.

The 'silent lobby', predictably had no effect on the Councillors and led to confusion among many of the workers—why were they silent when the Tories who were destroying their jobs were arriving?

A large demonstration of educational technicians then arrived bearing placards denouncing the Staff Association for undermining their attempts to negotiate directly with management over conditions and gradings.

INCINERATOR

NUPE estate workers are now demanding that Fisher make their action official, while the massive

Edmonton waste incinerator that serves most of North East London is about to be closed down by strike action.

The fight for an alternative leadership is focussed on the recently formed joint shop stewards committee.

On this committee talk of "unity" in place of action is peddled by Communist Party, SWP and IMG members alike.

All these people bring forward proposals for London-wide conferences, for special committees, for anything other than what is necessary—the building of strikes in support of those sections which have already moved into action.

£55 minimum wage call

Around 120 shop stewards from public sector unions in the Birmingham district attended a conference called on October 15 and adopted three virtually identical resolutions calling for a £55 minimum wage, protected against inflation through threshold payments.

Such payments, however, are not to be based on the assessment of trade union price committees, but on the government's Retail Price Index.

Each resolution spelled out a slightly different view of the way in which this claim should be pursued on a local level.

But none tackled the major

obstacle that public sector workers confront in pushing for such increases—the official leaderships of the unions concerned.

To raise the minimum wage to £55 means an increase way in excess of 10%.

It means a fight against local management; against the Lib-Lab coalition government with its programme of 'cash limits' to enforce pay restraint in the public sector; and against the TUC bureaucracy who have dedicated themselves to holding down pay settlements.

Simply to propose 'rank and file' action to tackle such problems is completely inadequate. While certain speakers claimed that NUPE leader Alan Fisher and other bureaucrats had attempted to disrupt the Birmingham conference, none of these attempts were detailed, and no course of action to combat them were proposed.

In the meantime a 'day of action' was hastily summoned for October 26, and a one-day strike, timed to coincide with the national 'day of action' against the cuts, called on November 23.

Several speakers claimed that the one-day strike call was not a substitute for all-out strike action but a "build-up" to it.

Past experience however suggests that unless a comprehensive programme for action against both wage controls and the cuts is made

There must also be a fight for the abolition of school meals charges and the adoption of a sliding scale of public expenditure to protect essential services from inflation.

Reinstatement fight

In the wake of the battle at Desoutters and in the THF hotels over union recognition we can expect a wave of anti-union actions from the bosses.

One of the first of these is taking place at the Azlon factory and warehouse in Lambeth.

Azlon manufactures plastic laboratory ware and scientific equipment for a wide range of customers. Over the last few months there has been increasing union recruitment both in the factory and the warehouse.

This resulted in the sacking on October 4 of Trevor Williams who had begun the recruitment for the TGWU.

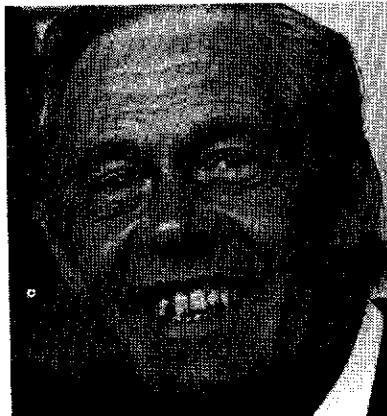
A number of workers struck in his support and have been out ever since.

Deliveries are being maintained by scab drivers to laboratories, schools and colleges.

The strikers have issued a call for technicians to refuse to accept delivery of Azlon materials from scab drivers.

Meanwhile the local TGWU district official has made himself unobtainable.

Lambeth Trades Council is supporting the strike and calls for a



ALL-OUT STRIKES NEEDED TO SAVE HOSPITAL

Five thousand London Hospital workers stopped work last week in defence of the Hounslow Hospital in West London whose patients had been forcibly removed by the Area Health Authority.

For most of them it was a 1-day stoppage in response to a call by stewards in the hospitals who had organised over the previous few days in spite of a lack of leadership from the union bureaucracy.

At the West London Hospital however, NUPE members came out on indefinite strike—only to be forced back after 2½ days through lack of sympathy action and refusal of NUPE to make the strike official.

Nearly 3000 of the strikers assembled outside Hammersmith Town Hall on October 12 where the A.H.A. were meeting.

INAUDIBLE

Militant calls were issued from stewards demanding all-out strikes to stop the cuts.

NUPE official Ron Keating and NALGO General Secretary Geoffrey Drain also addressed the strikers, but their speeches were inaudible amongst calls from the meeting for official strike action.

Inside the town hall the A.H.A. refused to discuss a motion calling for the immediate re-opening of the Hounslow. Instead they called for a public inquiry into their own actions!

Supporters of the Hounslow hospital who were sitting in the public gallery were forcibly removed by police.

Immediately afterwards Sister Cath Cooney, NUPE steward at Hounslow correctly condemned the inquiry as a diversion, pointing out it might well take years to report, in which time feeling would be defused.

FACE THE SACK

Subsequently, however, the hospital occupation committee—in which the Communist Party is a major political influence—has welcomed the call for the inquiry even though “it is only into the methods used to evacuate the hospital and not into whether the Hounslow should stay open.”

It is quite clear, however, that the AHA have no intention of being delayed by any enquiry.

They have written to staff still occupying the Hounslow instructing them to report to work at another hospital or be faced with the sack. As a result a few union members have since left the occupation.

The sacking threat means that the workers still occupying the



The Day of Action in defence of Hounslow Hospital

hospital will soon be without pay. NALGO is said to have promised full pay up to at least November 9 when the AHA meets again but NUPE has not yet given such a commitment.

CONFERENCE

Meanwhile the occupation committee has not called for anything until a labour movement conference on November 5 and a lobby of the AHA meeting on November 9.

Socialist Press supports both of

these initiatives though it is clear that neither can achieve very much. Hospital workers are fed up with one-day protest strikes and the main demand of the occupation should be to force the NHS union leaders to call indefinite strike action until the cuts are revoked.

This should be coupled with demands for the expulsion of David Ennals, the Minister responsible for the raid on Hounslow, both from the Labour Party and from ASTMS, the NHS trade union of which he is a member.

NUM: throw out incentives

The struggle against the “incentive” scheme jointly advocated by the National Coal Board and right wing miners’ leaders has not been advanced one inch by the scandalous and farcical court proceedings brought by the Communist Party-dominated Kent Area NUM.

For those who needed any convincing, it simply provides further evidence that to involve the bourgeois courts and legal apparatus in the affairs of the workers movement is fundamentally wrong and extremely dangerous.

SET ASIDE

In reply to veteran Stalinist Jack Dunn’s attempt to get an injunction to stop this week’s national ballot on the incentive scheme, Lord Denning handed down a ruling which can be used in future against other sections of workers.

Denning set aside the clear vote of NUM delegates at this year’s annual conference, and declared that the union’s right wing dominated Executive has the right to flout conference decisions:

“This is a sensible and reasonable proposal by the union’s executive committee to take the views of members by democratic means—a secret ballot of the workers affected by the proposals.”

The court action, supported also by Yorkshire left-winger Arthur Scargill, has simply demonstrated the confusion of the “left” within the NUM, who have in the past been the victims of court rulings, and clearly learned nothing.

The campaign against the Executive’s position and the reactionary incentive scheme must be based on mobilising the rank and file of the union around the demand for immediate action on the pay claim.

Oxygen runs out

As the strike of 3,000 British Oxygen manual workers pursuing a 30% pay claim enters its third week, lay-offs and disruption in the engineering industry are spreading.

Shipbuilding in particular has been hard hit, with 20,000 workers now laid off, while in the car industry attempts to find substitute methods of welding are causing havoc on some production lines.

There is no doubt that the strike has devastating industrial strength. Yet fresh moves are to be made by national officials of both TGWU and GMWU in a bid to prevent workers’ stranglehold tightening to the point of victory, and to preserve the 10% pay guidelines.

MORE DETAILS

I would like more information about the Workers Socialist League
Name.....

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Send to WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

Hotel strike.... spread the fight for a £50 wage

The strike at the Hotel Metropole, Edgware Road, London, has reached its third week, surviving manhandling from management and treachery from the GMWU officials.

About 60 workers representing all grades at the hotel are still out, determined to fight on until their demands for a minimum wage are met.

Originally 208 members of the GMWU working at the hotel—

owned by the giant Lonrho group—voted to start the strike on Monday October 10.

PROMISE

They were demanding a minimum wage of £50 a week and £43.60 for service workers, and were backed by the full time official Gerry Tilston, who promised to make the strike official within three days.

Regional Officer, Edward Romp, told management that since there had been no union agreement under

Phase 2, the 12-month rule did not apply.

But Romp and Tilston did a quick 180 degree turn within one day of the Department of the Employment saying that management were right to be invoking the 12 month rule.

The officials disbanded the picket lines and ordered the strikers to return to work, promising that there would be no official support.

NOTICE

Not surprisingly many of the strikers gave up—some going back to work and others returning just long enough to hand in their notice.

Those still on strike learned quickly that this was not just a fight against management but against their own union leadership, whose first priority is upholding the anti-working class policies of the coalition government.

When workers take action to win the union policy of a £50 minimum wage, these officials go so far as to give full permission for other workers to drive through the picket lines.

The leadership realises that if Metropole workers win their wage rises thousands of other catering workers will follow them.

SPREADING

Already the £50 minimum wage demand is spreading, with workers in the Central Hotel group and other chains including Trust Houses Forte, Grand Metropolitan, and Rank, putting in similar demands.

This move, backed up by strike threats, poses a challenge to the long history of betrayal in the London Region of the GMWU, and to the wages council structure which has maintained the scandalously low wages.

It is imperative therefore that all GMWU and TGWU branches demand that the strike be made official, send delegations to the picket line and give the fullest possible financial support to a group of workers who are being denied strike pay.

All contributions to Strike HQ, 51, Manor House, Marylebone Road, NW1. Tel. 01-723-4782.



No lead on bus claim

A series of one day per week lightning strikes by busmen in South Yorkshire is continuing in support of their pay claim—based on restoring living standards to the level of two years ago.

This works out at a 67% increase plus a cost of living clause.

Management have refused to offer more than 10%, insisting there is “no money available”.

TGWU bureaucrats have refused to make the strikes official, and have taken no action to persuade other busmen to submit similar claims.

Elsewhere TGWU officials are hiding behind the 12-month rule to prevent the spread of action on pay.

The South Yorkshire stoppages must be turned into all-out action, and similar claims submitted throughout the industry in defiance

NUJ strike to spread

After nearly five months on the streets, action is to be taken to spread the Darlington closed shop dispute.

The NUJ is calling guerrilla strikes throughout the Westminster Press empire from November 1.

This action—instead of the firmer all out strikes—has been called so that the employers will not know just how long the NUJ strike fund will last. But unless the action is strongly taken and strongly supported by printers it will become nothing more than a token of support.

IRRESISTABLE

NATSOPA are certain to refuse to support further action after an outburst from General Secretary Owen O’Brien, at the Printing Industries Committee of the TUC last week.

He said the NUJ should recognise that the IOJ was a union!

The call to spread the strike became irresistible as soon as the mediator published his report. He suggested that the Darlington chapel should return to work for a year and try to get on better with their management.

No window dressing was thought necessary. The NUJ was offered

of the fight.

When NUJ members overwhelmingly rejected the report in Darlington, the scene was set to step up the strike. NGA members at Darlington, who are supporting the strike, said they would have been angry if it had been accepted and the NGA team at the PIC were forced to admit that their members did not want to return to work.

The working of the NUJ resolution can mean anything or nothing. If the guerrilla tactics are to mean token strikes the dispute will fade into oblivion. If enough pressure is to be put on Westminster Press to recognise the closed shop, then strikes of substantial duration are needed, leading to an all-out shutdown of the entire newspaper network.

IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT the vote of Ford workers on the company’s 12% pay offer is overwhelmingly in favour of acceptance.

The pay award, however, remains totally inadequate to defend the living standards of Ford workers.

Responsibility for this lies squarely with the union leadership who submitted a claim for a mere 15%, knowing full well that in negotiations this would be whittled down to near the government’s 10% guidelines and that workers would not strike for a difference of

VOTE 'NO' TO LEYLAND PAY FRAUD

Using the Tory policy of a secret ballot held throughout British Leyland, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions leadership is trying to railroad through the company's corporate bargaining deal.

They managed to obtain a decision of senior stewards to recommend acceptance of the deal at a rigged meeting in London on 18 October.

Yet throughout Leyland the TGWU—which represents the vast majority of semi-skilled and unskilled workers—was forced to take a stand against the deal.



Moss Evans

the minority at such meetings because representation is one senior steward for each union in each plant.

This means for example that the TGWU Senior Steward in the Cowley Body Plant, representing 7,000 members, has one vote—as has the electricians senior steward in another Cowley plant representing a mere three workers!

RIGGED

The rigged decision of this meeting has since been used on the ballot form and in the press as part of further pressure on the workforce.

Ballots are designed to make workers feel that they are individuals and not part of the working class, seeing their strength as an organisational force.

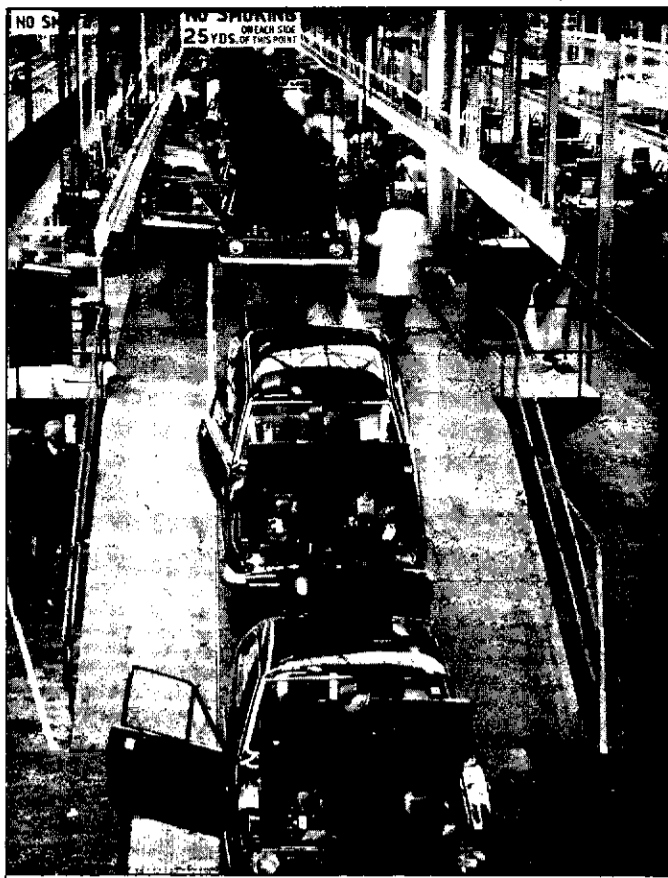
TGWU convenors that in many parts of Leyland had said they were against the deal played right into the hands of this plan by not holding mass meetings or producing explanatory literature.

Even in the Cowley Body Plant where the one mass meeting that we know of took place, the leadership refused to take a vote to decide policy on a plant basis.

IN FAVOUR

Instead they even argued in favour of the ballot taking place, despite the fact that the meeting was solidly against the deal.

The only literature produced in the Cowley Assembly Plant was a special edition of the 5/293 Branch News containing a detailed attack



on the company's plans.

The decision of the Conference of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement to distribute leaflets throughout Leyland was therefore a big step forward for that organisation.

The CDLM leaflet aimed at the key point of the deal, the fact that the vast majority of workers do not know what is involved.

There is no doubt from the response to the Cowley Body Plant TGWU mass meeting that if meetings had taken place all over Leyland then the deal would have

been overwhelmingly rejected.

But even if the deal is forced in, this will not in any way be the end of conflict. Already strikes are taking place in Leyland against speed-up, the very kernel of the deal.

And at Longbridge, inspectors are involved in a grading strike which is in direct conflict with the grading structure in the deal.

The deal itself must be rejected and, as the CDLM leaflet says, individual plants must instead put in claims to regain and defend their living standards.

LEWISHAM HEARING

Committal proceedings have now begun against the Lewisham 21.

Eleven youths were committed last Thursday on a charge of conspiring to steal purses and other items in the Lewisham area between January and May of this year.

The main conspiracy charge was dropped against one youth and six others are fighting the committal.

The South Africa style bail conditions which have been

imposed on the youths since they first appeared in court at the beginning of June, including signing on every day at the police station and curfew—being in before a certain time each night, have finally been lifted.

WORKERS ENQUIRY

The most urgent task facing workers in South East London, however, is the setting up of a labour movement enquiry into police harassment of the black community including the case of the Lewisham 21.

RALLY NOV 6



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—CELEBRATE
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MONTHLY FUND

This is the last issue of the fortnightly 'Socialist Press'. We appear next week as a weekly paper. This is clearly a great step forward for the Workers Socialist League and for the readers and supporters of the paper.

However a weekly paper cannot be run without the necessary finance. We face continuous price increases in the materials that go into the production of a newspaper, distribution costs and so on.

support is there for our paper. If we can raise £3,000 in the Special Fund surely we can raise the £600 a month target that is absolutely necessary if we are to successfully maintain the weekly 'Socialist Press'.

So far this month we have received £375.08, leaving us only a week to raise a further £224.92.

All donations should be sent to:
Socialist Press Monthly Fund
31, Dartmouth Park Hill
London NW5 1HR

MANNING

FROM FRONT PAGE

win acceptance of an "incentive" scheme which would increase the work of coal face workers by anything up to 60%.

And throughout every industry the end of the rigid pay restraint of Phase 2 has seen the appearance of the job-slashing "self-financing productivity deals" peddled by trade union officials who are dedicated first and foremost to preserving the profitability of the employer—at the expense of the long term interests and conditions of their own members.

ERODED

Meanwhile in the social services manning levels are being continually eroded by "natural wastage" and management refusals to fill vacant posts with the full knowledge and tacit acquiescence of union officials.

Every indication confirms that the slightest show of weakness or concession by workers' leaders in the face of such attacks simply provokes a fresh management onslaught.

The only way to fight the present offensive is to confront every attack on manning levels as and where it takes place by all-out strike action. Workers have no interest in boosting the profits of private employers or state-run industries at the expense of jobs and working conditions.

All "incentive" schemes must be rejected and instead full catching-up wage claims submitted, with provision to protect against inflation through a sliding scale of wages clause.

OPEN THE BOOKS

Employers claiming that their very survival depends upon cuts in manning levels must be forced to open their books to elected trade union committees to prove the need for such firms to be nationalised under workers management.

Such a call must not be confused with the phoney moves towards "nationalisation" embodied in the National Enterprise Board which is eagerly supported by supposedly 'left' Labour MPs.

The NEB itself is in the forefront of moves to step up the exploitation of workers in Leyland and in other industries.

In fighting to defend working conditions workers must therefore fight these 'lefts', and combine this with the fight to break the reactionary Lib-Lab coalition which daily proves its role as the instrument of big business.

APARTHEID

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intention of making.

Vorster stands to make a tactical gain by appearing tough now, four weeks before the general election in which South African whites will vote for a new parliament. He leaves open the possibility of a tactical loosening up after the elections, which he is certain to win.

Vorster's moves underline the fact that there is no reformist way to end apartheid and that message will now reach more of South Africa's black population.

BOYCOTT

It must also reach the labour movement of the rest of the world. Boycotts of supplies, especially of arms, to South Africa, supportive strike action and many other forms of material solidarity with the black struggle must be carefully planned and implemented.

At the same time a relentless fight must be pursued against all those 'leaders' of the labour movement, such as the present British government, who for all their expressions of 'outrage' are committed to the maintenance of apartheid.

Concrete action against the South African regime would, as they well know, threaten an important bastion of the world capitalist system.

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