



FIREMEN MUST NOT FIGHT ALONE

As the firemen dig in for their second week of strike action in support of their 30% pay claim, the silence from the TUC leaders is deafening.

None have offered real support to the firemen, though they know that if other sections of workers with pay claims outstanding took strike action now, the 10% limit could be decisively broken.

Manoeuvres

Instead there have been a series of evasive manoeuvres by NUPE leaders representing one million local authority manual workers, by leaders of ambulancemen and hospital telephonists.

And while left miners' leader Arthur Scargill has spoken in support of the firemen, his support has been

We're calling on unions opposing 10% limit

"It's hard to see which way Parry and the FBU leadership will move to head off this strike", Bucks Brigade FBU Chairman Mick Rowlinson told 'Socialist Press' this week.

"Right now EC members are visiting picket lines trying to find a pull back in support.

"But there's still no chink in the membership. And with Rees determined not to budge, there's no real room for Parry to manoeuvre."

Rowlinson warned of the

beginnings of a witch-hunt, with Labour right wingers claiming that the Socialist Workers Party were the cause of the strike. This, linked to the Tory call for fire station equipment to be given to troops could be the next move.

"If this was to happen, the guys on the picket lines would become even more bitter, knowing they were in for a long strike.

"Those who are now confused would see that the troops are not their old buddies, but strike breakers.

"And Rees would be showing that he had abandoned negotiations and had decided to starve



us out.

"We would call for immediate assistance from the trade union movement.

"I am secretary of the Aylesbury and District Trades Council and my branch will be raising an emergency resolution this Wednesday calling for financial and other support.

"We want to bring together all those unions who have claims opposing the 10% policy to act all together.

"The FBU strike can rebound through the whole trade union movement. This is a "moderate" union, but the members' support is absolutely solid."

restricted to a verbal gesture.

With the miners own 135% pay claim due for payment three weeks ago Scargill has made no move to press for strike action.

As TUC leaders conspire to isolate the firemen, sheltering behind the reactionary 12-month rule or meaningless talks in order to stave off action alongside the FBU, firemen face an added danger from their own leadership.

General Secretary Terry Parry has done nothing but scuttle to and fro from Merlyn Rees, where he has been offered nothing now but a form of words on possible pay increases in a year's time.

Parry was opposed to the strike in the first place: now he is doing nothing to strengthen it, biding his time for a fresh sell-out attempt.

No answer

The efforts of union leaders to mislead and confuse the working class on the firemen's strike were aided last week by 40 'left' Labour MPs, who demanded not an end to the 10% policy but for the firemen to be made a "special case".

Among those who latched on to this line were a few Tory MPs and Tony Benn, the Energy Secretary who worked so hard to smash the power workers' pay struggle.

To argue that the firemen are a "special case" does not answer the problem faced by every section of workers now pursuing wage claims—that the 10% limit must be broken if they are to regain and defend living standards slashed under wage controls.

The reason every union bureaucrat and 'left' talker avoids this fight is because the 10% limit is crucial to the survival of the Lib-Lab coalition deal that keeps Callaghan in office.

Pact threatened

Liberal spokesman Emlyn Hooson stated in Parliament last week that the pact would be at an end if the firemen break through the 10%.

Rather than welcoming

this prospect and denouncing the pay limits every 'left' pulled back from real confrontation.

Strong

While workers' leaders hesitate and delay, the Tories are stepping up their demands on Rees to make fire station equipment available to the scab troops—in direct conflict with picketing firemen.

Despite the bankruptcy of their leaders the firemen remain strong.

Demands that army fire-fighting depots be picketed to cut off fuel and supplies

Any 'left' MP who claims to support the firemen must be called upon to actively support such councils of action, and all wage struggles that threaten the 12 month rule and the 10% limit.

In last week's debate in Parliament left Labourite Dennis Skinner declared that the firemen should be a special case if the rest of the working class could also be a special case.

Vote against

He must be forced to draw the conclusion from such statements—and to declare



Soldiers scab on firemen's dispute as leaders leave strike isolated.



are growing in some areas.

Trade union support for the firemen's struggle at shop floor level is enormous. Workers know that if the FBU destroys the 10% policy they will all benefit.

That support must be turned into action. The firemen must not be left isolated in their struggle.

This is why the Workers Socialist League has called for the setting up in each area of Councils of Action, to strengthen and to extend the firemen's strike, and to provide an organised basis on which to fight against mass army scabbing and attempts at picket busting.

publicly that he will vote against any motion of confidence in the coalition government and against its Liberal policies.

Oust

And Skinner must be called on to organise a campaign throughout the labour and trade union movement to oust the Callaghan-Healey leadership.

In this way those leaders who simply talk left can be distinguished from those prepared to fight in active support of workers' struggles, and a principled leadership built, adequate to the needs of the working class.



SAHARAN PEOPLE'S FREEDOM STRUGGLE



The struggles of the Polisario Front in Western Sahara have escalated to a new level with the capture of eight French technicians in neighbouring Mauritania and renewed attacks on the mining centres and garrison towns controlled by the Mauritanian and Moroccan armies.

These moves have dragged the French government towards the centre of the gathering vortex of forces bearing down on the Maghreb (Arab-dominated northwest Africa).

No sympathy

It is not, of course, sympathy with the nationalist aspirations of the Saharoui leaders that has provoked this international involvement,

but competition for the 1.5 billion tons of phosphate deposits in the region.

'Green march'

These reserves have long been coveted by the Moroccan government to eliminate competition and boost its own declining share of the world market.

Two years ago, King Hassan—self-styled 'revolutionary monarch' of Morocco—launched the 'green march' of 350,000 unarmed civilians into what was then a Spanish colony.

Although this force withdrew, subsequent negotiations between the Moroccan, Mauritanian and Francoist governments brought the agreed partition of the territory between the two African states.

The 60,000 nomadic tribesmen of the Western Sahara were not party to this Madrid agreement.

In February 1976 the Polisario Front (the major nationalist grouping) declared the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, and formed a government.

Since then the guerrilla tactics of the Polisario have successfully prevented the export of any phosphates, and their attacks have seriously disrupted the iron

industry, vital to the fragile Mauritanian economy.

Their forces control the whole desert region outside the mining and military centres where the occupation armies are tied down in battles with the Algerian-backed and Russian-equipped Saharoui.

Populist tactics

The key to the situation is to be found in Morocco's role.

Threatened by internal economic crisis, widespread rural discontent and recurring outbursts of revolutionary opposition from the urban working class, Hassan took refuge in populist tactics to defend his beleaguered dictatorship.

The stage props of sham democracy were hastily assembled, with 'free' (ie, rigged) elections earlier this year.

Behind the facade of parliamentary democracy, Hassan's own ministers engineered support for war initiatives by brandishing the rhetoric of a 'Greater Maghreb'.

The leaders of the opposition parties avidly pursued this deliberate diversion away from the problems within Morocco. Equally chauvinist, they clamoured in support of

the regime's expansionist policies.

At one level, the whole war represents an extension of the long-standing rivalry between 'revolutionary' Morocco and 'socialist' Algeria for the colossal mineral wealth of the northern Sahara.

Pawn

The principal supporter of the Polisario in the past, the Algerian government, formerly regarded the Front as a pawn to be deployed in its own nationalist and bureaucratic interests.

Recent signs of cooling Algerian enthusiasm for this particular gambit, may well have prompted the guerrillas to seize the French engineers as hostages.

Hassan has used the escalation of the conflict to revive territorial claims over western Algeria and is once more threatening a border war.

Meanwhile Algeria is engaged in mediation for the release of the French captives but in competition with the Libyan government.

Gaddafi has eagerly rushed in, also waving the icon of a Maghreb united—but under his leadership.

Whatever may be the success of the Libyan dictator's maverick strategy, it is clear that the Mauritanian government will be a heavy loser from any settlement of the war.

Verge of collapse

With its economy on the verge of collapse as the result of guerrilla warfare, Mauritania was forced to turn to Morocco for a guarantee of survival.

A rabbit might as safely approach a fox for a cure to myxomatosis—Mauritania had always been the primary target of Hassan's imperialist ambitions.

Although during the course of the war the Mauritanian army has grown from 2,500 to 17,000 troops, the country is now largely controlled by the Moroccans.

With a wider focus, the full significance of these developments becomes clear.

The French government supplies both occupying armies with equipment and military advisers: the movement of parachutists into the border region of Senegal was only an extension of this arrangement.

But the direct implication of France is just one part of the total imperialist effort.

In taking an aggressive political stance, Hassan is not simply responding to the requirements of the Moroccan ruling class.

This foreign policy corresponds with imperialism's need to employ a policeman on the spot in Africa.

Vassal states

Since the victory of the liberation forces in Vietnam, US policy has shifted away from costly wars of intervention in search of reliable vassal states that will accept regional responsibility for defending the interests of international capital.

In Benin, Zaire and now Sahara, Hassan has acted in this way as the local agent of US capitalism, much as his close partner, the Shah of Iran, operates in the Gulf area.

In their struggles, the Polisario face not only the immediate armies of aggression, but behind them the desperate needs of international capital.

Although, as we shall show in future issues of *Socialist Press*, the Polisario Front has shown extreme political weakness, yet socialists must support the struggle for self-determination of the Saharan peoples.

BIKO MURDER COVER-UP EXPOSED

As the grisly details of the last days of anti-apartheid leader Steven Biko begin to emerge, news has been released that yet another black South African has died in police detention.

According to police reports, 18-year old school-boy Bonaventura Malazi "hanged himself" in the Krugersdorp security police headquarters last week.

This brings the deaths of black detainees in South African jails this year to 21.

The news comes as the inquest into the death of Black People's Convention leader Steve Biko unambiguously points the finger at South Africa's Security Police as the ones responsible for his death.

Biko died on the night of September 11/12 last, official as the result of a hunger and thirst strike he'd begun on September 5.

But this version of the last week of Biko's life has been shot to ribbons by the evidence slowly emerging at the inquest currently being held in Pretoria.

According to police evidence, Biko had a fight with five security policemen on September 7, during the course of which he "bumped" his head against a prison wall and cut his lip.

This incident was allegedly entered in the police occurrence book by the man in charge of interrogating Biko.

Under cross-examination Snyman admitted that he had not actually seen Biko "bump" his head, and allowed, therefore, that the incident may not have taken place at all.

In the official statement released by "Justice" Minister James Kruger after Biko's death, no mention of this incident is made whatsoever.

Kept naked

According to further evidence given by Snyman Biko was kept naked, in leg-irons and in manacles on the floor of his cell from September 6-8.

Again, this rather salient piece of information was omitted from Kruger's statement—despite his declaration that two further surgeons saw Biko on September 7 and 8, but "could diagnose no physical problem".

Finally, evidence offered on the third day of the inquest revealed that Biko was transported, naked and shackled, 750 miles from Port Elizabeth to Pretoria in the back of a Land Rover, with a single container of water as "medical equipment".

Died within hours

Biko died within hours of his arrival in Pretoria. Once again, Kruger's statement omits these points, blandly recording instead that "Mr. Biko was taken to Pretoria".

As we go to press the inquest into this police murder is still continuing and

will undoubtedly emerge.

What is clear at this stage is that Biko was murdered by South Africa's police, and that a grandiose cover-up has been attempted, stretching from police interrogators and district surgeons to James Kruger and the entire South African government.

It may be that the inquest will reveal who the actual murderers were, and as a result these racists may have to be made scapegoats by Vorster's white minority government.

But that would solve nothing for basically Steve Biko died because of his opposition to the entire apartheid system.

Contempt

Vorster and his armed forces have nothing but contempt for inquests.

Asked where he got his powers from to keep a man in chains, police chief colonel Goosen retorted:

"We don't work with the law, we work with our own powers".

South Africa's black proletariat should take note of Goosen's remarks. Only by relying on their own powers in the struggle for basic democratic rights can they cleanse South Africa of its barbaric apartheid system, and thereby avenge the murders of Steve Biko, Bonaventura Malazi and the 600 others who have been murdered since the June



Protestors holding a banner accusing the German state of murder at the funeral of Baader, Ensslin and Raspe.

New victim of German state terror

Yet another member of the Red Army Faction (RAF) guerilla unit has fallen victim to the ravages of the West German state.

On the night of November 12 Ingrid Schubert, a founder member of the unit, was 'discovered' hanging from her cell window in Munich-Stadelheim prison.

According to the bourgeois daily *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* the astonished prison governor was struck dumb by the news.

Gathering his thoughts together he feebly suggested that the guards, supposed to be keeping a 24-hour-a-day watch on her, had somehow or other missed catching her cut up and knot a bed-sheet, black out her cell door window and take her own life.

changing shifts.

Hers was the sixth case of an RAF member dying while in confinement in a German jail.

To prevent even the smallest ripple of suspicion reaching those commentators who had gone some way towards questioning the circumstances surrounding the previous deaths, the Bavarian Minister for Justice acted quickly.

He summoned an immediate post-mortem examination of the body. Pending laboratory tests the verdict of 'suicide with no evidence of outside influence' was pronounced.

This will certainly suffice to ensure that the fake-lefts in the SPD withdraw their demands for a full debate over the deaths during the 2 week annual party congress presently under way in Ham-

Workers in West Germany however must see in this death yet another reason to press ahead in their demands for a workers' enquiry into the incidents.

That the struggles of these terrorist fighters against oppression have proved futile is now clear. Their methods have served only to give a veneer of legitimacy to yet more turns of the repressive screw throughout the country.

Yet far from obscuring the class nature of the state and rallying the country round the government's demand to "hunt out the terrorists" their deaths must lay bare for all to see the real purpose and nature of the state.

Plain now for all workers to see is the depths to which bourgeois "justice" will unashamedly sink to preserve its



It is not only US imperialism that befriends the Shah, here seen riding through Belgrade with Yugoslav President Tito.

U.S. COPS' SAVAGERY GREET'S BUTCHER SHAH

Nothing could have more glaringly exposed the fraudulence of Carter's 'human rights crusade' than last week's visit to Washington by the Shah of Iran.

While Carter feted and flattered this criminal dictator, the United States police were engaged in beating up Iranian students who had come to Washington to demonstrate against the Shah.

The repression of the demonstrators in Washington followed police action in other parts of the United States to prevent the Iranian students organising their protest.

In Chicago on October 28 police invaded a meeting of 40 Iranian students and supporters. Twenty of them were arrested and the same number injured in the police attack and later when in detention.

Hostility

The organisers of the Washington protest also had to contend with the activities of the Savak (the Shah's gestapo) who are allowed by Carter to operate freely in the US (just as they are allowed by the government to operate in Britain).

In view of all this, the large attendance at the anti-Shah demonstrations (well over 10,000) testifies to the hostility of the mass of Iranians outside as well as inside the country to the dictatorship.

The Iranian authorities could only manage to get 5,000 along to the Welcome to the Shah demonstration even though the Savak threatened students who did not come along and offered the air fare, \$100 in cash and several days of free food and lodging to those who came.

Ferocity

In Iran itself the last few weeks have seen a series of militant anti-Shah demonstrations by students in Teheran, Qum, Shiraz and Rey, all of them put down with the usual ferocity by the police who fired at and injured many students.

The leaders of these demonstrations have been arrested and now join the

huge number of political prisoners in Iran's jails. Amnesty International estimates the current total at about 10,000.

The Shah's government has recently claimed that the number of political prisoners is only 2,500.

"Liberalisation"

But even this blatant lie is a new departure since it is the first time the Shah has admitted to holding any political prisoners.

The admission is part of a very limited 'liberalisation' which has been introduced in the last few weeks.

Intellectuals have been permitted to circulate a number of protest petitions and letters asking for liberalisation have been sent to the Shah by former leaders of Mossadeq's National Front Party.

All this reflects to some extent a weakening of the regime. But in essence it is the kind of cosmetic liberalisation which the Carter regime demands of its more embarrassing friends.

The repressive apparatus, which forces the masses into obedience or imprisonment, torture or death, remains unchanged and as active as ever as the treatment of student demonstrators have shown.

Shah needed

For the workers, peasants and students not a shred of political right exists.

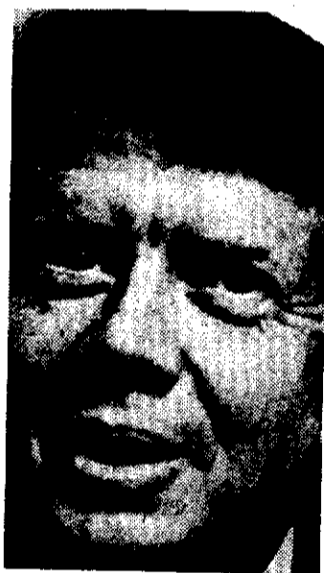
And Carter is making no protest about that because American and British imperialism need the Shah's regime for two major tasks.

First, to help them police the region of the Gulf where the Iranian army has played an important role in fighting the rebellion in Oman. By 1980 there are due to be 60,000 American military and security personnel in Iran.

Second, Iran is important to the imperialist states for its oil wealth.

Major assistance

The Shah has already given major assistance to the British government by loaning it money and oil at crucial moments and buying British goods, especially armaments, the Concorde and Chrysler



Carter

cars. The American capitalists now need his help to join Saudi Arabia at the next round of OPEC price talks in keeping down the international oil price. And this the Shah has already promised to do.

These are some of the reasons why the workers' movement cannot look to imperialist frauds like Carter to ameliorate the dictatorship; their interests lie in preserving it.

The letter to Carter from Labour MPs Stan Newens and William Wilson, requesting him to ask the Shah to respect human rights, is therefore a dangerous diversion.

This kind of 'opposition' to the Shah's dictatorship means nothing.

The Labour 'lefts' who oppose the Shah have consistently refused to fight in the Labour Party for the breaking of all economic links with Iran and for the enforcement of these boycotts by action by the labour movement.

That is the most concrete assistance which the British labour movement can give to the struggle of the Iranian masses for democratic rights and for the overthrow of the dictatorship and its replacement by a government of the workers and peasants.

CARRILLO SCABS ON US PICKET

Santiago Carrillo is the first leader of a Western Communist Party to be permitted entry to the United States since the Second World War.

Carter's government couldn't have made a better choice because this 'communist' continues to show himself to be a good friend of American imperialism and an enemy of the working class.

He began his lecture tour by giving a very concrete example of this when he twice crossed a picket line to give lectures at Yale University, where university workers are on strike for higher wages. The strikers' union and the embarrassed US Communist Party had both appealed to Carrillo to cancel the visit to Yale.

Carrillo responded by expressing "sympathy" for the strikers' cause as he marched through their picket.

The leader of the Yale strikers refused to speak to

Carrillo, who was greeted with cries of "yellow" from the strikers.

Carrillo showed his usual unconcern about such matters and tried to justify himself by saying that:

"In Spain we think that American trade unionism is to the right of the Spanish right".

The response to this from the CPUSA has not been revealed.

The American capitalist class and its representative Jimmy Carter, are more to Senor Carrillo's taste and in his lecture he defended their interests unstintingly.

He supported US military bases in Spain as long as the Soviet Union kept bases in Eastern Europe.

About American investment in Spain he said:

DHOFAR FIGHTS ON

The continual claims in the capitalist press that the war in Dhofar against the reactionary Sultan Quabous of Oman has come to an end were given the lie in a number of ways in recent weeks.

A large article was published for example in *The Times* about the defection of a leading member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman, Salim Mussalem Awar.

Much less publicity has been given in the capitalist press to a defection in the opposite direction by Captain Rabi Awad Marzo of the Sultan's own armed forces, who said that he had been horrified to discover the increasing extent to which the regime is being run by foreigners, especially the British.

In his press conference, Mussalem Awar tried to say how few were left fighting the guerrilla war and *The Times* carefully recounted the

low numbers said to be involved. But the same paper claimed that the fighting finished altogether two years ago!

Another interesting indication of what has been happening can be gathered from a careful reading of the situations vacant columns of some papers in recent weeks.

A company called Airwork Services Ltd is preparing to appoint a staff captain, quartermaster, an infantry company officer and an infantry company commander to go to Oman.

Fluent

The applicant for the post, which pays £10,800 a year tax free plus £5000 gratuity and numerous other perks, is to run newly reorganised regiments and must, said the advert, be fully fit for field duty, have at least two years experience with Arab soldiers be fluent in spoken Arabic and have held a command appointment at company or equivalent level in a combatant British Army Unit.

IN BRIEF

SOMALIA

The 'socialist' dictatorship in Somalia has broken off diplomatic relations with the USSR and Cuba and expelled all Soviet and Cuban technicians. This is the final reprisal for Soviet and Cuban military and political support for the 'socialist' dictatorship in Ethiopia. So ended the USSR's first friendship treaty with an African country. The USSR loses a Red Sea naval base which the imperialists are now jostling to get hold of.

ETHIOPIA

Colonel Atafu Abate, the number two of the ruling military junta or Derg, has been removed from power and apparently murdered by Derg chief Mengistu. More than half its members have been eliminated in this way in the internal power struggle since the Derg was formed in 1974. Latest reports indicate that, though the Ethiopian army has temporarily stabilised the situation in Ogaden where it is fighting the West Somali Liberation Organisation, it has lost further ground to the Eritrean liberation movements in the north.

PORTUGAL

As opposition to wage control and economic austerity grows, President Eanes has appealed for social calm as rival demonstrations are organised, and Premier Mario Soares has issued an ultimatum that, if his minority Socialist government programme does not get the support of the centre and right wing bourgeois parties by the end of the month, he will resign.

SPAIN

The first national strike against the government's wage freeze was carried out by the militant air-traffic controllers and brought air traffic to a standstill for three days.

TUNISIA

The wave of short strikes has continued. Called originally to protest against a death threat to the national leader of the state 'trade union', the strikes are beginning to express deep rooted discontents of the Tunisian working class with the Bour-giba regime and its policies.



Carrillo (centre) at this year's Labour Party Conference

"I am a realist. Spain needs technology, investments and credits to develop. As a communist, a supporter of socialism, I can give an assurance that foreign investments will be respected by us".

He repeated his well-known positions on Spain:

that what was needed was a government of national unity and that "The monarchy at present played a positive role in the restoration of democracy".

This was, as one of the Yale strikers shrewdly remarked, 'a wierd kind of communist'.

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

14 Million set to follow FBU in payqueue

In case there is any doubt about the importance the coalition government attaches to defeating the firemen's strike, it is worth noting that so far less than 500,000 workers have settled claims since the end of Phase 2.

In other words the remaining 96% of workers are still in the pay queue, eagerly watching to see if the FBU can crack Healey's arbitrary 10% limit.

And of the 3% of workers who have settled, there have been no recorded instances of workers settling substantially below the

10% figure for single figure percentage sums as originally demanded by Healey.

Indeed the 500,000 with claims already settled includes the 57,000 Ford workers who settled with 12% plus fringe benefits—substantially in excess of the official norm.

And it is clear that thousands of workers are holding back negotiations in the hopes of getting a better settlement. Normally by this time of year 17% of workers have settled their pay reviews, as against the present 3%.

But part of this delay is also deliberate manipulation by union

officials. Praying earnestly for a fall in inflation rates to lessen the pressure behind claims, union bureaucrats are also doing everything in their power to isolate pay struggles as they emerge.

This underlies the deliberate stalling by NUPE and NUM leaders on pay claims affecting 1½ million workers, while the 43,000 firemen are left to fight wage control alone.

The harsh reality every labour bureaucrat wishes to avoid is that if the firemen burst through the 10% barrier, another 14 million bitter and determined workers will be clamouring to follow.

And no blather about "special cases" will stem that kind of pressure.



Left-talking NUPE Assistant General Secretary Dix

BOREDOM RULES AT BOSSES TALK-IN

Clearly the Confederation of British Industry has been taking lessons from the TUC.

Its outing to Brighton for a first ever public conference last week included the familiar trappings of many a union conference—manoeuvres against rank and file militancy, carefully balanced speeches aimed at offending the least numbers of people and a selection of motions by the chair that avoided the main divisive issues.

The press—puzzled as to what its exact role was supposed to be—found the conference stupifyingly boring in bulk and accidentally hilarious in part.

The *Financial Times* correspondent noted that "skilful platform manoeuvring by Lord Watkinson, the CBI President, fended off a membership revolt".

Other reporters complained of "blandness" and lack of razamatatz.

Not even the faces were all that different. Various employers and Tory spokesmen were spectators at the

TUC in Blackpool and fitted in at one seaside resort as easily as at the other.

Reg Prentice—the Tory MP in whose defence half the Labour ministers once rallied, was present representing ITT, best known for its financing of actions against the Allende government in Chile.

The CBI urged moderation in pay increases, more collaboration with government and TUC (despite protests), a lower top rate of tax and stricter laws against strikes and pickets and in support of sackings.

But despite the feelings expressed from the floor the CBI refused to call for a ban on post entry closed shops or

many other overt union bashing measures.

Their problem was realism. The government which has provided the CBI with the wage and job cutting policies its members require still has the name 'Labour' nailed to its mast.

The leadership of the TUC has also played its role.

All that was left to blame was the working class—not the best propaganda for what was supposed to be a show-case conference—with delegates noting that 'selfish' workers often seemed to be ignoring their own union officials.

Len Murray's sentiments exactly!



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL
The Labour Party Young Socialists' platform after their lobby of Parliament against youth unemployment last Wednesday. The lobby gave an opportunity for such fake lefts as Eric Heffer and Frank Alaun to declare yet again their opposition to unemployment. It was, however, not connected to any fight to break the Lib-Lab coalition.

LEWISHAM POLICE KEEP UP ATTACKS

Police harassment of the black community in South-East London shows no sign of letting up.

The latest major assault involved a raid of seven houses, from which 8 youth were thrust into waiting police vans.

Custody

As we go to press, six of them, including a 14-year-old boy, remain in custody, where they have spent the past four weeks, charged with robbery.

In arguing against bail, the police have announced their intention to swoop again, a move which the release of the other youth might, they claim, hinder.

Two of those arrested are members of the Lewisham 21, all of whom are still awaiting trial on a bewildering variety of charges, including conspiracy.

The midnight visits of police are only the most spectacular aspect of "legal" intimidation.

Minor charges

By a conservative estimate, some 50 or 60 Lewisham youth are waiting to come before the courts on minor charges such as "suspicion".

A favourite trick of the police is to pick up young blacks for such serious suspicious acts as waiting for a bus.

If the "offender" is provoked into defending himself, he is then charged with assault.

Although the police clearly have developed these techniques to keep the community in a state of fear and tension, their application is not entirely random.

Raids

The family of Lewisham Defence Committee chairman David Foster, for example, has suffered a series of raids, arrests and beatings that can only be understood as an attempt to scare them into inactivity.

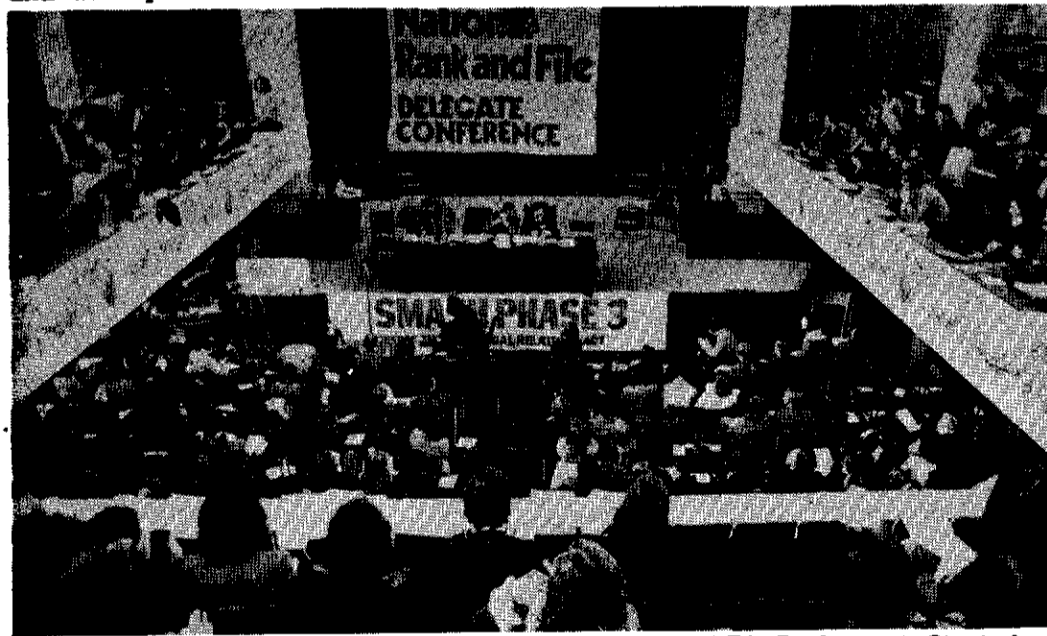
Last week the younger son was nabbed while walking along the street by police who refused to reveal why he was "wanted".

On arrival at the police station he was told that it was "all a mistake".

Fortunately, he refused to be provoked into "offensive" behaviour, which would have given the cops the excuse they were doubtless looking for.

The need for community self-defence, supported by the entire labour movement, is nowhere more clear than in Lewisham.

- *Release the arrested youths!
- *End bail condition for the "Lewisham 21"!
- *For a workers' enquiry into police harassment of the black community!



An earlier Rank and File Conference in Birmingham

RANK & FILEISM NO ANSWER

The Socialist Workers Party—prime movers in this Saturday's 'Rank and File' conference in Manchester, clearly hopes to restrict discussion to their own mixture of minimum demands and abstract calls for 'nationalisation'.

SWP members have distinguished themselves in wages struggles by arguing against claims that include protection against inflation through cost of living clauses, and insisting instead on a flat £15 demand.

Government

And nowhere in *Socialist Worker's* populist rhetoric is there any analysis of the Lib-Lab government that is standing rigidly behind the pay limits.

The basis for a fight

against the SWP's bankrupt positions however is laid in a resolution to the Rank and File conference from the 5/293 TGWU Branch at Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant:

This Conference pledges itself to fight inside the working class on the following points of policy:

*To bring workers into action to break the 12-month rule and the 10% limit.

*Reject productivity deals.

*For catching up wage claims with cost of living clauses whereby wages would rise point by point with the cost of living as decided by

elected committees of trade unionists.

*For a campaign inside the labour and trade union movement for the breaking of the Lib-Lab coalition, and for the removal of the Callaghan-Healey leadership of the Labour Party.

*Abolition of cash limits in the public sector, and a fight for a sliding scale of public expenditure.

*Equal pay.

*£60 minimum wage.

This conference pledges to fight in all union conferences in branches and shop stewards committees for these policies, as well as the Scottish TUC.

DONS' MASS PAY PROTEST



The lobby of Parliament by members of the Association of University Teachers on Wednesday, 16 November, succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of its leaders.

Seven thousand dons, many of them clad in gowns and mortarboards, converged on Westminster in support of their "demand" for higher pay.

Indeed, so many queued up to hear AUT Secretary Laurie Sapper's rousing call to "Rectify the Anomaly" that he was forced to hold a second show.

It may be that the spectre of professors on strike does

Dons dress up for their protest not make the Government quake in its boots.

Not a word was uttered against the savage effects of cuts in education spending.

The only concern of the bureaucrats—and, it must be admitted, of many "rank and file" AUT members—is to persuade Minister for Education Shirley Williams that a hefty rise for the dons does not really break the pay policy, since it was promised before Phase I.

The main anomaly needing "rectification" is the AUT's widespread elitism and complete refusal to fight shoulder-to-shoulder with non-academic and student unions in defence across the board of the education system.

'LEFT'S' BID TO HEAD OFF PAY OFFENSIVE

40 force vote on firemen — but back off Lib-Lab Coalition

The Parliamentary debate on the Firemen's pay strike brought the now familiar spectacle of Labour leaders joining hands with Liberals and Tories in support of Healey's wage-cutting 10% limit.

Home Secretary Merlyn Rees spelled out that despite the huge cost of the FBU action the pay policy would be upheld.

Yet on the picket lines sections of firemen are beginning to get a gauge of the importance of their action.

"The miners brought down Health and we'll bring down this bastard", announced an Oxford fireman last week.

Pressure

And throughout the working class continued pressure on union officials for an all-out fight on wages indicates scant respect for the Lib-Lab government or its pay policy.

But if workers and the capitalist parties are each in their own way becoming clear on the issues involved in the FBU strike, the same is not true of Labour's 'left' MPs.

40 of them staged a token 'revolt' during the debate by refusing the government whip. They knew in advance of course that their votes would be more than made good by Tories and Liberals supporting government policy.

Obscure

Not only did none of these MPs would draw the political conclusion from support to the firemen, they actually did all they could

Firemen's wives demonstrate in Romford

to obscure it. Instead of declaring that the firemen are simply among the first sections of workers in struggle against the 10% limit, and opposing that restriction on wages, the 'lefts' tried to pass off the firemen as a "special case".

And instead of pointing out that wage control is fundamental to the Lib-Lab coalition, and declaring their intention to withdraw all support for that coalition, the

'lefts' remained diplomatically silent.

Tragedy

Scottish Labour Party 'left' Jim Sillars said it was a "tragedy" that firemen of all people should be forced onto the street.

He urged the government to be "flexible" on wage control.

Welsh Labourite Neil Kinnock also warned the

government not to use the 10% policy as a "straight-jacket". But he did not call for an end to the limit.

Eric Heffer and Audrey Wise joined in this call for the firemen to be regarded as a "special case".

No initiative

Dennis Skinner appeared to go one better, agreeing that the firemen should be a special case—provided that the rest of the working class could also be a special case.

Yet Skinner has launched no initiative anywhere in the labour movement for a break in the Lib-Lab coalition. He has not even himself declared he will refuse to vote for it on motions of confidence.

To talk of breaking the pay limits wide open without making such a stand is patently ridiculous. It gives the impression of opposition while bringing none of the action necessary.

Electoral chances

A hint as to why the 'lefts' have been pressed into these sudden declarations on the firemen after their long silence on the power workers, on Fords and on the 10% policy itself came from 'left' NEC Chairman Joan Lester.

Speaking on Friday she warned that the Labour Party's electoral chances could be damaged if the firemen were not made a special case.

As Labour's right wing wheels out the troops in direct strike breaking, the 'lefts' now begin to play their key role as a smokescreen to conceal the class issues involved in the firemen's action.

Withdraw support

To expose the gulf between their words and their actions workers must demand these 'lefts' follow through their claimed support for the firemen, and organise a joint declaration that they will withdraw all parliamentary support for the Lib-Lab coalition.

At the same time they



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Healey must be called on to declare support and to campaign actively for the setting up of councils of action in each area with the perspective of strengthening the firemen's strike, and bringing out other sections of workers on their own claims alongside the FBU.

The 'lefts' evasions on those questions will confirm the need for an alternative leadership in the organised labour movement.



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Kinnock

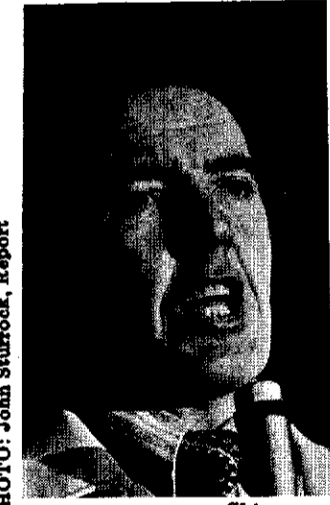


PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Skinner

Labour ... gag rule used

Eighteen months ago the notorious 'gag' rule 15 was bureaucratically imposed on Trades Council constitutions.

It forbade Trades Councils to cooperate with any organisation whose policies are contrary to the reactionary policies adopted by TUC Congress.

And it gave dictatorial powers to Trades Council Chairmen to suppress discussion and even bar delegates regarded as "disrupters".

Now similar moves are being made in London by Labour Party bureaucrats anxious to hold back the growing tide of workers' struggles.

The Executive Committee of the Greater London Regional Labour Party has this month endorsed a letter from an affiliated union which asks that before giving moral or financial support in industrial disputes they should seek advice from the "union" concerned, by which the Labour bureaucrats mean union officials.

Already this policy has been used in North Islington Labour Party to rule out of discussion a resolution from two wards calling for MP O'Halloran to support the tunnellers' dispute and himself attend the picket line.

The policy probably originated from APEX bureaucrats outraged at labour movement mobilisation over Grunwicks.

Most Labour Parties would probably disregard the circular.

The tunnellers' dispute, against the use of lump labour by a Murphy firm of subcontractors, was particularly embarrassing to "Murphy's-man" O'Halloran.

Trades Councils for the most part ignore Rule 15. But Stalinist-dominated Islington Trades Council has used it on a number of occasions to rule fighting resolutions out of order.

The rule is a dangerous precedent for bureaucrats to have up their sleeves, and must be explicitly rejected by London CLPs.

PRESS GANG Night of the Long Knives

The SS men could not have known what had hit them. Had they been reading the British press for the past two or three years they must have thought that their arrival in Britain would go unremarked.

The record of the newspapers on racial tension in this country is one of consistent support for immigration laws and hysteria at the number of black people in Britain. So maybe racism was all right—if not genocide.

The storm that greeted them has been noticeable not just for its ferocity but for its direction.

It has been the voice of the Sun, the Express and the Daily Mail which has shouted as loudly as any.

The only attacks on the Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees, have been that he was incompetent in his banning.

The Times said he had been made to look 'foolish' but that "he was probably

men in". The Sun said "It was an incredible blunder to allow ex-Nazi SS officer Hubert Meyer to hold a Press conference before being kicked out of Britain."

The Daily Mail called it "ludicrously inept".

These opinions must be questioned. Rees made the exclusion order under the racist 1971 Immigration Act. Rees is the Home Secretary who used the same Act to expel Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball last year for writing about the activities of the CIA.

He is the same Home Secretary who pursues, along with the whole Labour Cabinet, action against the families of black residents in this country—under the same act which he has now used to ban the Nazis.

And he is in charge of the equally repressive Prevention of Terrorism Act, which has been used to exclude Irish visitors.

In using the 1971 Immigration Act against the Nazis

future exclusion of left wingers.

And, like the Public Order Act, token action taken against fascists or neofascists has always been directed as a lever against the left.

It is the task of the working class to deal with the fascists. We do not ask a coalition government to do it for us.

The effect of the ringing editorials was weakened by the knowledge that Colonel Meyer was being driven round London by ITN and by the Daily Express.

There is not a single national newspaper which actually boycotted the Press conference.

Socialists who face banings in future can expect no such chauffeur service from Fleet Street. If the Daily Mail gets its way there will be no chance.

"If a liberal minded [!] country like ours can't deploy its powers of exclusion and deportation deftly and with the minimum of fuss, it had better not deploy them

STOP SECRETS CASE NOW!

Two journalists—Duncan Campbell and Crispin Aubrey—and former Signals corporal John Berry were committed for trial at the Old Bailey on Friday under the Official Secrets Act.

Each faces sentences of up to 14 years imprisonment if convicted.

The charges against them, under Section One of the Official Secrets Act, are normally used against foreign espionage agents.

The case certainly raises the issue of the right of journalists to investigate secret government activities.

At a time when press barons are whining continuously about "press freedom" the proceedings at Tottenham Magistrates Court have shown exactly how

Berry is accused of giving Campbell and Aubrey information about the operations of the Government Communications Headquarters.

This is part of a worldwide signals intelligence operation known as 'Sigint'.

Government witnesses told the court that not only was the Sigint set-up secret, but the fact that it was secret was also secret!

The labour movement must mobilise in defence of Aubrey, Berry and Campbell.

Workers must demand the dropping of all charges, and the repeal of the repressive Official Secrets Act.

This means also demanding the removal of Home Secretary Merlyn Rees and the Lib-Lab coalition government, who are pressing these charges in the interests of the bourgeois military machine.



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

To the People of Ireland!

"Our Freedom must be had at all hazards."—Wolfe Tone.

The time has come to practice the advice of Fintan Lalor, namely: to train our hands and our sons' hands, for the day will come when we and they will have to use them. E!

The workers must be disciplined and alert if they are to enjoy the just proceeds of their labour. It has been well said:

"The Price of Liberty is
Eternal Vigilance."

The methods of discipline and alertness and the means of power to train our hands, are provided by

THE IRISH CITIZEN ARMY.

This organisation embraces the full principles of Republican Democracy; its aim is to sink the difference of Birth, Privilege and Creed under the common name of the Irish People. It stands for a Union of Progressive Nationalism with the Democratic forces of Ireland, and its policy is to achieve that; for which

Theobald Wolfe Tone died, and John Mitchel suffered—

AN INDEPENDENT IRELAND.

Irishmen! Join the Citizen Army NOW and help us to build up an Irish Co-operative Commonwealth.

All inquiries to be addressed to:

HON. SEC., LIBERTY HALL, DUBLIN.

Muscail do Mhisneach, a Bhanba!

Ireland

ROOTS OF TODAY'S CRISIS

PART THREE

The Easter Rising

by Maurice Walters

"The tradition of the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living," wrote Marx in 1852.

His statement could have been written with Irish Republicanism in mind.

And of all the events in the Republican calendar, it is the 1916 Easter uprising which is commemorated with the greatest fervour.

Easter Sunday of each year brings thousands of Catholic workers on to the streets in commemoration of Ireland's "Fenian dead", and above all the 16 leaders executed by the British in 1916.

Disaster

And yet the actual rebellion itself was nothing short of a disaster.

It began on Easter Sunday April 24, 1916 when 500

men from the Irish Volunteers and almost 200 men of the Irish Citizen Army (virtually its entire strength) seized key buildings throughout Dublin.

The tactical plan was to hold a roughly circular area enclosing Dublin Castle—British HQ in Ireland—using the General Post Office in the City Centre as headquarters.

Boland's Bakery, Jacob's Factory and the South Dublin Union were taken in the South of the city; the Four Courts on the River Liffey was seized and volunteers were positioned near the railway stations and on the North Wall.

Surprisingly, there was little or no resistance to these first moves—the government forces never in their wildest dreams expected the Irish "to rise again", so when open rebellion did come along they were quite unprepared for it.

Indeed the rebels could have seized Dublin Castle itself if they had tried.

Tricolour

Thus on the first day of the rising the leaders could have been quite contented: the tricolour of green, white and orange (symbolising peace between Catholic and Protestant) flew over the GPO; the proclamation declaring "the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and inalienable" had been read by Padraig Pearse on behalf of the 7-man Provisional Government of Ireland, and posted throughout the city.

The Republic, for which there had been 4 uprisings in the preceding 120 years, had, it seemed, finally come into

being.

These initial hopes were to prove illusory though.

Within 5 days the rising was crushed, and at 3.30 pm on Saturday April 29 Pearse unconditionally surrendered to the British forces.

Within 4 days the executions of the leaders began: by May 10, British Prime Minister Asquith was telling the Commons that there had been 14 executions, 73 sentences of penal servitude, 6 of hard labour and 1,706 deportations from Ireland.

Ultimately there were to be 90 death sentences (16 carried out) and roughly 3,500 men and 79 women under arrest or sentence.

James Connolly, who had been wounded during the course of the fighting, was strapped to a chair and shot on May 12.

The last of the leaders, Roger Casement, was hanged in Pentonville Prison on August 3.

With the executions over and the revolt crushed, the British Cabinet felt content and began to turn its eyes to more pressing matters: Brusilov's offensive in Russia, the battle of Verdun and the sea battle at Jutland.

But the calm which followed the rising and the executions was entirely deceptive.

Resistance

The reprisals and repression had not knocked the resistance out of the Irish people; on the contrary, that resistance was inspired nationally and was to develop in the following years into the War of Independence.

The fact that the rising itself failed has provoked many times the comment that it was nothing but a putsch—a conspiratorially arranged insurrection executed by a handful of people with no base of support at all.

On the surface such a view seems reasonable enough: the rising was confined almost exclusively to Dublin, was confined to a tiny insignificant minority of the country, numbering at most 1,000. It was divorced from any mass movement which alone could guarantee success.

Moreover the insurgents were badly armed: they had been relying on a shipment of arms from Germany, but on April 21—Good Friday—the ship carrying the weapons was intercepted by the British off the South of Ireland.

Before it reached Cobb harbour, it was scuttled by its commander, Karl Spindler. On hearing this news the Chief of Staff of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, Eoin MacNeill, actually countermanded plans for the rising and, through the pages of the viciously anti-working-class, anti-republican *Irish Independent*, called off the Easter Sunday manoeuvres which were to prepare for generalised national rebellion.

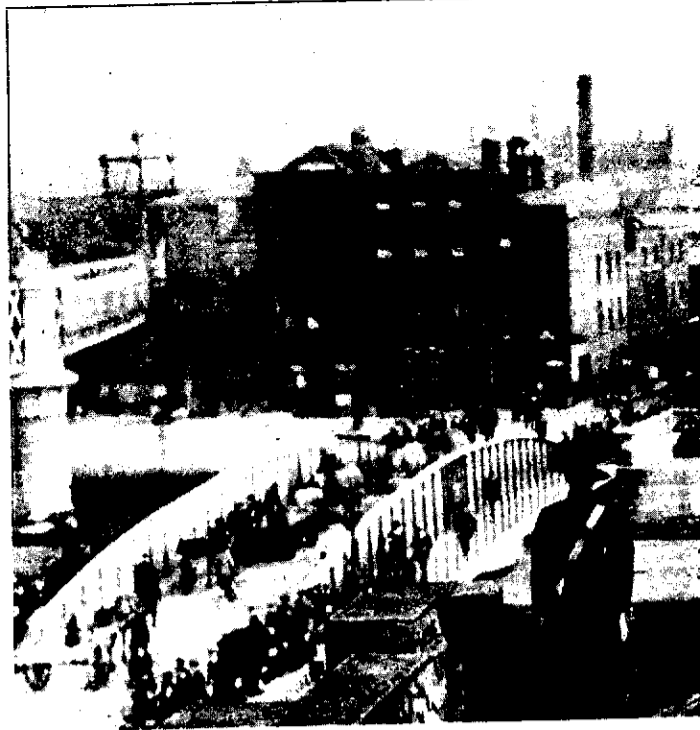
No putsch

Despite this, the leaders in Dublin decided to go ahead and carry out their plan—knowing that it would fail, and knowing that they would die as a result.

Yet for all that the Easter rising cannot be strictly characterised as a putsch. In a polemic directed at Karl Radek amongst others, written in July 1916, Lenin denied that the Irish rebellion was a putsch.

"The term putsch," he wrote, "...may be employed only when the attempt at insurrection has revealed nothing but a circle of conspirators or stupid maniacs, and has aroused no sympathy among the masses.

"The centuries-old Irish national movement, having passed through various stages and combinations of class interest, manifested itself, in particular, in a mass Irish National Congress in America... which called for Irish independence; it also manifes-



ted itself in street fighting conducted by a section of the urban petty-bourgeoisie and a section of the workers after a long period of mass agitation, demonstrations, suppression of newspapers etc. Whoever calls such a 'putsch' is either a hardened reactionary, or a doctrinaire hopelessly incapable of envisaging a social revolution as a living phenomenon."

(*The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up*) (emphasis in original).

The main point is that the Irish uprising did not run counter to the direction in which the masses of Irish workers and farmers were slowly but surely moving.

It was an event which both sparked off and anticipated a mass movement directed against British imperialism. It had also been prepared for over the preceding years. Indeed, a decision had been taken as early as September 1914 to stage a revolt, and during the war detailed planning for the insurrection began in the summer of 1915.

Volunteers

The bulk of those who were to fight in 1916 came from the Irish Volunteers, an armed movement which had been formed in 1913 partly in response to the creation by the Northern Unionists of the Ulster Volunteer Force, whose object was to resist attempts by the British Liberal government to proclaim Home Rule in Ireland.

By the summer of 1914 this force numbered 180,000, and although most followed John Redmond into support for the 1914-18 war, some 12,000 stayed, ready for revolt.

The Volunteers were augmented by the forces of the Irish Citizen Army, a working-class militia based on the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and formed after the Dublin lock-out of 1913 under the leadership of James Larkin and James Connolly.

So, although the numbers physically taking part in the revolt were small, they were all tied to organisations which did have roots in the working-class petty bourgeoisie and peasantry.

Moreover, the leaders were far from being 'stupid maniacs'. They had decided to rebel on the basis that 'England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity'.

Torch

Connolly himself saw the uprising as being the torch which could cause 'a European conflagration that will not burn out until the last throne and the last capitalist bond and debenture will be shrivelled on the funeral pyre of the last war lord.'

The rebellion for Connolly was to be a blow against the imperialist war which he had

opposed from the very outset.

The misfortunes of the Easter uprising was its prematurity, the fact that it took place 'before the European revolt of the proletariat had time to mature'. (Lenin op cit).

No party

But perhaps a greater misfortune was that it lacked a revolutionary party such as the Russian workers possessed; for if such a bolshevik organisation had existed in Ireland, the bourgeois democratic revolution could have been carried out within the framework of a socialist reorganisation of the



De Valera in 1916

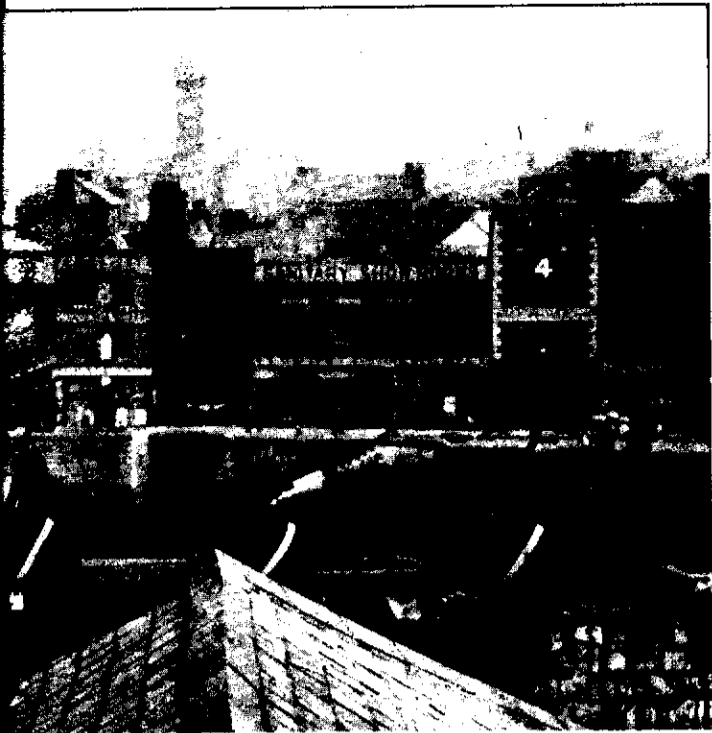
country.

The absence of such a party and a programme for working-class independence and leadership of the nation struggle meant that throughout these years the working class were subordinated to the national bourgeoisie.

James Connolly's specific failures in this respect will be dealt with in a later article in the series, but the graphic demonstration of this subordination can be seen in the relations which existed between the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois Irish Volunteers, and the working-class Irish Citizen's Army.

The Citizen Army tail behind the Volunteers, even allowing them to be members of the Citizens Army as unblinkingly accepted the Volunteers' programme codified in the 1916 Proclamation.

This document which was signed by Connolly as member of the 1916 Provisional Government certainly possesses a radiance, but is nonetheless



Liberty Hall after bombardment during the rising

a bourgeois nationalist programme.

The leadership of the post 1916 National Movement was thereby handed over to the bourgeoisie which, weak and divided, were unable to rid Ireland of imperialist oppression. This was the birth of the Irish Republican Army.

There can be no doubt that the struggle for independence was carried out with daring, tenacity and courage.

But there can also be no doubt that the leadership were determined at all stages to confine it to the limits of a bourgeois revolution.

No attempt was made to integrate national demands with working class demands, despite the fact that the years from 1917 onwards saw considerable working class agitation.

December 1917 saw a successful strike by Belfast shipyard workers for higher wages; druggists and municipal workers struck in Portadown in 1918, and by the end of that year the issue of the 44 hour week began to loom large.

Strike action

In January 1919 the Belfast District Committee of the Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades (F.E.S.T.) balloted for a strike for the 44 hour week.

The result was 20,225 to 558 for strike action although denounced by F.E.S.T. leaders in London, the Belfast workers secured support from shipbuilders on the Clyde, Humberside and Tyneside, and the strike began on January 25, 1919.

In one of the most impressive displays of Protestant and Catholic working class

solidarity—although the mass of workers were Protestant, the strike committee chairman, Charles McKay was a Catholic—Belfast slowly ground to a halt.

Shortly after this troops were sent in to re-open public services, and shortly after that again the strike ended, having settled for a 47 hour week.

Nor was this agitation confined to the north. In the south the membership of the ITGWU rose from 5,000 in 1916 to 100,000 in 1920.

In September 1918, Dublin papers were comparing the situation to the events of 1913. And even at the start of 1919, industrial struggles were more noticeable in southern cities than the guerrilla campaign which was getting underway in the countryside of the south west.

Indeed, the refusal of Irish transport workers to handle munitions or troops during these years was probably a greater blow to the British war-machine than the undoubtedly effective IRA guerrilla tactics.

For the party of the Nationalists—Sinn Fein—all this class agitation was a woeful distraction from the main tasks at hand.

'Labour must wait', said Sinn Fein leader Eamon De Valera before the 1918 General Election, 'in the interests of national unity'.

And official labour did wait—sanctioning only token strikes against British oppression, such as the one-day anti-conscription strike of April 1918.

Indeed, it didn't stand any candidates at all in the December 1918 elections, abdicating thereby the entire leader-



Street fighting in the Easter Rising

ship of the national struggle to Sinn Fein.

This failure—in a period when the working class clearly wanted to fight imperialism, and when the sectarian divisions in the north could have been overcome (as exemplified in the 1919 strike)—was nothing short of criminal, and is an important factor in explaining the continued imperialist oppression of Ireland, the deep divisions between Catholics and Protestants in the north, as well as labour's inability to decisively influence current southern Irish politics.

Royal Irish Constabulary at Soloheadbeg in Co. Tipperary. These deaths, the first British fatalities since 1916, mark the beginning of the War of Independence.

For the rest of 1919 the guerrilla campaign was directed largely at the RIC, with some spectacular results.

IRA units led by Michael Collins as Director of Intelligence, systematically infiltrated and destroyed the British espionage service, effectively paralysing the entire imperialist intelligence service in Ireland.

With military deaths

But their very indiscipline prevented them from effectively carrying out their task, which was in any case made more difficult by the fact that the ostensible enemy based itself in the country and adopted the 'hit and run' tactics of all guerrilla groups.

And though the Tans retaliated—burning Cork City in December 1920—they proved incapable of suppressing the nationalist led movement.

Instead Sinn Fein and its armed wing, the IRA, increased in confidence, and in the general election of May

the Mansion House with peace proposals; and at noon July 11 1921 the truce came into effect.

One other factor had been operative in bringing about the ceasefire. The May elections—held under the Government of Ireland Act—had been designed to form the basis of two home-rule governments in the country.

The six north eastern counties were to have their own, limited parliament as were the remaining 26.

Not feasible

The IRA had opposed this scheme and it was clear that in the south it was totally unfeasible.

But in the north the Unionists ruled the roost, and although they didn't want devolved government, they opted for it as a way of strengthening their positions.

Having won comfortably in the north in the May elections the Unionists, led by Sir James Craig, formed a government and on June 22, 1921 King George V came to Belfast and opened the six-county Parliament.

Having secured the foundations of the Northern Ireland state, Lloyd George's strategy was to negotiate with the southern republicans and woo those more willing to compromise, thereby splitting them.

This he effectively did, securing acceptance of a treaty which recognised the partition of the island; which did not recognise the south as an independent republic; and which, stipulated that all those elected to the southern parliament should take an oath of allegiance to the British Monarch.

Acceptable

Clearly the Treaty fell far short of everything that had been fought for in the preceding years, but it did prove acceptable to those representing Ireland's bigger farmers and businessmen (eg. Collins and Griffiths).

That it was ultimately to prove acceptable to all the Sinn Fein leaders of the period was not immediately apparent.

On January 4 1922, the Dail voted to accept the treaty by 64 votes to 57.

The war with Britain was over, but within months the Civil War was to engulf the south as the 26-county 'bourgeois state' sought to consolidate itself.

IRISH-WOMEN, it is you who will suffer most by this foreign war. It is the sons you reared at your bosom that will be sent to be mangled by shot and torn by shell; it is your fathers, husbands and brothers whose corpses will pave the way to glory for an Empire that despises you; it is you and your children who will starve at home if the produce of Irish soil is sent out of this country. **TO YOU WE APPEAL TO AID US IN THIS STRUGGLE TO SAVE IRELAND FROM THE HORRORS OF FAMINE.**

FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN, if we allow the farmer to sell his crops for export our people will starve; if we allow the profit-monger to sell the products of our land to be exported to foreign countries our people will die of hunger. Already we are threatened with famine prices; already the gaunt frame of hunger looms large in the outlook because the people think that you will do in 1914 as your fathers did in 1846-7-8. Is it not better to take the risk and responsibility of preventing a repetition of this than to die as our fathers died of hunger and of fever begotten of famine? And you can prevent it. To the men of our class who are armed we say, Keep your arms and use them if necessary. If God created the fruits of the earth He created them for you and yours. Do not allow our crops to be gleaned for any other country. They are yours. **KEEP THEM AT HOME! KEEP THEM AT HOME, WE SAY! KEEP THEM AT HOME BY THE STRENGTH OF YOUR RIGHT ARM!**

**"At last be men, stand forth and clear
For Freedom's course, a highway."**

GOD SAVE THE PEOPLE!

Published by National Executive Irish Trades Union Congress and Labour Party.

(Signed).

JAMES LARKIN, Dublin.
D. R. CAMPBELL, Belfast.
M. J. O'LEHANE, Dublin.
THOMAS CASSIDY, Derry.
R. P. O'CARROLL, T.C. Dublin.

M. J. EGAN, T.C., J.P., Cork.
WILLIAM O'BRIEN, Dublin.
JAMES CONNOLLY, Belfast.
THOMAS MacPARTLIN, Dublin.
P. T. DALY, Secretary.

CITY PRINTING WORKS, DUBLIN.

As it was Sinn Fein swept the 1918 elections, winning 73 seats to the Irish Party's 6, and the Unionists' 26.

Sinn Fein

Their policy was straightforwardly separatist—boycott the British House of Commons, and form instead an exclusively Irish parliament (The Dail) based on the 1916 Proclamation.

On January 21, 27 Sinn Fein representatives accordingly met in the Mansion House, Dublin and established the first Dail, voting a constitution, a Declaration of Independence, and a programme of democratic rights.

That same day, an IRA unit led by Sean Treacy and Dan Breen attacked and killed two members of the

mounting and with troop movements halted by the actions of transport workers, the British Government at first tried to intensify military repression.

In January 1920, curfews were imposed on all major towns; in March, the 'Black and Tans'—whose names derived from their hybrid black and khaki uniform—were sent to 'assist' the regular forces.

Tans

Recruited by and large from lumpen-proletarian layers in Britain, the task of the 'Tans' was to perform the role the German Freikorps had played in 1919—to terrorise and bludgeon into submission all opponents of imperialist rule.

An anti-war poster put out by the Irish TUC 1921 they won 130 seats out of a possible 180.

To cap this electoral success, the Dublin IRA unit carried out the most successful urban action of the war when, on May 25 1921, they destroyed the Customs seat of nine British administrative departments, rendering it a thousand times more difficult to control the country, with all records, files etc., destroyed.

Faced with the failure of military repression (at this point there were some 60,000 troops and policemen in Ireland), and with growing British working class agitation against the Irish war, Lloyd George decided to negotiate.

On June 15th, he sent a letter to De Valera proposing a peace conference; on July 8 General Macreedy arrived at



IN REVIEW



GANDHI'S EMERGENCY EXPOSED

Dave Whitfield reviews 'An Eye to India' by David Selbourne, published by Penguin, price £1.50

The State of Emergency declared by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in June 1975 was imposed with its full force for twenty months. During that period the Indian people suffered a degree of oppression that rivalled the worst excesses of British colonial rule. Yet the Emergency was not as liberals claimed a break from the 'democratic' traditions of India since 1947, but merely another, intensified expression of the prolonged crisis of Indian society. The proportions of that crisis are on a colossal scale: 600 million live in a land which could be self-sufficient in food, but where 300 million people 'survive' on or

below the 'subsistence level'. Such figures almost defy comprehension. They regularly invite the response of religious defeatism, in various forms: the long and terrible history of India itself testifies all too well that the narcotics of piety and mysticism can only deaden such pain, not remove its source. The Emergency highlighted every aspect of the problems of India: economic crisis, political crisis, social crisis of every form. In particular, developments during Gandhi's dictatorship brought sharply into focus the crisis of leadership in the working class. The central economic pro-

blem lies in the contradictions at work in the relation of India's under-developed economy to world imperialism.

As Selbourne makes clear: 'One section of the ruling classes must resist the agrarian revolution which is needed by another for the development of capitalism; . . . The other seeks to build, and partially succeeds in building an indigenous capitalism, while itself held in near thralldom (circumscribed by shortages of resources, insufficient investment and its inherited position within the international division of labour) to the world economy, with its disorderly succession of slumps and recoveries, inflation and recession, and its control of both capital and market'. (P.11)

Beset by these crushing problems, the Indian economy was then assaulted by the current international crisis of capitalist profitability.

Recession

The effect was to produce recession, and inflation: unemployment, factory closures, idle machinery; prices spiralling upward at an increasing distance from wages.

The poor peasants became more indebted; the landless labourers continued to starve or were driven into bonded labour.

And over all this presided the Congress Party, ruling India for the thirty years from independence. Here the landlords and industrialists were forced together in an uneasy alliance against the workers and peasants.

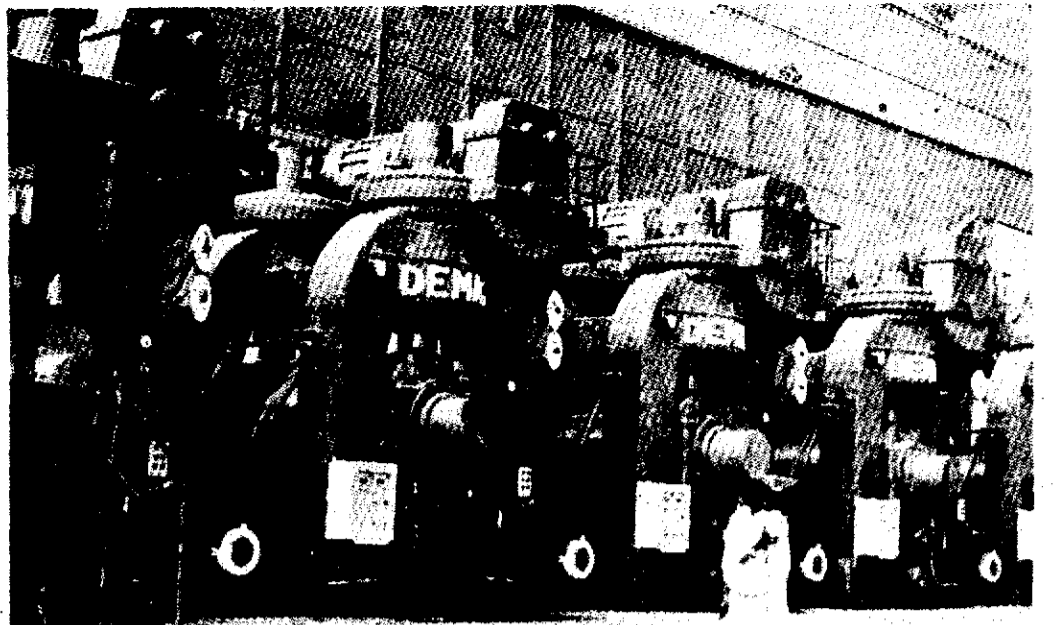
This bourgeois party gained mass support from its constant barrage of populist rhetoric: endless proclamations of faith not just in democracy, but in socialism for India.

Apparatus

Selbourne firmly places the origins of the dictatorship in the previous history of Congress rule, when the same methods had been employed but on a smaller scale.

He then moves on to show how the Emergency legislation was implemented.

Selbourne documents thoroughly the whole apparatus of repression: strict censorship; forced sterilisation, mass demolition of poor housing, round ups of beggars, torture, detention without trial and all the provisions of the 1971 Main-



Modern equipment in Indian steelworks

tainance of Internal Security Act.

Behind all this was clearly the objective of Gandhi's ruling faction in Congress Party, to establish a corporate state.

In this bid to preserve India for capitalist exploitation, a frontal attack on workers and peasants took priority.

Wages were slashed and strikes banned. The independent trade unions were restricted and outlawed according to the *Indian Express*

'The workers and the trade unions which aspire to accreditation with the government are required to accept new and special obligations.

these moves was a situation very attractive to foreign investment: low wages, an extremely high rate of exploitation—and every concession from the government. ("Wild conjectures are circulating about nationalisation. We have no such plans", said the Prime Minister. "Our purpose is to increase production." (p.236))

Dominant

Multinational corporations grew even more dominant over the economy, controlling 30% of the private corporate sector.

The increase in economic exploitation developed together with the destruction

ledge can carry the reader to the heart of the matter'.

Certainly the result is far more than a sterile collection of incongruous impressions and opinions.

The book is sub-titled *The Unmasking of a Tyranny*, and its juxtaposition of the cant, bland optimism or grotesque lies of government 'information' with the detailed reality they distort, generates a power which—at one level—annihilates the dictatorship's pretensions to 'democracy' and 'socialism'.

But that level is criticism, and as Marx observed long ago, 'Not criticism, but revolution is the driving force of history'.



'They are called upon to abjure strikes and agitational methods, to strive for higher production and productivity, and to subordinate their immediate sectional interest for the sake of long range gains for the national economy.' (p.181)

These conditions were acceptable to Congress Party's own stooge union—and to that of the pro-Moscow Communist Party of India. Indeed almost any condition was acceptable to these Stalinists, as one of these leaders explained: "Achutha Menon told me clearly, and then retracted his opinion when I wrote it down in my notebook, (that 'there are no significant ideological differences between the CPI and the Congress' ". (p.186)

of democratic rights and the whole battery of emergency measures. They existed in a complex inter-relationship that cannot be simply torn apart in analysis.

Complex picture

Selbourne's method of overcoming this problem is essentially to bring together five ways of seeing India: the writer's own observation of specific scenes; statistics of the condition of India; socio-economic analysis of those statistics; commentary from India of different classes; and a special category, the propaganda of the dictatorship.

These are all set against each other in an elaborate pattern to give a complex picture of emergency India. Selbourne argues that only such a combination of perceptual and rational know-

An Eye to India does not engage its analysis of emergency India with the continuing struggles of the Indian workers and peasants, to produce a programme of action that can develop those struggles to a revolutionary level.

Crucially, Selbourne seems not to see the central importance of building a revolutionary leadership through the fight for that programme—a leadership which can stand as a genuine socialist alternative to those forces which have betrayed the Indian masses in the past, and left them prey to the right-wing Janata coalition that succeeded Gandhi in office.

But the book remains a mine of valuable material—or rather, it provides a supply of material, already extracted but only partly processed.



STATE CAPITALISM - POINTER TO SWP'S 'RANK & FILE' POLITICS

As the Socialist Workers Party's Rank and File conference assembles at the weekend few of the delegates will be giving a thought to the question which created the International Socialists in the first place—the question of what sort of state is the Soviet Union.

Why on earth should any militant want to defend the Soviet Union? What is left, in that country where Trotskyists were hounded and killed, to defend?

When a Stalinist bureaucracy rules through a police state, when politics has been reduced to the fawning of the party sycophants, when workers' democracy has become a cruel joke, is it not time to say "There is nothing left of the revolution"?

This is the logic of the SWP's position.

Such questions come naturally. The answers do not.

Incredulous

They require an approach which goes beyond gut reaction, "common sense" and other substitutes for Marxist analysis.

Many members of the SWP are incredulous that their organisation should be attacked because it assesses the Soviet Union as "state capitalist".

They shake their heads at the thought that the issue is considered of more than academic interest.

Indeed it would be difficult for rank and file SWP members to think otherwise. The state capitalist position is more often stated than argued, and is given a secondary importance to the membership.

Yet the question is not secondary, nor is it academic. It is the issue on which Tony Cliff and his supporters were expelled from the Fourth International in 1951.

Both 'capitalist'

Cliff argued in 1951 that since the Soviet Union and China were both 'capitalist' states there was nothing to choose between them and US imperialism.

Drawing the conclusion from this, he and his followers refused to support the Stalinist-backed Korean liberation forces against world imperialism when war broke out.

"We can give no support to either camp", they declared in *Socialist Review*.

Meanwhile Trotskyists internationally were braving a huge jingoistic and Cold War witch-hunt in order to oppose the imperialist intervention and support the Korean and Chinese forces.

But in the late 1960s, with the witch-hunt largely abated and opportunist pickings to be made from student hostility to the Vietnam war, the "International Socialists" switched position—to give apologetic support to the Vietnamese NLF.

Unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism remains a touchstone of a correct attitude to international work.

Relations between the

Soviet Union and the West are determined—despite the best efforts of the Stalinists—by the fact that the Soviet Union is not capitalist in any sense at all.

Workers' state

The Workers Socialist League holds that the Soviet Union is a deformed, corrupt, perverted workers' state—a state where political revolution is a necessity and the building of a Trotskyist party an urgent task.

But it remains nevertheless a state where the property relations overthrown and the old capitalist state machine destroyed in 1917 have never been restored.

Despite Stalin, despite his successors, it remains at its base a workers' state.

This is not a novel position. It was held by Trotsky, who had more reason than anyone to hate the Stalinist bureaucracy, until these same forces murdered him in 1940.

After his exile Trotsky's major task was to assess the role of Stalinism as the greatest counter-revolutionary force in the international workers' movement.

He approached the question as a Marxist, seeking the material forces which threw up Stalin, and the social forces which would overthrow Stalinism.

Conservative

But Trotsky specifically rejected the notion that the Stalinist bureaucracy had taken the place of the capitalist class.

He characterised Stalinism as a conservative force arising within the workers' state because of real material difficulties, determined to limit the pursuance of the revolution and settle for 'socialism in one country'.

But Tony Cliff and his followers examine, not historical processes, but the outward and visible form of the state.

They do not like what they see. It is clearly not socialism.

Therefore they conclude, knowing only two colours, black and white, it must be capitalism—"the opposite of socialism". And if the private owners are not around then it must be "state capitalism".

They do not answer the obvious question. If the Bolsheviks overthrew the property relations in 1917, when were they restored?

Transformation

It is clear enough to the SWP when the overthrow of capitalism took place in the Soviet Union—October 1917.

The mammoth social upheaval and civil strife that brought about this transformation was the first in history to give the wealth to the propertyless class in society—the proletariat.

Yet according to the SWP the working class allowed these gains to be taken away again with not so much as a whimper or a moan—and certainly no civil war.

The SWP leaders try to skate around this by claiming that the counter-revolution took place over a period of time; certain people with reactionary ideas moved into

leading positions:

"This happened not gradually, but by a succession of qualitative changes by which the mode of operation of the party was brought into line with the demands of the central bureaucracy. Each of these qualitative changes could only be brought about by direct confrontation with those elements in the Party which, for whatever reason, still adhered to the revolutionary tradition."

(*Socialist Worker*, 5.11.77)

The whole thing is thus presented as nothing more than a battle of ideas. Yet from this vague evasion, we are presented with the conclusion that:

"By 1928 a new class had taken power in Russia. It did not have to engage in direct military conflict with the workers to gain power because direct workers' power had not existed since 1918."

But many nationalisations did not take place until 1918 either! In other words the October Revolution that the SWP claim to "celebrate" is given a total life of between six and twelve months before "state capitalism" began to set in!

Yet the SWP have to ignore economic reality in the Soviet Union to uphold their views.

The state still owns the means of production, it controls the flow of foreign trade, it controls the



Red Army men—did they give up the gains of October without a fight.

exchange rate and does not allow market forces to run unchecked.

The bureaucracy that controls this state, does so through control of the working class politically—not through exploitation of private property relations.

Impressions

A revolution in Britain which toppled the ruling class from power would still have to expropriate the land and the factories and other means of production.

A political revolution in the Soviet Union would find no need to alter the property relations.

The method of the SWP is to pick on external impressions and examine them isolated from the political and social forces which produced them.

And this inability to see through surface appearances is exactly the method that renders the SWP so impotent in fighting the trade union bureaucracy in Britain.

Outraged by the obvious scabbing and sabotage by

union officials at Grunwick, at Desoutters, and in the hotel unionisation strikes this year, the SWP have each time seen the answer not in confronting these officials and mobilising workers within the union against them.

Instead they seek to substitute themselves as an organisation for the union. This is the method underlying the SWP's Rank and File Co-ordinating Committee, which has yet to lead a single serious struggle to victory anywhere in the country.

The fact that trade unions have been politically usurped by the bureaucracy does not mean that workers' immediate task is to build new unions or alternative bodies.

Leadership

Nor does the fact that political power has been usurped in the Soviet Union mean that workers need once again to overthrow capitalist property relations.

In both cases the fight is for a conscious Trotskyist political leadership to over-

throw the parasitic bureaucracy and establish genuine workers' democracy.

Trotsky spelled out the link between these problems:

"The trade unions of France, Great Britain, United States and other countries support completely the counter revolutionary politics of their bourgeoisie. This does not prevent us from labelling them trade unions, from supporting their progressive steps and from defending them against the bourgeoisie. Why is it impossible to employ the same methods with the counter revolutionary workers' state? In the last analysis a workers state is a trade union which has conquered power."

(*In Defence of Marxism*)

The SWP distinguishes itself by its wrong policy both on the unions and on the Soviet Union. This is why the issue of 'State Capitalism' is of importance to every SWP member.



Lenin in Red Square in 1918—the SWP theory suggests that the October Revolution was reversed inside a year.

EEPTU PRE- CONFERENCE CARVE UP

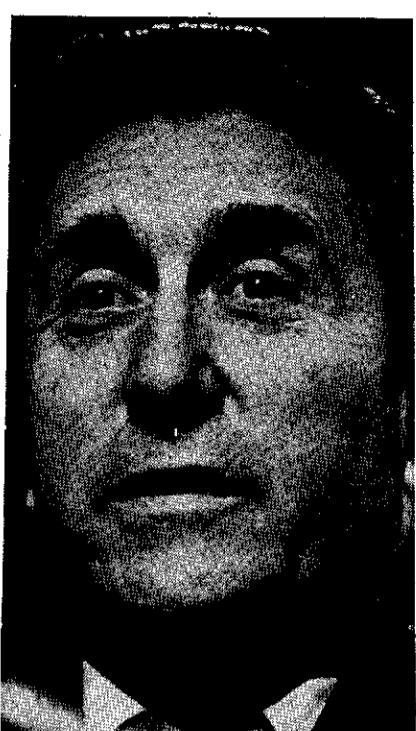


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Chapple

Frank Chapple, extreme right wing leader of the Electrical and Plumbing Trades Union has hit the headlines on the eve of the union conference with an astonishing 'left' speech.

He warned the government not to attempt to intervene to uphold the 10% pay policy when negotiations begin for the EEPTU's 50,000 members in the electricity supply industry.

Credulity

The speech rang rather hollow when contrasted with Chapple's attempts to end unofficial action by power workers last month.

He claimed however that this was so as not to allow these workers to prejudice tactics for the main pay talks.

But Chapple stretched credulity to arm's length when he declared that,

although he was loyal to the Labour government: "My first loyalty is to the people who pay my wages".

Disbanded

Particularly outraged by this statement must have been members of the 3,000 strong Cardiff EEPTU branch, which was disbanded by the right wing Executive only weeks before the Blackpool conference.

The conference was the six yearly rules revision conference, and the Cardiff branch was due to send a strong left wing delegation to fight for democratisation of the 450,000 strong union which is entirely dominated by right wing officials.

Head off

Meanwhile the EEPTU bureaucrats have moved in with a bid to head off the determined strike by 5,000 lift engineers that has paralysed lifts in office blocks and flats all over the country.

The strike has belatedly been declared official. Within days of this announcement there are signs that the whole case could be referred to ACAS.

ACAS specialise in shrewdly worded sell-outs tailored to delight employers and union officials and to confuse workers. The lift men must remain on their guard.

And a new leadership must be built within the EEPTU in struggle against the bureaucratic dictatorship of Chapple and the union Executive.

Skilled workers at British Leyland, including tool-makers and electricians have set up a joint committee which they hope will obtain separate negotiating rights within the new corporate structure.

DARLINGTON STRIKERS' FALSE STEP

The weakness that the employer has been searching for in the Darlington strike for a journalists' closed shop was found last week after 24 hours probing by Westminster Press and the leaders of the print unions.

This week the strike becomes the longest in the NUJ's history. Faced with the choice of escalating the strike in line with chapel and group chapel policy or knuckling under to the threat of NGA print leaders to pull out of the dispute, the strike committee sent a resolution to the National Executive of the NUJ calling on it to delay action.

Tacit agreement

It asked the Executive who were only too happy to agree that one more approach to Westminster Press should be made, this time with the aim of securing tacit agreement to a closed shop and a commitment to no pay.

The motion was sparked by the strike committee wanting the full truth about the NGA approach to the

NGA members have been out in support of the strike (as have SLADE members) since August and the NGA leadership has already admitted that it would be difficult to order them across NUJ picket lines, as their members have become committed to the strike being won as opposed to simply "settled".

'Initiative'

Three days before the NUJ executive had been finally about to spread the strike to other papers in Westminster Press, Joe Wade, General Secretary of the NGA stopped them in their tracks by announcing a new 'initiative' on the dispute.

For a week there was silence on this 'initiative'. Then Wade sent a letter to the NUJ General Secretary, Ken Ashton. It contained no proposals.

Wade simply said that the NUJ must come up with a plan acceptable to the NGA leadership for a settlement or the support was over.

In return for NUJ agreement to sell out Darlington, Wade promised talks on technology and future closed shop claims.

It was at this point that the Darlington chapel leader-

ship failed its test. The objective need was for a demand to step up the strike.

But Darlington has deliberately cultivated a 'moderate' approach. The strike committee, under intense pressure, would have had to ditch this to find the correct road.

It is not surprising that they did not. It is none the less wrong for that.

The strike committee claims that the spreading of the strike will follow if the management fails to respond.

Rebellion

But other chapels, waiting since September to join the strike, are likely to face rebellion in their own ranks at the on/off/on/off tactics and the way that their support has been used simply as a bargaining counter to be bartered.

The strike is not yet over and an intransigent Westminster Press management will undoubtedly reject such tacit agreements.

What is now required from the Darlington chapel is a clear call for escalation and for all Westminster Press journalists to lobby the next NUJ executive meeting on Friday.

Right wing fail in CPSA plot

The rules revision conference of the CPSA, meeting in Southport defeated last Monday a campaign of a highly organised extreme right wing group aiming to introduce postal ballots for the election of the Executive Committee.

This move, which had the cordial support of Bernard Levin, the Tory Party and every right winger who thought he could gain office through Fleet Street witch-hunts, was roundly defeated on a card vote by 116,094 to 94,793.

This represented an even worse defeat for the right wing than it may appear, since a two-thirds majority the other way would have been necessary to bring about the change.

Vetted

The right wing group in the CPSA, which with 200,000 members is the largest of the civil service unions, is based solidly on the carefully vetted Civil Servants who work in the Ministry of Defence and other "security" sections.

The right wing group produces well printed material and is said to be financed by the notorious Truemid organisation.

Since the right wing seized control in May last, it has fought to make the union less democratic and has tried to sack at least one union officer because he is a supporter of the *Militant* paper.

The left wing opposition which is a confused amalgam of Communist Party members with *Militant* support and to a less extent the SWP, spent

most of the conference attacking the right wing for niceties of constitutional procedure, without dealing with the real issues of wages and the fight against the 10% limit.

Something of the real feelings of delegates could be seen from the standing ovation which greeted an ex-fireman member who spoke on the FBU case.

First to suffer

The phoney campaign—"Week of Action"—for next week demanding the restoration of the 'pay research unit' will do little to tackle the real issue of Civil Servants' wages when they are always the first to suffer under government pay controls.

A campaign is essential on such questions around demands for direct negotiations and strike action where necessary as well as for a sliding scale of wages and of public spending if conditions are to be improved and victories over the right wing are to be consolidated.

MIRROR PAY CRUNCH

Journalists on the 'Daily Mirror' have been sacked by their management after they refused to drop their pay claim.

The sackings are to be followed by a similar move against *Sunday Mirror*, *Sunday People* and *Reveille* NUJ members on Thursday. Altogether about 250 journalists are involved.

The move has been made under the watchful eyes of Fleet Street employers whose Newspaper Publishers Association no longer negotiates centrally with the NUJ.

'Hot weather'

Instead each national newspaper group concludes house deals with local chapels which has allowed both sides to ride a coach and horses through pay policy in agreements which have never been detailed.

Mirror journalists were paid 'hot weather' money during the summer of 1976 to avoid open confrontation over pay.

Now the claim has been forced to confrontation. The £3,000 rise quoted is only for a few of the members working 'on the stone' with printers who will be using new technology.

But the increases across the board are too big for the employer to swallow in any form.

Not enough

Their offer-of up to £1,500—has not been enough to stop a dispute where mandatory meetings held by NUJ members at critical moments have lost 18.5 million copies of the paper in London. Manchester (which negotiates separately) is unaffected.

The strength of the claim is undoubted, but NUJ members under professionally devious leadership are trying every twist and turn they know to avoid a straight pay claim, straight forwardly fought.

In moving to sacking the IPC owned newspaper has clearly calculated that a strike will test the ability of this leadership to function in the open. NUJ members must change that leadership if it fails the test.

SEAMEN THROW OUT PAY OFFER

Seamen's leaders last week threw out an employers' pay offer which would offer 10½% on the total wage bill, and which was linked to an extra eleven days holiday.

Employers claim that the offer would raise average earnings for seamen working abroad to £97 a week.

But National Union of Seamen negotiators correctly described the offer as "unacceptable".

As seamen will know, 10% does not even keep pace with inflation over the last period.

No preparations have been made however for action to force an 'improved offer, and negotiations are continuing.

Meanwhile strike ballot papers have been issued to ships officers by the Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association, following the refusal of the ship-owners to improve on their offer of the £4 Phase 2 maximum, made in June.

If a majority vote for strike action, ships could rapidly be laid up in ports all over the world as officers refuse to sail them back to Britain.

Another pay dispute has stopped shipping in the port of Manchester. 42 lock gate keepers have stopped work after rejecting a pay offer within the 10% limit, paralysing shipping in Manchester and ships waiting to get in.

Ambulancemen to follow firemen?

Ambulancemen have been taking a special interest in the firemen's strike.

Their own pay claim for a £55 minimum wage would have the same impact on the 10%.

Their present wages of £34 to £40.52 for a 45 hour week will need to be raised by between 40 and 50% to meet their demands.

The ambulancemen are also calling for five weeks holiday, better sick pay and a 40 hour, five day week.

Rejected

The claim, submitted by the trade union side of the ambulance pay council, also includes a call for inflation-proofing.

The employers rejected the claim last week, despite the fact that representatives

of the four unions involved—NUPE, COHSE, TGWU and GMWU—only met last Friday to finalise the claim.

All out strike action alongside the firemen is the only way that ambulancemen will be able to win their claim in the face of such arrogant action by the employers.

Propaganda

And despite the government's NHS cuts which have drastically reduced the ambulance service, the ambulancemen will have to face the same propaganda of putting lives at risk as now confronts the firemen.

It is the Lib-Lab government that will be the real culprit. Like the firemen, ambulancemen will find that 'sympathy' will yield nothing. The firemen have taken the way.

MASSIVE THREAT TO STEEL JOBS

WORKERS MUST OPEN BSC BOOKS

Plans to axe 24,000 steelworkers' jobs and completely close a number of steel plants over the next two years are now drawn up by Treasury officials.

12,000 jobs which allegedly make the industry "overmanned" at present, should be axed at once, say the Treasury, headed by coalition cabinet minister Joel Barnett.

According to management figures, BSC lost £200 million between April and September of this year. They claim that annual losses are now at the £500 million level, and that a further £600 million is needed for new investment.

Steamroller

Such figures are deliberately used at this point to steamroller union officials into acceptance of swingeing cuts in the labour force.

No worker has any real way of checking on these statistics at present.

Nor can steelworkers explain how such huge losses could be accumulated while they continue to be exploited on the shop floor with wages slashed by inflation linked to rigid wage controls.

The pronouncement that the industry is "overmanned" comes from management, not from committees of workers.

Meanwhile part of the reason for the slump in demand for steel is the deliberate government cut-backs in the construction industry, coupled with the chronic low level of production in manufacturing industry. Both are prompted by the profits crisis of British employers.

"Foreign"

British Steel is now suggesting that a cutback of 40,000 to 60,000 in the workforce would be necessary to reach what they describe as "foreign" staffing levels.

Discussions are already proceeding with steel union bureaucrats to determine the size of a possible buy-off payment to ensure thousands of "voluntary" redundancies.

Figures between £5,000 and £15,000 have been thrown around.

But the cost to the working class of losing further thousands of jobs and the enforced speed-up that will follow for those that remain cannot be calculated in this way.

It is obvious that the cost of maintaining BSC's 208,000



Sheffield steelworkers marching last year against sackings

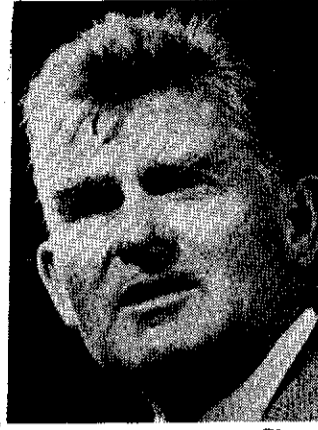
workforce is a minor element in such a monumental cash crisis.

The starting point for any action by steel unions must be to elect independent trade union committees with the power to coopt sympathetic experts and to demand immediate access to the accounts and plans of BSC management.

Where for instance is the £600 million "investment" to be spent? How many private suppliers are creaming fortunes from the "nationalised" steel industry?

How many private steel firms continue to make profits while the state sector remains saddled with the most costly investment and production processes?

PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report



Sirs

REJECT HOTEL SELL-OUT

The full details of last Wednesday's Hotel Workers Wages Council meeting have yet to be published. However, it seems that rises of 13%-17% on the present minimum of around £32 have been negotiated.

Predictably the Tories, both in their press and Parliament have attacked the rises as a serious breach of government incomes policy.

If the industry has a temporary shortage of work, the work available must be divided between the whole workforce, without loss of take-home pay.

The crisis is not the product of workers or the unions—and workers must not now bear the cost of it.

However such a policy means an immediate fight must be taken up against bureaucrats such as ISTC General Secretary Bill Sirs, who has already stated his willingness to "help" solve BSC's crisis—which can only mean his willingness to trade in the jobs of his members.

Meanwhile the other side of BSC's offensive against its workforce can be seen in management's refusal to offer more than 7% in the current round of pay negotiations.

Sliding scale

Job cuts are linked inseparably to wage cuts and to speed up.

1,000 GMWU members at the Stanton Iron works in Derbyshire are now on strike against this pay policy, demanding a £15 rise coupled with a further 40p for every 1% rise in the cost of living.

The dispute remains unofficial as yet, and messages and donations should be sent to B. McGinley, 29, Glendon Road, Kirk Hallam, Derbyshire.

Nevertheless employees such as Tiny Rowland, Maxwell Joseph and Charles Forte despite public misgivings will rest easy in the knowledge that union officials will be fighting for acceptance of this increase which will do nothing to end the paying of starvation wages to workers in the hotel and catering industry.

First test

The first test of the settlement will come on Tuesday November 22 when the Centre Hotels resume negotiations on their claim for a £50 minimum wage.

Stewards, who three weeks ago rejected management's derisive offer of 13% will now be asked by union full-time officials to regard the 13% as a major victory for hotel workers.

In rejecting this betrayal and reaffirming their commitment to the £50 minimum claim the Centre Hotel branch can provide a lead for all other branches with claims pending.

Device

As we pointed out in last week's Socialist Press it is vital that the Wages Council structure is challenged by the spread of the £50 claim.

This body is a class collaboration device for perpetuating low wages paid in the industry and ensuring that super profits continue to be made. Any fight for decent wages and conditions means a fight to end this structure.

Events at the Metropolitan—where workers have been on strike since October 10 for a £50 minimum wage look like taking a new turn this week with management implementing threats of dismissal.

Support

Such an act challenges the right of trade unionists to strike over wages and conditions. The seven workers still out on strike must not be allowed to be victimised in this way. GMWU branches throughout the industry must demand that the union leaders take a fight for their reinstatement and support those still on strike with finance and delegations on the picket lines.

PUBLIC SECTOR 'WEEK OF ACTION' KNIFED

The biggest protest march since the Tory Industrial Relations Act took place just over a year ago.

Eighty to one hundred thousand workers, many involved in protest for the first time, flooded into London to declare their willingness to fight cuts in the social services.

But they have still not been called on to do so by union officials.

Instead 'natural wastage', backdoor deals and outright cuts have been forced

through in every area of the public sector by management backed by the collaboration of union bureaucrats.

Where there has been a fight from the shop-floor there has been a response. The Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital remains open and functioning—despite government plans to axe it over a year ago—as a result of work-in action.

And a similar work-in at the Hounslow Hospital was rallying such support that management took the step of attempting to wreck the hospital, and forcibly snatch-

ing the remaining patients.

A shop stewards' call for protest strikes against this action—called by the Committee of London Area Stewards in the Health Service (CLASH) brought stoppages in many hospitals.

But national union officials have remained silent, and local struggles have remained deliberately isolated.

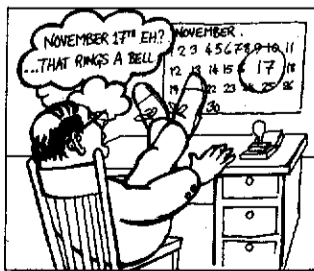
Demands for all-out national action to stop the cuts, for restoration of government spending, and for social services to be protected against inflation through a

sliding scale of spending have fallen on deaf bureaucratic ears.

Now, a year later, public sector union chiefs have set out to prove that no-one cares about the cuts. They have called a Parliamentary lobby with restricted delegations.

And such is the level of frustration at union officials' passivity that some union members are even refusing to sign protest petitions against the cuts.

This situation can only be transformed by the fight in the public sector unions for a principled leadership and a serious programme of strike action.



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SADAT'S VISIT

DELIGHTS

IMPERIALISTS



The visit of Egypt's Anwar Sadat to Jerusalem last weekend was not simply part of the strategy of US imperialism to isolate and crush the national rights of the Palestinians.

It was also a desperate effort by the bourgeois Sadat regime to abandon the battle against the Zionists in order to solve their desperate economic crisis at home.

If there is one thing that unites the imperialist puppet government in Israel and the Arab bourgeois nationalists, it is their common fear and hos-

tility towards the oppressed masses of the Middle East.

This international visit must have received more publicity than any piece of international diplomacy since Chamberlain's visit to Munich in 1938.

It received the applause of every imperialist exploiter and media liar in the entire capitalist world and the execration of all supporters of national rights for the Palestinians.

The television pictures showed enormous crowds of security men and journalists and the dutiful applause of every Zionist parliamentarian land-grabber and gangster.

What the TV did *not* show was the Palestinian refugees who have been left behind in their camps to the tender mercies of Israeli bombers and fascist paramilitary forces.

The public speech of Sadat mentioned a national home for Palestinians, but as even the *Times* correspondent pointed out, Israeli PM Begin did not find it necessary to include any such reference.

Nor did he speak of national rights for anyone except Zionist settlers.

This bilateral discussion is exactly the terms in which the Zionists have always wanted to negotiate 'peace'—between states already set up

and ignoring whole populations whose existence they do not even acknowledge.

Bloody

This latest step in Middle East diplomacy has confirmed what Trotskyists have always said about the struggle for Palestinian national rights—they will never be achieved in any alliance with the Arab bourgeoisie.

Time after time the conflict of interests has been shown between the Palestinian fighters against Zionism and the ruling groups throughout the Arab world—at times in a most bloody and bitter way.

Programme

Yassir Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organisation described the visit correctly as a "sure gain for Zionism and imperialism".

However these forces will only be defeated by a movement with a programme to rally the Arab masses against both the Zionists and their friends in the Arab bourgeoisie.

HEATHROW CLAIM REJECTED

As predicted in last week's 'Socialist Press' British Airways have rejected the pay claim submitted by engineers at Heathrow Airport and instead offered a 10% increase and a productivity deal.

In a four page document detailing their offer British Airways management state that they are prepared to pay all grades £6.75 a week extra.

But British Airways point out that the shift pay and incremental increases which have been agreed between them and the unions involved and are due for payment in January will now only be paid on the condition that a productivity deal is negotiated.

British Airways are proposing a productivity deal which is open ended as far as altering conditions of work is concerned.

The maximum increase the men could receive regardless of the extent of the changes is £3.37. Part of the productivity deal includes a no-strike clause.

In order to ensure that a real increase in productivity has taken place BA management are proposing to hold back payments under the

scheme—which they hope to negotiate in time for its introduction in January—until April when they will pay the men a lump sum for the first four months.

If industrial action "causes loss of productivity" the men will forfeit that money.

The European Division Joint Shop Stewards Committee has met and rejected the company offer. It remains to be seen whether the Overseas Division will do the same. There is some talk of them being prepared to discuss with management about a possible productivity deal.

The British Airways offer is totally inadequate to restore the living standards of the Heathrow engineering workers. Shop stewards must instruct their national officials to break off discussions on such an offer and prepare the membership for indefinite strike action in support of the original claim, the shift pay and the incremental increases.

At the same time other sections of the 55,000 strong workforce on the airport who have themselves submitted substantial wage claims should be called on to take simultaneous strike action in support of their own claims.

Rolls Royce stay firm on pay strike

An attempt by Rolls Royce management to end the 10-week old strike at the North London Park Ward plant has failed.

Management, using the Electoral Reform Society, had tried to ballot individual strikers on a compromise package proposed on November 1.

This deal comprised a revised offer of a 10% wage increase (the former offer was 8%), increased sick pay of £21.25 per week (previously £10 per week), increased holiday pay of £64.68 gross plus an agreement to scrap the present bonus scheme.

Conditional

All this however was conditional on the strikers agreeing to widescale revision of Manning agreements. Faced with this the strike committee rejected the deal. At this point management tried to ballot the strikers, but this proved a flop as strikers refused to complete

or return the ballot papers.

The strikers are now clearly well placed to win all their demands.

Management are being forced to make greater concessions in an effort to restart production.

Compromise?

The pressure is further intensified by the fact that Rolls Royce last week announced that it had bought a 32,000 square feet factory adjacent to the struck plant in Hythe Road, Willdesden, and are obviously eager to begin work there.

The strikers' demands for a 17% across the board wage increase, for sick pay at average earnings, for holiday pay at average earnings and for an improved productivity deal are now within grasp.

The biggest danger seems to be in the possibility of a compromise settlement which could involve laying men off.

Donations to: R. Buck, 2, Lucas Avenue, Harrow, Middlesex.

POLICE CHIEF SPEAKS OUT

Chief Constable of Greater Manchester, James Anderton, was the man who recently conducted secret negotiations with the National Front on the route of their march, in order to stop it being attacked by the working class.

He also provided thousands of police to protect Martin Webster.

Now he has spoken out in his own right. In a public lecture in Preston Anderton showed how openly political the police are becoming. His speech also shows that the development of the mass thuggery on the Grunwick picket lines by the Special Patrol Group is not an isolated example but part of a general trend.

He began by saying he would like to see the future "a future in which we can be more thankful, knowing that at least we are working for, not against each other". (In

other words where everyone works for capitalists and none against them).

He went on:

"We could begin by ensuring that honour, hard work and dedication were justly rewarded... and that the social non-conformists, malingers, idlers, parasites, spongers, frauds, cheats and unrepentant criminals were given very short shrift indeed".

One can only assume that when he talks about non-conformists he means pickets, those who strike against the Social Contract and demonstrators. "Idlers" are presumably the unemployed.

This is confirmed by his next statement:

"We must stop pampering those who bite with increasing fury every single hand that feeds them. They, too, have their responsibilities, but they invariably command only their rights."

It would appear that Anderton discussed more than the secret route of the NF march with Webster!

MONTHLY FUND

Another good week has brought us within striking distance of our monthly target of £600. With one week to go to the end of the month we have £509.85 in hand, of which £172.34 was added during the last seven days.

Among contributions received were Hull £8.75; Birmingham £10; South London £15; Anon £70; Hackney £1; Rally collection £50; Health Service workers £10; Oxford £7.59.

One final push is needed to reach the full amount. All donations should be sent to:

Socialist Press Monthly Fund
31, Dartmouth Park Hill,
London NW5 1HR