



FIREMEN'S STRIKE WILL THREATEN LIB-LAB COALITION

The decision by the Fire Brigades Union to start all-out strike action from next Monday is a direct threat to the Lib-Lab coalition government.

The firemen are demanding an increase of 30%. This is what is needed to give them average industrial earnings plus 10% for skill and danger.

Even this claim would only give a fireman £86 for a 48-hour week.

But, if won, the struggle would provide the first breakthrough against Chancellor Healey's 10% limit in the public sector.

It was in order to impose such wage control that the Liberals decided to prop up the reactionary Callaghan government—as the Workers Socialist League has stressed from the beginning.

While several sections of workers—such as Fords—have broken through the 10% limit, few apart from the Scottish lorry drivers have done so to the extent of the firemen's claim.

This is why the government intends to hold the line at any price.

The moment the FBU vote was announced, Home Secretary Merlyn Rees declared in Parliament that troops would be used to scab on the firemen, rather than concede the claim.

Almost in the same breath Rees was defending the savage actions of police on the Grunwick picket line—a clear test-run for the Special Patrol Group as a picket-busting squad for disputes elsewhere.

Army and RAF scabs would use their own equipment—are being trained

for the task at Fyffe in Scotland.

But the firemen confront an equally reactionary enemy in the shape of their own official union leadership.

The FBU Executive opposed the 2-1 vote for strike action.

And General Secretary Terry Parry later described the decision as "tragic".

Parry is setting the stage for a witchhunt similar to that against the power workers.

Workers are showing more and more contempt for such leaders. The firemen will be joining a succession of workers already involved in action—including Vauxhalls, Rolls Royce and Smiths.

The power workers, who

being used.

Despite the limitation of their claim—which lacks any provision for a cost-of-living clause to protect against inflation—the firemen must be supported.

If they break the 10% limit and the reactionary Lib-Lab coalition, they will do so for the whole working class.

Need this mean that a Tory government will be returned? Not at all. The Tories have shown they do not want to be returned to confront a victorious working class. It

would be extremely difficult for them to carry through their anti-union policies in such conditions.

Workers must not allow the possibility of a Tory government to deter them from fighting the scab herders and strike breakers of the Lib-Lab coalition.

The working class would be strengthened if, in every area involved in the firemen's struggle, councils of action

are formed around Trades Councils and strike committees, drawing delegates from all unions and labour movement bodies as well as tenants organisations and the unemployed.

The aim of such councils of action must be to counter any moves to break the strike, by bringing other sections of workers into action for their own pay claims, alongside the firemen.

Such organisations are necessary to defeat army and police intervention.

Alongside this fight, we must expose the treachery of the Parliamentary 'left' Labourites by demanding they fight to break the coalition and support all pay strikes.

In this way we can show the need for the working class to develop its independent strength.



Merseyside firemen in an earlier dispute

MINERS: WATCH YOUR LEADERS!

action on the £135 pay claim.

They will attempt to hold up proceedings until the miners Phase 2 settlement runs out next Spring.

Any other step would, they know, lead to immediate confrontation with the pay policy and the Lib-Lab government.

Such delaying tactics must be rejected by miners. The 12-month rule must be broken—and action taken as soon as the NCB rejects the £135 claim.

Already the miners' ballot has raised working class militancy on wages, and struck a heavy blow at all productivity deals.

The strength of the claim is that it sets out to regain all that has been lost over the past three years of wage control.

But its weakness is that it contains no demand for a cost of living clause to protect against coming inflation.

While Yorks President Arthur Scargill campaigned strongly against the productivity deal, miners must be on their guard.

After several mobilisations over the summer, Scargill conspicuously produced no miners on Monday's Grunwick picket.

And there is no evidence that he will fight for immed-

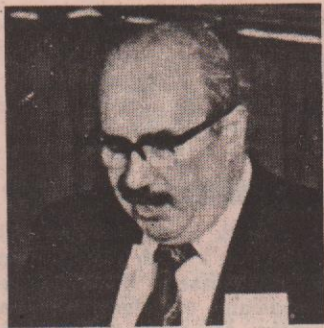
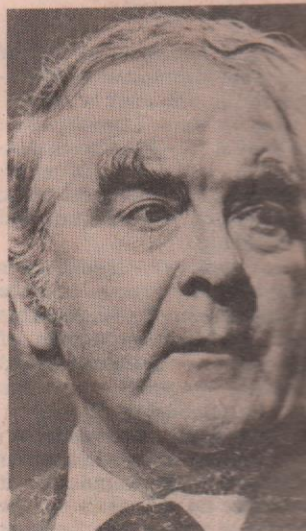


PHOTO: Andrew Wiard, Report.



After the clear decision of miners to reject the productivity deal proposed by the NCB and the NUM Executive, the right wing now have no choice but to delay



iate strike action against the 12-month rule, for the fu claim.

Meanwhile there are st manoeuvres open to Gormk and the right wing wh remain determined to sab tage the claim.

No compromise on the £135!

Break the 12-month rule



BANKRUPTCY LOOMS FOR TURKISH BOSSES



Police violence in Istanbul

An IMF delegation has now been in Ankara for more than a month discussing the Demirel government's application for a \$1,000 million loan to prop up the bankrupt Turkish economy.

The most the IMF has so far hinted it would offer is \$200-300 million, attached to rigorous conditions.

And in the meantime a mere \$40 million has been handed over, as a reward for the government's 10% devaluation of the Turkish lira and 100% increases in the price of a range of goods bought by workers.

The IMF are demanding

that such attacks go much further—to bring about a 35% devaluation, a slashing of state spending, the scrapping of government plans to invest in heavy industry, a total wage freeze, and the cancelling of all bonuses paid to civil servants.

Different plans

The unstable National Front coalition government, pledged to uphold capitalism in Turkey, has little choice but to comply with these demands.

Turkey's estimated income is £6,000 million, while expenditure is predicted at £8,400 million.

The trade deficit over the

last ten months is over £2,200 million; and the Central Bank of Turkey has no foreign currency even to finance the import of oil and basic raw materials for industry.

Such is the disruption caused by this crisis that regular power cuts of three hours a day are bringing bankruptcy to many small firms, and government-owned factories, including the Seydisehir aluminium plants, have been shut down to save electricity.

This closure was made possible by the control exercised by the fascist "trade union" confederation, MISK, which viciously suppressed any resistance.

But while the fascists are playing a key role in the employers' strategy, other sections of the extreme right are in confusion.

The religious zealots of the National Salvation Party, partners in the coalition, are incensed at the IMF demands that they drop their utopian plan to set up independent heavy industry in Turkey, and the instruction by these international bankers that investment be concentrated in agriculture.

Such is the uncertainty of the NF coalition that vicious

repression is used now against the slightest resistance.

Offensive

Last month police with machine guns and armoured cars attacked 5,000 workers who resisted moves to demolish their shanty-town dwellings on government land in the Umraniye district of Istanbul. Six workers were killed, hundreds wounded and hundreds arrested.

But workers fight on. 40,000 metal workers have been on strike against the

metal workers' employers federation since May.

They are struggling against employers' attempts to impose an industry-wide wages settlement. Union policy is to achieve plant level negotiations.

Another 5000 workers in 12 factories are locked out by employers in a bid to break the strike.

Workers fight on

Workers are denied any independent leadership, however. Leaders of both the right wing and the 'left' union confederations TURKIS and DISK are simply waiting for the liberal-bourgeois Ecevit to take over the government from Demirel.

But Ecevit, first and foremost a capitalist politician, and only incidentally a democrat, has different plans:

"We are not going to develop a sharp opposition because the tension in the country does not allow it. The Republic is in danger."

Indeed Ecevit is so dedicated to the existing government that he has even rejected the reactionary proposal from the Turkish Communist Party to form a Popular Frontist "National Democratic Front".



Ecevit

Despite the fact that the Stalinists had shown in this way their readiness to abandon any independent position, Ecevit has moved onto the offensive against the CP, especially in the 'left' union confederation DISK.

Nine full time DISK officials, including the General Secretary have been removed and replaced by Ecevit supporters.

The increasing power of Ecevit's RPP inside DISK is the consequence of the treacherous policies of the Stalinists over a long period.

The backfiring of these policies is not so much a blow at the TCP but at the independence of the working class.

The way forward must be through a fight against all policies of class collaboration.

*Down with the popular frontist National Democratic Front!

*For a working class united front against fascists. Build workers defence squads!

*For indefinite general strike action to bring down the National Front govern-

ZIONIST REGIME SEEKS ADDED STABILITY

The cutting down of some of the luxuriant growths in Israel's bourgeois politics was announced on 20 October when the so-called Democratic Movement for Change decided to join the extreme right wing Likud government of Menahin Begin.

This alliance has served to emphasise the reactionary character of all sections of the established political structure of the Zionist settler state.

Opponent

When first formed a year ago the 'Democratic Movement for Change' was portrayed in some quarters as an opponent of Zionist expansionism, and a 'liberal' alternative to the anti-democratic policies of the Likud and Labour blocs.

In fact the 'DMC' was nothing more than an alliance of disappointed place-seekers and confused opponents of the anti-democratic and militaristic policies of the Zionist establishment.

Its policies were sufficiently vague and discontent sufficiently profound, for it to pick up 15 seats in the elections of last May—almost entirely at the expense of the previous Labour administration.

This allowed the former gangsters of the Likud to come to power.

Since then the Democratic Movement for Change has protested about some of the more obviously expansionist policies of the new government like the settlements in the occupied territories and its failure to carry out any

sections of Zionism in Israel and throughout the world, it has also been made uneasy by the distancing of the Carter administration in the United States from the latest phase of Zionist expansionism.

The efforts of the US administration to come to some arrangement with sections of the Arab bourgeoisie has also disturbed DMC leaders.

It was after a twelve-day visit to the USA of DMC leader Ygael Yadin that he discovered the diminishing favour of the US establishment for Zionist expansion.

On his return he decided to push for support for the Begin administration. Israel said Yadin, was confronted with the toughest test we have faced since 1948".

Thus Yadin has simultaneously provided the Likud bloc with a stable parliamentary majority and a veneer of support for some measures of social welfare and an association of some sort with the labour movement.

Comply

Besides Yadin himself becoming Vice Premier, the DMC has provided the Minister of Welfare and Labour, Israel Katz, a former civil servant.

Meir Amit, a former general and leader of the Labour Party and the business side of the Histadrut, Israel's so-called trade union federation, has been made Minister of Transport.

The DMC has also provided a Minister of 'Justice' in Shamanel Tamir, a former member of the Irgun murder gang.

This motley combination may provide a few more months of stability for the settler regime, but they will certainly do nothing to serve the interests of the masses in



Israeli workers on mass protest at price rises and tax increases last week

IN BRIEF

INDIA

At least two men were killed and more than 150 people were injured in Madras last week when police opened fire on demonstrators protesting against the visit to the state of Tamil Nadu by former Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. The organisation behind the demonstrations is known as the DMK and was in power in Madras from 1967 until it was dismissed by Mrs Gandhi during the 1976 "emergency".

ETHIOPIA

Renewed fighting in the Bale province, less than 200 miles south east of Addis Ababa, has resulted in the death of 100 Ethiopian soldiers, according to the Western Somali Liberation

province, just west of the Ogaden desert, is now largely controlled by Somali guerrilla forces.

SOVIET UNION

The 1977 Soviet grain harvest has fallen far short of the planned figures for the year. The USSR only harvested 194 million metric tons of grain—9% below the 213 million tonne figure planned for 1977, and 13% below last year's record total of 223.8 million tonnes. Soviet leader Brezhnev only indirectly indicated disappointment at the shortfall, which comes at a time when Soviet needs are increasing to match population growth and to feed expanding livestock herds.

MAURITANIA

Some 300 French troops

last week to prepare, if need be, for a French intervention in Mauritania should Boumediene of Algeria fail to reply to a message from French President Giscard d'Estaing. The crisis has arisen because of the capture of French hostages by the Algerian based Polisario Front, which is fighting for the independence of the former Spanish Sahara, now shared by Mauritania and Morocco.

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka last week granted an amnesty to 130 insurgents gaoled after the unsuccessful insurrection of 1971 in which 1200 people died. The amnesty, announced by Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Julius Jayewardene, is consequent on last month's repeal of Mrs. Bandaranaike's legislation on

INTERNATIONAL NEW MOVES PORTUGUESE

Taking his cue from recent class-collaborationist moves by Spanish Social Democrats and Stalinists, Portugal's Prime Minister Mario Soares has made an ambiguously worded proposal for a four-party political pact.

In a statement issued on

Monday evening (October the minority SP Government called for a broad-based acceptance of 'urgent options' needed to overcome the economic crisis.

The communique explicitly stated, though, that 'the desire to reach a platform orientated around political platforms cannot be confused with executive power sharing, still less with a

TOWARDS POPULAR FRONT

coalition government'.

Soares wants to protect the SP from any charges that he is collaborating with rival parties—eg. the Social Democrats (PSD) or right wing Centre Democrats (CDS).

One step further

But the charge can still be levelled that this proposed agreement does take Soares one step further along the road to the organised class-collaboration of popular frontist blocs such as France's Union of the left.

This turn has been dictated by the worsening economic situation in Portugal.

The IMF have promised a multi-million dollar loan to Portugal, but this is now obviously conditional on formal collaboration being established between the Socialists and bourgeois parties such as CDS.

IMF control

In this way, through the CDS, the IMF can directly regulate the pace and direction of SP policies.

It is now clear that these



CP leader Cunhal—he has already made moves towards the Popular Front.

will be directed in their entirety against the gains made by the workers and peasants during the 1975 revolution.

To counter these attacks the workers of Portugal must immediately demand a scrapping of all agreements currently mooted in leading SP circles.

PAKISTAN ELECTIONS POSTPONED

Pakistan's military boss, General Zia Ul-Haq, has announced that the country's general elections will not now be held until November of next year.

The postponement, he said, was 'because sanity had not yet come back' to Pakistan, and therefore 'free and fair' elections could not yet be held.

The postponement is obviously designed to ensure that former Prime Minister Bhutto, currently charged with corruption and responsibility for murder, is out of the way before elections take place.

Zia's man in the electoral field now seems to be the ageing leader of the Tehrik-i-Istiglal (Movement For Stability) group, Air Marshal Asghar Khan, who is rumoured to be about to lead his group out of the nine-party Pakistan National Alliance (PNA).

This move is seen as the first step in a bid by Khan for the Prime Ministership, and seems to be supported by Zia and his military cohorts.

The decision to pull out of the PNA will undoubtedly throw the extreme right-wing remnants of the PNA into crisis.

It is possible that two

other parties, the Mo league and National Democratic Party, will also be out, so fragmenting further the bloc which had been constructed in opposition to Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

The PPP have been the subject of widescale attacks in recent weeks, and seem to have resulted in a downturn in their activities.

There appears to be a considerable lack of interest in Bhutto's trial—now taking place in Lahore—and a marked absence of demonstrations in his support.

All this puts a large question mark over the future—whether they can retain support without leader Bhutto.

PPP officials are confident they can, and point to the reservoirs of support they still hold in the countryside.

'Either Bhutto will lead or Bhutto's ghost will lead,' said one lawyer last week, adding that the PPP were 'in a fighting mood'.

But with the situation changing almost daily in Pakistan, there seem no grounds for sharing such fatalistic optimism.

In any case, the in-fighting between Pakistan's bourgeois opponents is not going to benefit Pakistan's workers and peasants.



TIM

Videla junta uses troops to run subways

Argentina's 10-month old ruling military junta last week sent in troops to take control of the Buenos Aires' subway system, in an attempt to crush the most widespread strike it has faced since seizing power in the spring of last year.

Armed soldiers and policemen backed up strikebreaking management officials in running one of the five underground lines which have been idle since last Friday fortnight (October 28).

The strike initially began as a limited stoppage by 40 signalmen demanding higher wages, but has snowballed into an all-out confrontation between the unions and the junta.

The signalmen have been joined by overland and underground railwaymen, airline pilots and airport ground workers as well as water and power workers in Rosario demanding wage rises of

The government itself has been forced to budge by the strike, and last week Economy Minister, Jose Martinez de Hoz, relaxed the restrictions on wage increases to allow the company to offer a 40% rise.

But in a situation of rampant inflation such as exists in Argentina such wage increases only serve to temper the continuing fall in living standards.

The established Peronist leaders of Argentina's working-class would be only too glad to call off the growing strike in return for a paltry rise, since the strike is now challenging not only the government's monetarist economic policy, but the government itself.

Clearly what is needed now in Argentina is a leadership capable of transforming the movement for wage demands into a movement aimed at ousting the government through general strike action, and replacing it with a government of the working

Massive disruption seems certain to paralyse Italy this coming—but the disruption will be prolonged and extended rather than short and sharp.

Workers in rail and air transport, together with postal workers, are to take action which will grind Italy to halt in protest at the Government's austerity measures.

From November 9 to 14 all trains are to be delayed 30 minutes at the point of origin, with an all-out 24 hour strike on November 12, and similar 30-minute stoppages from November 24 to 26, and November 28 to 30.

Equally disruptive wildcats are to be staged by firemen and airport ground workers.

Meanwhile the Italian postal system seems to have collapsed.

This is consequent on a decree promulgated on July 15 last by the Minister of Post, Senator Colombo, which ruled that no postal worker could do more than 35 hours of overtime a month or 420 hours a year.

Quota done

Since most of the workers had already done their year's quota of overtime, the postal system ground to a halt, and is now in chaos.

For example, one Rome newspaper last month dis-

covered that it takes nine days for a letter to travel from Rome to London, which is longer than it took a horseman to deliver a Papal Bull from Rome to the court of Henry VIII!

This collapse of public services is the direct product of the right wing Christian Democratic Government's austerity policies, which prohibits the hiring of more staff to cope with the volume of work to be done.

Clearly the one measure which can begin to iron out Italy's disparity between the work available and the growing numbers unemployed is the sliding scale of hours i.e. the division of the work to be done among all those—employed and unemployed—

available to do it.

This work sharing measure course be carried out at union rates of pay, under the control of elected trade union committees though it will obviously mean a reduction in the work done.

But to achieve such a measure it is necessary to mobilise the Italian working-class against the Christian Democratic (CD) and the mass Communist Party which keeps the right wing in o-

The class collaboration worked out between the bourgeoisie and CP has been embellished with the term 'compromesso storico'—the historic compromise.

This collaboration—in content emulates the class frontism of the CDS in France and Spain—is implicit in every government decision—both its austerity policies and the decision to postpone local elections until next year.

For the workers of the historic compromise the chain that ties the Italian bourgeoisie further austerity is broken. The chain is broken.

STRIKE WAVE FACES ITALY



CANADA/FRANCE

The leader of the Quebec speaking state of Quebec, Canada, M. Levesque, has been given a virtual welcome by the French government in France. The significance of this is that it raises the possibility of French support for the Quebec state to have Quebec join the rest of Canada.

£ RISES... .. NEW CRISIS!

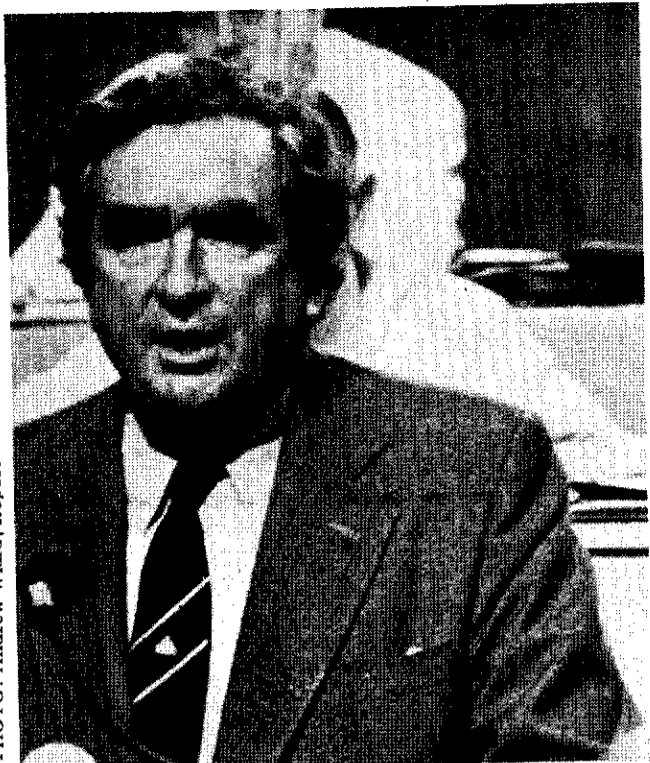


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Healey

The 'liberation' of the pound by allowing it to float on the international currency markets, was a great day for chauvinists but not much comfort for the government.

A higher pound has important implications for the working class and for the international crisis of capitalism. Its possible effects on inflation, unemployment, wage controls and public spending have been such as to produce a split in the Cabinet.

Pegged

Until last week, the pound was pegged within close limits against the dollar and other major currencies.

The Bank of England was intervening in the international currency markets to prevent it moving too far up or down.

When Denis Healey announced his mini-budget two weeks ago he said he was aiming for a stable currency. Less than a week later he took the anchors off the pound and it immediately began to rise—to the sound of loud cheering from the popular press and to worried looks from businessmen and financiers.

Falling inflation

After the miners' vote it ended the week little higher than the level at which it had been freed.

The immediate effect of a higher pound is to make imports cheaper, exports more expensive and to bring a promise of falling inflation.

Is it not therefore a move to be welcomed? A sign of good things to come?

The answer to those questions is 'no', and to see why we must look first at the pressure on the pound to rise.

The initial development of North Sea Oil has provided British capitalism with a birthday present of enormous size, enough to attract foreign capital.

Although it can only provide profits for a relatively short period, that is no barrier to money which is as easy to take out of the country as it is to bring in.

Profits rise

In addition, profits among businesses in this country are on the rise.

A Sunday Telegraph forecast which predicts that wages will rise by 13-14% next year also predicts company profits will rise by 23%.

The third major factor to attract international finance into Britain was that the US dollar was weak, which in itself made the pound look strong.

For all these reasons funds were flowing in, but this increase in cash was proving an embarrassing risk to the Labour leadership's strategy for wage cutting.

Foreign money would find its way into the economy, encourage firms to expand and encourage employers to buy off trouble by increasing wages by much more than the sticking point of ten per cent.

The decision to float the pound was therefore a reaffirmation of monetary policy by the government which will lead to massively higher

sibility of a further and more severe slump in the British economy.

The Society of Motoring Manufacturers and Traders have already bitterly complained, partly because British cars will cost more abroad but mostly because foreign cars will become cheaper in this country and will take an increasing amount of the market.

The government would be unable to get away with the reactionary solution of import controls because these would not be permitted by Germany and other EEC countries.

Backbone

A higher pound hits therefore at the backbone of the visible export trade—the car

market. It is little wonder that it was those who cling to nostalgia of their 'left' days, like Benn and Shore who opposed the move in the Cabinet.

The overall effect of the week was however for the pound to stand just one per cent higher against the dollar than before the float.

Headache

It has underlined that despite North Sea Oil, despite the profit boom, a floating pound can still sink.

That is the other major headache for the government. By allowing the international pressures to be reflected on the currency they are faced with the possibility of another run on the pound.

The manoeuvres over the pound reflect three things.

A special correspondent looks at the ups and downs of the pound and the complex problems faced by British capitalism.

1. That the government is deliberately sticking to a policy which it knows is bound to lead to higher unemployment.
2. That it intends to use the changes in exchange rate to argue for speed up and sackings as part of an 'efficiency' drive.
3. That the crisis of capitalism has become so deep that even these policies show no signs of breaking out of

the cycle of falling trade and investment.

For the working class the lessons are clear. The falling inflation rate is not the slightest argument in favour of government policies.

The attacks on the working class are now merely taking several forms at once.

The demands for a sliding scale of wages to protect wage increases against inflation, for work sharing on

full pay to combat the attacks on jobs must be fought for.

They point to the need for the seizure of power by the working class and the first steps to a planned economy in the interests of the working class.

Going up or down, the capitalist system knows only how to exploit the working class.



HOUNSLOW: ALL-OUT STRIKES ARE NEEDED

Over 150 delegates and observers attended an emergency "Fightback Conference" against cuts in public expenditure called by Hounslow Hospital Occupation Committee in London last Saturday.

The intention was to bring out the lessons of the raid on Hounslow Hospital, to discuss the fight against the cuts and spreading the fight onto a broader basis in the working class.

Present were delegates and observers from unions including NALGO, NUPE, ASTMS, COHSE, AUEW and the TGWU.

Devastating

Speaking from the platform Brother Dominic Costa (Hammersmith Hospital JSSC and CLASH) illustrated the devastating extent of cuts in the Health Service so far. He went on to describe

London Area Health Service Shop Stewards Committee, in mobilising strike action in 10 London Hospitals after the Hounslow raid on 6 October.

Sister Cath Cooney, from the Hounslow Occupation Committee and Sister Pam Jones from the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson spoke of the importance of hospital occupations as a focal point in the struggle against the cuts.

Leadership

Speakers from the floor were in general agreement on three points.

*The scandalous role of the trade union leadership in sabotaging the fight against the cuts.

*The derisory effect of token one-day stoppages.

*The need for indefinite strike action as the only way to stop the cuts once and for all.

There was disagreement, however, on how to continue

include workers outside the public sector.

Various arguments were put forward, such as the formation of local "action committees" and the need to by-pass the trade union bureaucracy and build rank and file support.

It was left to Julia Redman (ASTMS, Liverpool) Rosie Peazer and Dai Stephens (both ASTMS, London) to make the correct point that the real fight is against the leadership in the public sector unions.

These union leaders have the power to mobilise health workers against the cuts, and they must be forced to do this or else be thrown out.

Only after the public sector is strongly mobilised can outside unions be expected to join the fight.

The conference ended with a vague resolution calling for support for the lobby of Hounslow Area Health Authority and the DHSS on 9 November.

Also agreed was the publi-

cation of a newsletter to build for "mass action", mobilisation for the November 21 "week of action", and for a recall conference in the New Year.

There was some confusion when Brother Carl Brecker (Hounslow Area JSSC), one of the organisers, called on delegates to vote for this resolution which was to be "suitably amended" afterwards to the "mood" of the conference!



ASTMS leader Jenkins - could mobilise action.

Bid to fight anti-sit-in law

With mid-December as the likely date for implementation of the Criminal Law Act, the Campaign Against the Criminal Trespass Law (CACTL) is holding a national conference on Saturday-Sunday 26-27 November, open to delegates and visitors to discuss the new problems that will then confront occupations and squatters.

The Act, first envisaged by the Heath government, but passed through Parliament by the Labour leaders, gives magistrates swingeing powers to jail workers or students taking part in occupations and sit-ins.

Tidied up

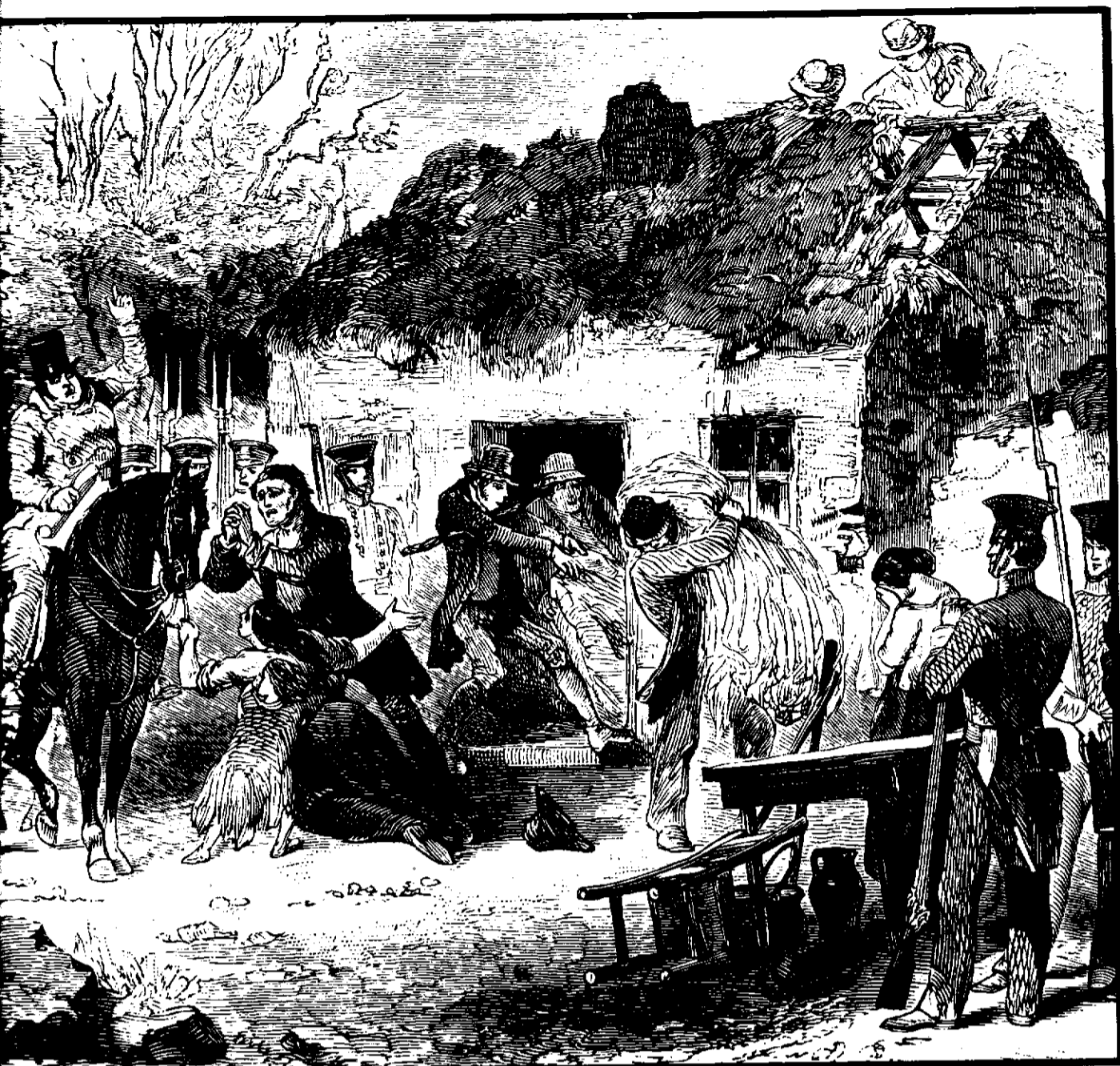
It is defended however by union bureaucrats such as TGWU Deputy General Secretary Harry Urwin, on the ludicrous grounds that it 'tidies up' the law and makes it less likely that conspiracy laws will be used.

The reason for that is clear—if workers can be jailed summarily for 6 months without right of jury trial, the state does not need to go to the embarrassment of cooking up a "conspiracy" charge.

Support

The CACTL organisers promise that the conference will not be a protest affair, but will focus on methods of obtaining labour movement supporting action for sit-in strikes and occupations.

The conference will be held at Digbeth Hall, Birmingham, and credentials are £2.50.



Evicted in the Famine.

Ireland ROOTS OF TODAY'S CRISIS

Part Two

The destruction of the industry through superior English competition after the passing of the Act of Union was in the form that the struggles took throughout the 19th century.

The first leader of this movement was Daniel O'Connell, a Dublin barrister, who led a campaign in the 1820's for Catholic emancipation—the admission of Catholics into Parliament and upper levels of the armed forces.

mission in services and to the Inner Bar.
2. One disfranchising the 40 shilling freeholder.
3. One banning O'Connell's Catholic Association.
The Catholic 'Emancipation' had thus been rendered completely toothless by the Second Act.
The increase of the electoral qualification to £10 meant that the very people responsible for the passing of the bill were prevented from enjoying any fruits from it.
The 'Liberator' had freed the Catholic middle class only.
The aspirations of the Catholic peasants had been

completely disappointed, as the Acts in no way affected the land system.
Their continued militancy forced O'Connell to go further and campaign for the repeal of the union.
However his leadership was to say the least inconsistent. After his first attempt to pass a Repeal Bill was defeated in 1834, he turned his attentions to making an alliance with the Whigs.
In doing this, he declared himself willing to give up the demand for Repeal in exchange for 'equality' for Ireland.
'The people of Ireland are ready to become a portion of the empire provided they are made so in reality and not in name alone. They are ready to become a kind of West Briton if made so in benefits and in justice, but if not, we are Irishmen again.'

Bargaining Counter

Like the present Social Democratic and Labour Party leaders in Northern Ireland, O'Connell used the mass movement purely as a counter in Parliamentary manoeuvring.
Only the object of the manoeuvres has changed.
For O'Connell it was reforms, today it is power sharing.

O'Connell's willingness to compromise was shown most graphically in conclusions to the Repeal campaign.
In 1843, monster meetings—750,000 strong—were held all over the country.
In his speeches O'Connell threatened the government with outright rebellion. However the government called his bluff by banning the final national meeting scheduled for October 5 1843 at Clontarf.
O'Connell then had to declare where he stood. His fear of rebellion outweighed his 'opposition' to the government. He called the meeting off.

Violent Campaign

What was surprising about O'Connell's handling of the Repeal Campaign was not

that he betrayed it when challenged by the government over the Clontarf meeting.
His political career of manoeuvring and compromise in Parliament testified to his aversion to violent revolution.
The intriguing aspect was the violence with which he waged his campaign. In the famous 'Mallou Defiance' of June 11 1843, O'Connell warned his audience:
'The time is coming when we must be doing. You may have the alternative to live as slaves or die as freemen.'
On the face of it these are not the words of a reformist. However, they can be explained by the desire of the Catholic middle class (aided by the clergy) to separate the masses from the influence of the other current of resistance, the peasant secret societies.

Regain Control

The tone of O'Connell's Repeal campaign was thus an effort to regain control of the peasant masses.
He even included certain economic measures such as security of tenure in his list of demands.
O'Connell was aided in retrieving the peasantry by the support of a group of young writers grouped around a paper called *The Nation*.

This 'Young Ireland' group led by Thomas Davis, engendered a revival of Irish poetry and song, which popularised the Repeal movement.
After the Clontarf betrayal of 1843, O'Connell and the 'Young Ireland' became more and more estranged.
Their non-sectarian approach conflicted with O'Connell's clericalism. Eventually in 1846, O'Connell succeeded in expelling the Young Irelanders on the sham pretext of their not excluding the possibility of violent revolution.

Middle Class

In fact, for the majority of Young Irelanders their middle class orientation removed them so completely from the peasantry, as to make the question of revolution an academic one.
One or two exceptions emerged, notably James Finton Lalow and John Mitchel.
The latter led an attempted rising in 1848, but it was quickly put down and Mitchel was transported.
Despite its failure, this rising formed an important link between the rising of

1798 and that of 1916.
This period of Irish history is not however remembered mainly for its political developments, but for an event which changed the face of the entire country, the great Famine.

Starvation

In 1845 there was a partial failure of the potato crop, a not uncommon occurrence. However it was followed in 1846, '47 and '48 by a total blight on the crop and since the potato was the staple diet of the peasants this meant mass starvation.
Although the blight which hit the potato crop was a natural disaster, the ensuing hunger was entirely man-made.

Under the influence of the Manchester school of economists and continuing profits, the government decided that, despite the bad potato harvest, free trade must continue.
Therefore the export of grain crops and dairy goods from Ireland to England continued and at times even increased, during the famine years.
This produce was enough to feed the population of Ireland twice over.

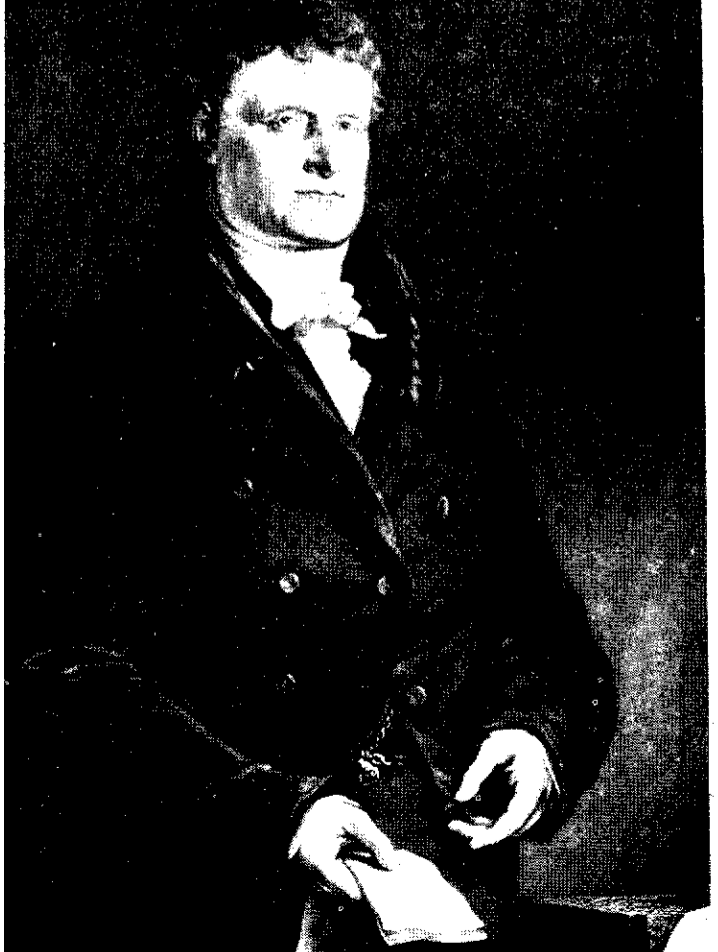
Typhus

In these three years over a million people in Ireland died of starvation or typhus and a similar number emigrated.
Despite this, the limited public works programme initiated by the government as a form of relief, was continually resisted by the landlords, as it was providing an alternative to work on the land.

From 1840 on there was a profound change in the population of Ireland—from 8 million in 1841 to 5½ million in the mid 1860's.
Apart from the death by starvation of 1/7 of the population, emigration was the chief cause of the depopulation of Ireland.
Emigration had already begun in the 40's but was brought to a climax by famine when over one million left Ireland for America, Canada, Australia or England. However, between 1840 and 1880 nearly 4 million sailed from Ireland on these routes.

Exodus

The famine exodus was thus merely the highest point of a phenomenon which lasted for over half a century, and brought the scattering of



Daniel O'Connell

the Irish nation, particularly its youth around the globe. The 'clearing' of Ireland was by no means an historical accident.

It was the result of a change in the class relations in Britain, which dictated for economic and political reasons, the reorganisation of agriculture in Ireland.

The existence of an almost feudal land system in Ireland was an obstacle to the ascendancy of liberal capitalist interests in Britain.

As Marx later asserted 'Ireland is the bulwark of English landlordism'. The interests of the growing capitalist class demanded the weakening of the Anglo-Irish landed aristocracy.

The first step in this process was the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. The establishment of Free Trade in the import of grain ended Ireland's 'monopoly' of the English grain market.

Competition with American and European suppliers of grain for the English market made Irish village-based agriculture economically untenable. However, the proximity of Ireland still gave it an advantage in the supply of livestock.

The radical reformers in England could thus combine their undermining of the landlord class with a restructuring of Irish agriculture on a free-trade basis through a shift to pasture farming.

Bourgeois interest required both the liquidation of the landlords as a class, and the physical removal of the tenant-farmers to free the land for more docile beasts.

As Marx points out in *Capital*:

"Therefore her depopulation must go yet further, that thus she may fulfill her true destiny that of an English sheep-walk and cattle-pasture".

Evictions

This process began with evictions following the passage of the Irish Poor Law (1838).

This poor relief applied only to those with less than ¼ acre of land, thus forcing the tenant to choose between starvation or holding on to land.

The Encumbered Estates Act (1849) making the sale of a bankrupt's land much easier, facilitated the transfer of the land from the landlords to financial speculators.

This heralded a period of even greater callousness towards the plight of the tenant farmers.

Capitalist land-owners cleared their properties of the sitting tenant with less emotion than they showed when balancing their books.

This revolution in Irish agriculture fundamentally altered the nature of Irish village life.

Smallholdings

As well as the replacement of village squires by ruthless businessmen, the small holding almost completely disappeared to be replaced by medium and larger holdings.

Small farmers who had not emigrated or died, were either pushed into the squalor of the town unemployed or else became agricultural labourers with no claim of their own to the land.

These conditions revived the agrarian secret societies, under the name of 'Ribbonism' and agrarian 'crime' again became widespread.

Capitalist exploitation also gave rise to the Tenants Right movement.

Before then payment of rent was an expression of the tenant's right to farm whereas the new ownership was a purely legal contract between owner and lessee with all the rights on the

farmer's side.

Despite initial success—getting 50 MP's elected in 1853—the Tenants Right Movement crumbled after the betrayal by a section of its leadership, Sadleir and Keogh—known as the 'Pope's Brass Band' because of their rabid clericalism.

The balance of power at Westminster, which was held by the Tenants Right Movement was sold by these two for posts in the Whig Government.

Tenant right continued to be a demand of the peasantry throughout the fifties and sixties.

Hostility

However, the disappearance of the small farms in favour of medium sized ones considerably narrowed its social base.

The agricultural labourers had no interest in this demand, retaining instead a deep hostility to the whole land-system.

From those other casualties of the Famine and British government policy, the Irish in America, emerged a new movement, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the 'Fenians', founded in 1858 by James Stephens.

Despite the limited Nationalist programme of this movement, the social background of its membership determined its general character as a revolutionary movement.

Proletarian

In America and England its membership was almost totally proletarian in origin, in Ireland support came mainly from the agricultural labourers or the skilled working class in the cities.

These elements regarded their situations as arising out of the occupation of Ireland by an enemy army and pledged themselves to the eradication of every aspect of British rule in Ireland.

This standpoint was obviously anathema to the Church and to the Catholic middle class who had mostly become small landlords during the fifties.

Their interest in maintaining the status quo effectively prevented them from influencing the Fenian movement and thus Tone's 'men of no property' took the centre of the stage once more.

The Fenian conception of Britain and Ireland as nations at war with one another lent their activity an excessively military character.

Military tactics

This preoccupation meant that the major disputes in the movement centred on military tactics, rather than political clarification which was vital if the war against Britain was to become a reality instead of an assumption.

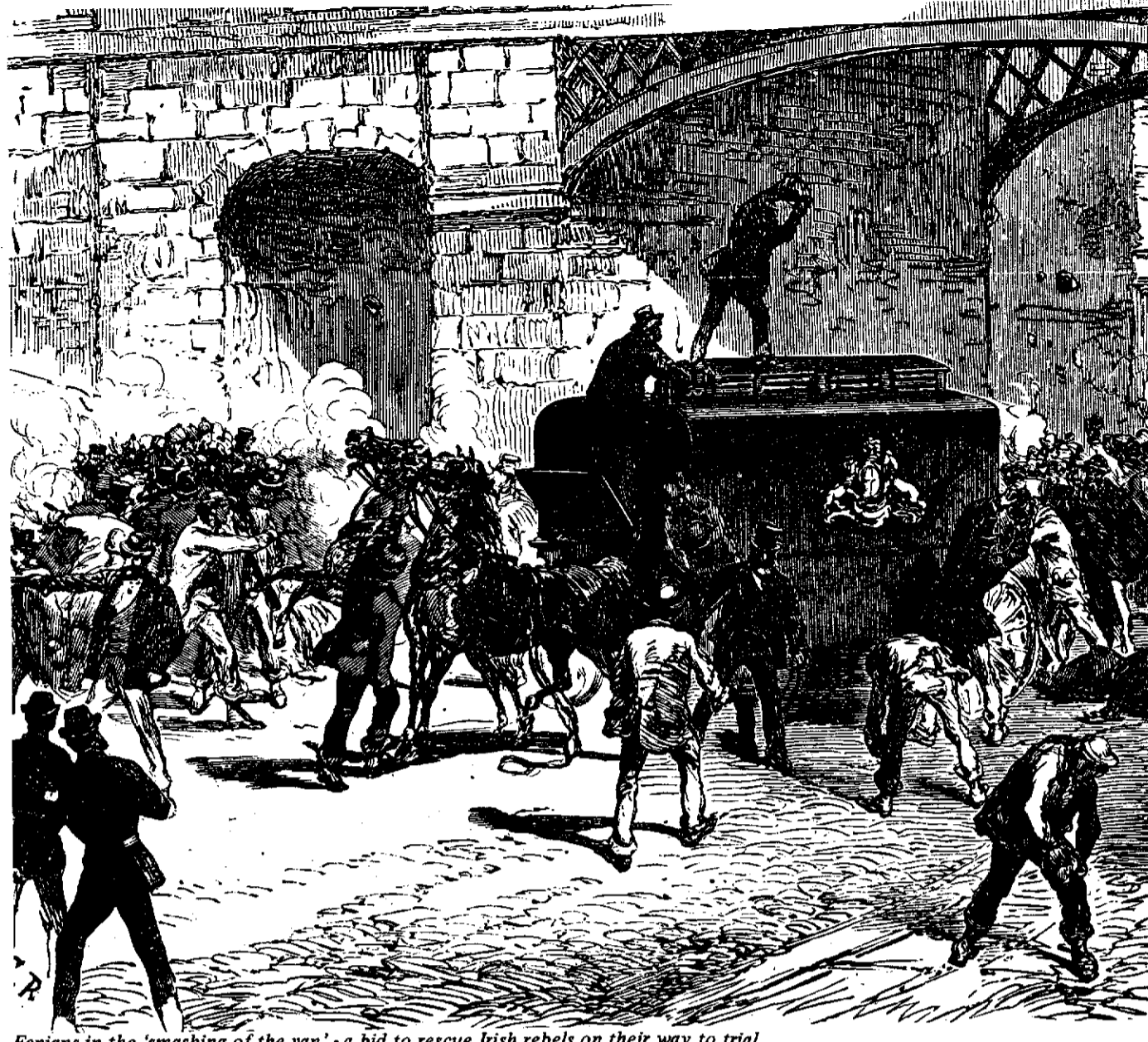
In April 1865 at the end of the American Civil War, thousands of Fenian soldiers were released, leaving them free for action in Ireland.

The return of many of these to Ireland so alarmed the British government that it provoked a general clamp-down on the Fenians in Ireland.

Raided

The paper *The Irish People* was raided and its leaders arrested. With the daring escape of Stephens from Richmond Jail, it was generally expected that insurrection would immediately follow.

When nothing happened the delay caused dissension and splits in America. O'Mahoney, one of the founders of the movement was isolated and the majority organised a futile invasion of



Fenians in the 'smashing of the van' - a bid to rescue Irish rebels on their way to trial.

British-ruled Canada.

This split and others caused by the apparent lack of strategy by the leadership forced Stephens to organise for a rising in March 1867.

Confusion over the date however, led to a premature attempt on Cresten Castle in February. Foiled by an informer in their ranks, this attempt put the authorities on full alert for the main insurrection.

Blizzard

Aided by a blizzard on the appointed night, the authorities quickly put the rising down.

In September the same year, when one of the main leaders, Colonel Kelley was captured in Manchester, an attempt was made to rescue him.

During the attempt, one of the police guards was inadvertently killed. Five men were subsequently charged with the 'murder' of the police sergeant.

One was discovered to have nothing to do with it while another was released because of his American citizenship.

The other three, Allen, O'Brien and Larkins, despite their defence by Ernest Jones, a leading Chartist, and an international campaign against their sentence, were hanged, and as the 'Manchester Martyrs' be-

came another landmark in Anglo-Irish politics.

However, although it failed as a military conspiracy the Fenians maintained constant the demand for National independence for Ireland.

The election of a leading Fenian prisoner, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa to Parliament in 1869, heralded a new turn by the Fenians, one which in Engels' words led them:

"from their tedious conspiracies and small outrages on to a road of action which, although legal in appearance, was nevertheless much more revolutionary than anything they had undertaken since the failure of their insurrection."

The attempt to find legal roads for their activities led them in 1870 to co-operate with Isaac Butt's Home Rule League.

Despite the conservatism of Butt, the Fenians saw advantages in using the League for their propaganda.

The land question still remained the dominant one in Irish politics.

Compensation

Gladstone's Land Act of 1870 did little to ease the conditions of the peasantry, merely allowing for compensation on eviction for any improvements made during tenancy.

The main demand of the peasantry were for the "three

'F's':

1. Fixity of tenure
2. Free sale
3. Fair rents.

The poor potato crops in 1875, 1876, 1877 and 1878 evoked the spectre of the Famine. The economic depression of the period also increased evictions.

As a result Michael Davitt, a leading Fenian founded the Land League in 1879 on the demand for the nationalisation of the land.

The importance of this movement was that it constituted a mass movement, unlike all those previous and not dependent on the urban middle class for leadership.

Rent strikes

Such a movement however could not be ignored by the middle class. Consequently, Charles Stuart Parnell, a Home Rule MP, who had in the mid-seventies gained fame through his practice (borrowed from a Fenian) of obstructing bills in the House of Commons by long-drawn-out speeches, made overtures to the Land League and subsequently became its nominal President.

A campaign of 'rent strikes' was agitated for by the Land League. The severity of the crop failure of 1879 and the increase in evictions left the country on the brink of rebellion.

It was only the attempted Land Bill of 1880 and the Act of 1881 which prevented this from occurring.

This latter Act actually conceded the "three 'F's'" in the hope that the threatened alliance between the Catholic tenantry of the South and West and the Protestant tenantry of North East Ulster would be undermined.

Boycott

The left wing of the Land League argued for a complete boycott of the law, while Parnell, although simulating hostility to it, actually favoured acceptance of the Bill.

When the conflict between the two tendencies in the League became too hot, Parnell evaded taking a clear

position by provoking the government into arresting him.

From prison he could watch the repression of his extremist opponents while, at the same time, opening negotiations with Gladstone.

Concessions

The outcome of these was the notorious 'Kilmainham Compact' whereby Parnell agreed to 'slow down' agitation and co-operate in the suppression of agrarian 'crime' in return for concessions which would strengthen his moderate position against his left-wing.

In 1882 the National League was set up with the support of the Catholic Clergy and Parnell turned completely to Parliamentary manoeuvring.

In 1885 he switched support from the Liberals to the Tories in exchange for a promise of Home Rule.

In the election of 1886 the Home Rule party had 86 MPs—exactly the difference between the Whig and Tory numbers. Neither party could rule without the support of the Home Rule Party.

Gladstone subsequently introduced a Home Rule Bill but was defeated by the defection of 78 Liberal Imperialists, under the leadership of Joseph Chamberlain.

Land Purchase

Gladstone resigned and the Tories were returned in the general election.

Accompanying their policy of coercion and suppression of any agrarian movements, the Tories instigated a programme of facilitating land purchase.

This policy, followed through for the next 25 years, was designed to both undermine peasant discontent by making them 'property-owners' and, more importantly, to remove the Tories' landlord supporters from an enterprise which was no longer profitable. This policy was designed also to isolate the Home-Rulers.

by Paul Stevens



Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, the Manchester Martyrs.

LENIN AND TROTSKY WRITE ON THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

To mark the 60th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution we have given over our Reviews page to three extracts from Lenin and Trotsky in which they examine the lessons of the first ever successful proletarian revolution.



Lenin

The defence of the Bolshevik method as applied in the October Revolution was Trotsky's starting point in the struggle against the growing power of the Stalinist bureaucracy in 1923-4. The passage below is taken from *The Lessons of October*, included (on pages 251-3) in the Pathfinder volume *The Challenge of the Left Opposition*, 430pp, £2.95.

There has been some talk lately in our press to the effect that we are not in a position to tell through what channels the proletarian revolution will come in England.

Will it come through the channel of the Communist Party or through the trade unions?

Such a formulation of the question makes a show of a fictitiously broad historical outlook; it is radically false and dangerous because it obliterates the chief lesson of the last few years.

If the triumphant revolution did not come at the end of the war, it was because a party was lacking.

This conclusion applies to Europe as a whole. It may be traced concretely in the fate of the revolutionary movement in various countries.

With respect to Germany the case is quite a clear one. The German revolution might have been triumphant both in 1918 and in 1919, had a proper party leadership been secured.

We had an instance of this same thing in 1917 in the case of Finland. There, the revolutionary movement developed under exceptionally favourable circumstances, under the wing of revolutionary Russian and with its direct military assistance. But the majority of the leaders in the Finnish party proved to be social democrats, and they ruined the revolution.

The same lesson flows just as plainly from the Hungarian experience. There, the communists, along with the social democrats, did not conquer power, but were handed it by the frightened bourgeoisie.

The Hungarian revolution—triumphant without a battle and without a victory—was left from the very outset without a fighting leadership.

The Communist Party fused with the social democratic party, showed thereby that it itself was not a Communist Party; and, in consequence, in spite of the fighting spirit of the Hungarian workers, it proved incapable of keeping the power it had obtained so easily.

Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer.

That is the principle lesson of the past decade. It is true that the English trade unions may become a mighty lever of the proletarian revolution; they may, for instance, even take the place of workers' soviets under certain conditions and for a certain period of time.



In conference during the Civil War: left to right, Bela Kun, Alfred Rosmer, Trotsky, M. V. Frunze and S.I. Gusev

dition that communist influence becomes the decisive influence in the trade unions.

We have paid far too dearly for this conclusion—with regard to the role and importance of a party in a proletarian revolution—to renounce it so lightly or even to minimize its significance.

Consciousness, premeditation, and planning played a far smaller part in bourgeois revolutions than they are destined to play, and already do play, in proletarian revolutions.

In the former instance the motive force of the revolution was also furnished by the masses, but the latter were much less organised and much less conscious than at the present time.

The leadership remained in the hands of different sections of the bourgeoisie, and the latter had at its disposal wealth, education and all the organisational advantages connected with them (the cities, the universities, the press, etc.).

The bureaucratic monarchy defended itself in a hand-to-mouth manner, probing in the dark and then acting.

The bourgeoisie would bide its time to seize a favourable moment when it could profit from the movement of the lower classes, throw its whole social weight into the scale and so seize the state power.

The proletarian revolution

is precisely distinguished by the fact that the proletariat—in the person of its vanguard—acts in it not only as the main offensive force but also as the guiding force.

The part played in bourgeois revolutions by the economic power of the bourgeoisie, by its education, by its municipalities and universities, is a part which can be filled in a proletarian revolution only by the party of the proletariat.

The role of the party has become all the more important in view of the fact that the enemy has also become far more conscious.

The bourgeoisie, in the course of centuries of rule, has perfected a political schooling far superior to the schooling of the old bureaucratic monarchy.

If parliamentarism served the proletariat to a certain extent as a training school for revolution, then it also served the bourgeoisie to a far greater extent as the school of counterrevolutionary strategy.

Suffice it to say that by means of parliamentarism the bourgeoisie was able so to train the social democracy that it is today the main prop of private property.

The epoch of the social revolution in Europe, as has been shown by its very first steps, will be an epoch not only of strenuous and ruthless struggle but also of planned and calculated battles—far more planned than with us in 1917.

“Would it not be better if greetings in honour of Soviet power and the Bolsheviks were more frequently attended by a profound analysis of the main reasons why the Bolsheviks were able to build up the discipline the revolutionary proletariat needs?”

As a trend of political thought and as a political party, Bolshevism exists since 1903. Only the history of Bolshevism during the whole period of its existence can satisfactorily explain why it was able to build up and to maintain under most difficult conditions the iron discipline needed for the victory of the proletariat.

And first of all the question arises: how is the discipline of the revolution-

ary party of the proletariat maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced?

First, by the class consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its perseverance, self-sacrifice and heroism.

Secondly, by its ability to link itself with, to keep in close touch with, and to a certain extent, if you like, to merge with the broadest masses of the toilers—primarily with the proletariat, but also with the non-proletarian toiling masses.

Thirdly, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard, by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided that the broadest masses have been convinced by their own experience that they are correct.

Without these conditions,

discipline in a revolutionary party that is really capable of being the party of the advanced class, whose mission it is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and transform the whole of society, cannot be achieved.

Without these conditions, all attempts to establish discipline inevitably fall flat and end in phrase-mongering and grimacing.

On the other hand, these conditions cannot arise all at once. They are created only by prolonged effort and hard-won experience.

Their creation is facilitated by correct revolutionary theory, which, in its turn, is not a dogma, but assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement.



Lenin (centre) with Trotsky (left) and Kamenev (right)

Trotsky wrote the article 'Lessons of October' for the French paper *Revolution*, the organ of the Parisian revolutionary youth. It appears in *Trotsky Writings* 1935-36, Pathfinder 1970.

Messrs. sceptics might say: but in the end the October Revolution brought the triumph of bureaucracy. Was it worth making?

A separate article or perhaps two should be devoted to this question. Here let us say history goes forward not along a straight line but along a devious one; after a gigantic jump forward there follows as after an artillery shot, a rebound.

Nevertheless history goes forward. No doubt, Soviet bureaucracy is an ugly ulcer threatening both the conquest of the October revolution and the world proletariat.

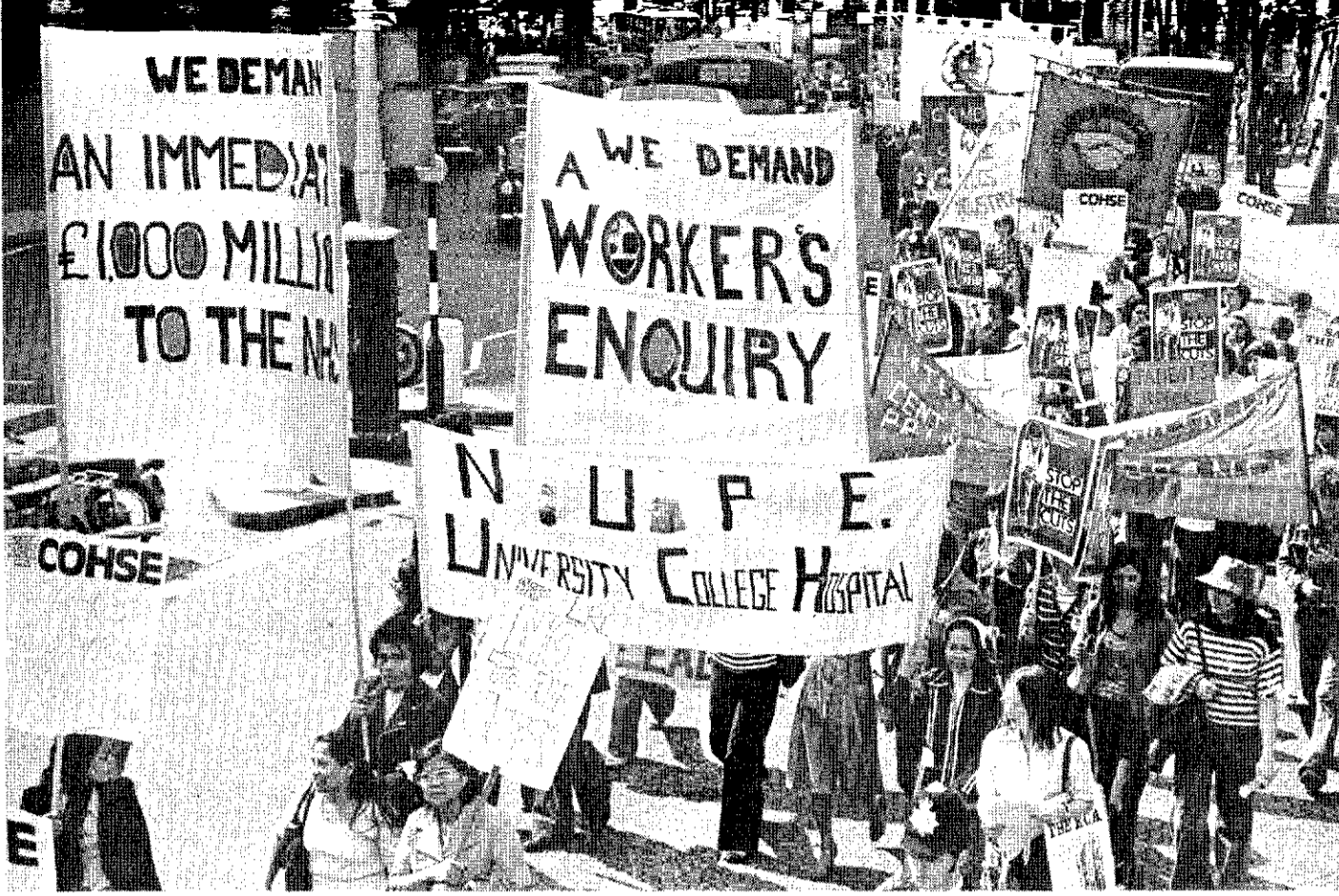
economy, collectivization of agriculture which, despite the monstrous harm of bureaucracy, lead the country forward economically and culturally while the capitalist countries are moving backwards.

The October revolution can be freed from the vise of bureaucracy only by the development of the international revolution, the victory of which will really assure the building of a socialist society.

Finally—and this is not insignificant—the October revolution is important also because it gave the international working class a number of priceless lessons.



PHOTO: John Starrok, Report.



March in support of the EGA occupation

OUR POLICIES WORKERS CONTROL OF THE NHS

A new series on the fight for Transitional Demands

The methods used at Hounslow Hospital to remove 21 elderly patients clearly demonstrate the extent to which the Health Authorities will be willing, in the face of Hospital occupations, to ignore standards and follow the requirements of the Lib-Lab coalition in cutting public spending.

The Hounslow occupation has lessons for other hospital workers now (EGA, Plaistow) and in the future, and also for the organisation of workers' control of the health service.

Elements of control

At Hounslow there were some clear elements of

workers' control. After the official closure on August 31, patients were still being cared for against the express wishes and requirements of the Area Health Authority.

Further admissions were being organised by the Occupation Committee with the co-operation of GPs.

Individual patients, among them a principled trades unionist, were insisting on admission.

The Hounslow work-in was in this sense a clear challenge to the control of health care by the capitalist state authority.

At the same time there were crucial weaknesses in the occupation.

This is illustrated by the fact that the work-in still relied on the sympathy of consultants—which was withdrawn at the time that the

AHA moved in.

Nurses willing to admit patients whose admission was organised by the occupation etc. hesitated when threatened by disciplinary action from the General Nursing Council so that patients were turned away.

Intercepted

Last minute arrangements for the admission of a patient were intercepted by a member of the AHA staff who still had freedom to come and go in the hospital right up to the time of the abduction.

So what are the wider implications? It is no accident that standards of health care vary enormously from region to region and area to area.

Care of the elderly in Hounslow is already grossly

inadequate.

The limited growth of the health service since 1948 has corresponded to the requirements of capitalism.

The result has been that expensive emergency services, which are out of the question for private practice, have been built up at the expense of preventive and community medicine, the care of the elderly, the handicapped and the mentally ill.

With public expenditure cuts it is again these services, which are of most benefit to the working class, that suffer.

In order to give a perspective for the development of workers' control over the health service it is necessary to examine the present structuring.

Delegation

The health authorities at Regional, Area, District and Sector levels are organised to respond to orders from DHSS rapidly and without question by downwards delegation from and responsibility to, the bureaucratic layer above.

DHSS controls a massive bureaucratic machine comprising 14 Regions and 102 Areas in England and Health Boards in Wales and Scotland. On average there are at least two Districts to each Area and the Districts control up to five or six sectors.

Family Practitioners Committees are mainly appointed by the Regional and Area Health Authorities, but local medical committees of GPs have considerable influence.

Appointees are usually retired army officers, local entrepreneurs and other representatives of the bourgeoisie.

"Workers participation"

Token trade unionists are included following the recommendations of the 1974 Labour government in a paper entitled 'Democracy in the Health Service'.

This joint representation is a form of "workers' participation".

The FPC's controlling general medical and dental practice and pharmacy (the Chemist shops) are the only authority to have an open ended budget.

This is not unconnected with the fact that the vast majority of their expenditure is on prescribed drugs and therefore intimately connected with the profits of the drug companies.

To enforce the cash limits that the health authorities have so willingly accepted for hospital and in-patient and out-patient services would immediately bring the Lib-Lab coalition into confrontation with the multi-national capitalists of the drug industry.

Fundamental

Workers' control of the health service therefore raises major questions.

It is of fundamental importance in health care that developing independent working class action should bring together workers' organisations, primarily the trade unions of those who receive as well as those who give health care.

All major questions in the distribution of resources must be decided by the working class as a whole.

Trade union committees must be developed to control

such matters. As they begin to gain knowledge and experience they will increasingly become organs of dual power, directly challenging management locally and on an area level.

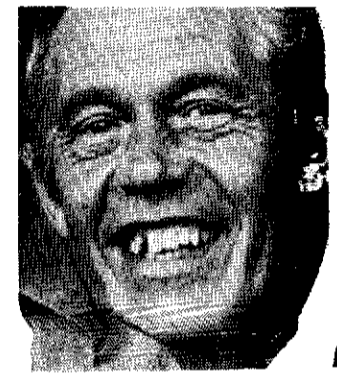
To achieve such a policy, starting from present closures and cutbacks in service, a programme of mass action is necessary to defend the Health Service with occupations wherever closure is threatened.

Workers must expose the cynical refusal of the health authorities to maintain services.

This is a period in which the health authorities will fully demonstrate their ability to serve only the bourgeois state, their private suppliers and the drug industry.

Workers must therefore expose these connections, and challenge the competence of those individuals who sit as members of the authorities.

Health workers must take up the demand 'Open the books of the health authorities' and destroy the secrecy of the health authorities' decision making.



Fisher

They must link up nationally with workers in the drug, supply and construction industries, to demand the nationalisation under workers management of all the resources on which the delivery of health care depends.

All groups of workers must force their national union leaderships to call developing national strike action as the only means of defending the health service.

At the centre of such action must be the call for public spending to rise in pace with inflation as assessed by these elected union committees.

PRESS GANG Whistling in the dark

It was little wonder that the 'Daily Mirror' called it Black Saturday.

Not only were the power workers showing what effect their demands could have; not only were TV programmes being blacked out by ABS technicians; but the Mirror's own production of news in London had been hit by the action of their own journalists over a pay dispute.

On all sides confrontation over pay is the rule rather than the exception.

It has not taken the most astute brains of the Fleet Street executives to point the way back to 1973/4 when the miners showed how ineffective talk of 'standing firm' by the Government could be.

Dress rehearsal

The press treatment given to the power workers is a dress rehearsal, a sharpening of the pens, for the flood of propaganda that will hit the streets as a confrontation

between the miners and the Government approaches.

So far no-one has actually accused the power workers of murder. But it is touch and go.

Houses burning down, pensioners falling over in the dark and other accidents during the blackouts are being nailed at the door of the electricity supply workers as surely as if they had set fire to the house and tripped the pensioners personally.

Carry the can

When hospital emergency generators fail—presumably because health service cuts have meant inadequate funds for maintenance—then it is the power workers who have to carry the can for the chaos and danger that ensues.

Press barons are not at all embarrassed that their propaganda vies for space with declarations that they stand for the freedom of the press.

The Times openly declares its role to be one of moulding

public opinion against sections of workers prepared to fight over pay.

"Even today", boomed its editorial, "this disregard for a special responsibility to the public (freely taken on) merely for the sake of one's immediate and narrow interests should be recognised as repugnant..."

"The men are opposed by the employers, their unions and by the TUC as represented by Mr Len Murray yesterday."

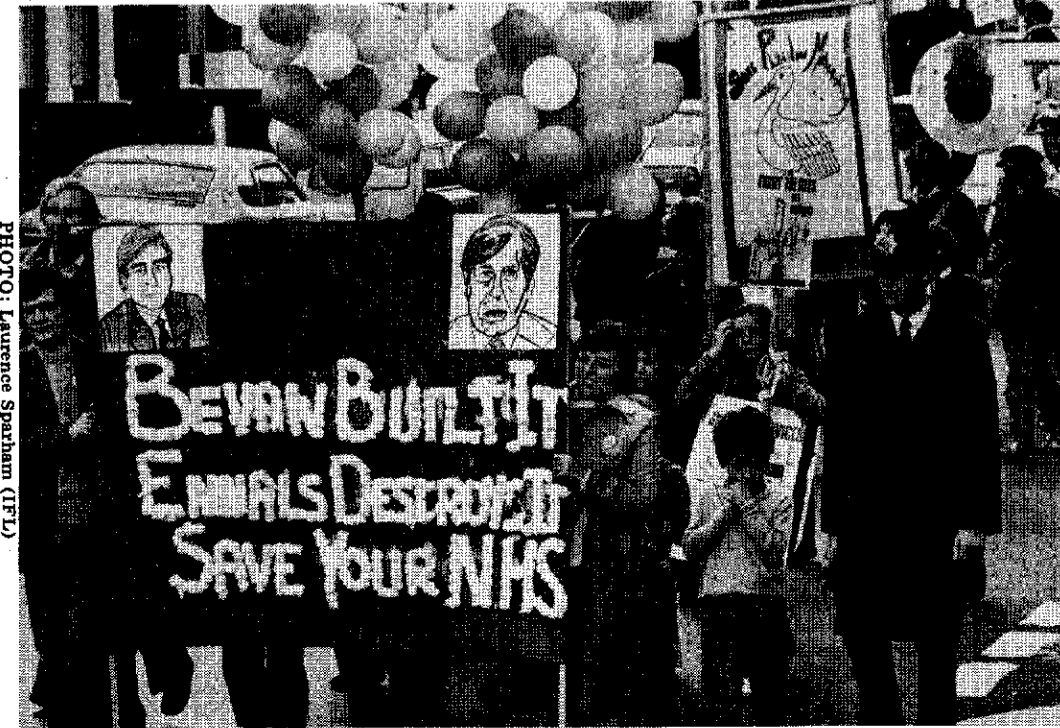
Their unions have much to answer for, having failed either to give effective representation or to impose effective discipline on members abandoning the proper negotiating channels...

"By the mobilisation of opinion and a readiness to withstand temporary dislocation, these assaults have to be resisted—starting now."

(Our italics)

That mobilisation of opinion is what the papers are now engaged in.

PHOTO: Laurence Spatham (IFL)



Workers march in support of Plaistow Hospital



INDUSTRIAL NEWS

CHRYSLER PLEADS POVERTY AGAIN

The management-inspired dispute at Chrysler's Linwood plant, Scotland, has ended with the convening of an "urgent in depth examination" of working practices which limit productivity and efficiency at the factory.

Behind this dispute and the urgent enquiry lie the plans of Chrysler International to get tough with their UK workforce.

Just two years after a £162 million handout from the Labour government, Chrysler are again pleading poverty.

Losses

In the first nine months of 1977 they claim to have lost £19 million. Soon there will be nothing left of a £20 million contingency provision fund set up on a 50-50 basis by the government and the company in 1975.

When this special fund runs out Chrysler International will have to decide whether to fund further losses themselves, appeal to the government for more handouts, or cut back on spending in the UK.

Provoked

It was with this situation in mind that the company decided to provoke the Linwood workers.

The fact that lay-off plans were being arranged in Chrysler's Stoke plant in Coventry five days before the dispute in Scotland proves that it was a deliberate provocation.

The capitalist press has posed the problem as a simple one of asking four inspectors to move a few yards from where they were working.

In actual fact the management were also attempting to speed up the car conditioning line and cut manning levels—all without going through procedure.

When workers refused to submit to these methods they were taken off the clock.

Chrysler are obviously intending to launch a campaign on speed-up and demanning, using the now routine threat of financial collapse and possible closure.

The enquiry will obviously be used to aid this campaign. The role of the trade union "representatives" Grenville Hawley and Gavin Laird will be to smooth the road to speed-up and the cutting of manning levels.

Chrysler workers have shown by their response to the provocation of the last two weeks that they will resist management attacks.

What they need is a policy on which to fight. Workers must carry out their own enquiry—into the books of Chrysler.

No more pleading poverty. If Chrysler can't afford to run the company and pay its workers it must be nationalised without compensation under workers management.



Rolls Royce strikers picket the Motor Fair.

ROLLS MEN STAY OUT

After eight weeks, the dispute which has closed the two Rolls Royce plants in Willesden, North London, is still on.

Last Tuesday (November 1), the strike committee unanimously rejected a new offer by the firm—an offer which falls far short of the 17% the men are demanding.

Predictably, the com-

pany's argument was that the maximum it could offer was 10% "under the government's pay guidelines". Hitherto it had been offering just 8%.

With production of Rolls Royces at a standstill, the men feel confident that management will have to concede their demand soon.

A spokesman for the stewards said after last Tuesday's decision that "the men are solidly behind us and we intend to fight on."

In another move, the strikers have written to—all people—the Queen, telling her why the Jubilee limousine being built by the company will not be finished on time—a point the workers astonishingly apologise for!

But with neat irony they also enclosed a collection sheet and invite HRH to give a donation.

Needless to say all they will get from this (newly) bespectacled relic of feudalism is a right-royal silence.

Such pranks do not offer a way forward for Rolls Royce workers. They must campaign for supporting action from the local labour movement and other Rolls Royce plants in order to win the full claim.

Vauxhall fight

19,000 Vauxhall car workers remain laid off as a result of strike action by skilled workers pursuing a claim for differentials and separate negotiating rights.

Only a week ago manual workers were pressured into accepting a sell-out deal on pay.

While the skilled men feel they have avoided this pitfall, their differentials claim offers no long term solution to the problem of inadequate wages.

But their struggle against Vauxhall's corporate bargaining structure indicates the kind of battle to be expected soon in British Leyland, where the outlines of corporate bargaining have just been forced in.

Anger as NUT strike vote ignored

The national President of the NUT, John Gray, faced accusations of dithering and shilly shallying at a special meeting of the Oxford District Association called this week to discuss continuation of sanctions against cuts in the pupil teacher ratios.

He was forcibly told that had the NUT leadership called strike action from the successful 4,000 strong demonstration against the Council in September 1976, instead of dissipating the energies of the teachers and the sympathies of parents through divisive and demoralising sanctions the battle would have been won long ago.

Sanctions

The meeting was debating a motion supporting the Executive's present sanctions and merely calling for exten-

The meeting overwhelmingly called for this to be amended to include plans for strike action, although the details of the time and mobilisation for this strike were still left for the Executive to decide.

Arrests

Gray replied to the criticisms by saying that he appreciated that sanctions were more difficult to implement than strike action, did make individual parents feel their children were being victimised, and divided up the unity of teachers, but they had proved effective in other areas of the country!

He could not however, give details of a single Education Authority which had scrapped completely its plans for cuts as a result of NUT action.

A new ballot of the Oxfordshire membership is now planned—the 80% vote for strike action last May now being considered null and void without the Executive

Singer sackings for speed-up

Following the lead given by management in British Leyland in their offensive to step up the exploitation of workers on production tracks, employers are turning to increasingly blatant attacks on manning levels.

Latest announced is the decision by Singer UK to make some 1,150 workers redundant in their Clydebank factory.

Not disguised

The plant singlehanded produces 20% of the world's domestic and industrial sewing machines.

The redundancies are not disguised as the result of any

slackening of demand, or as the outcome of financial difficulties for the giant firm.

Management simply say they wish to "improve productivity".

Possible strike

But AUEW convenor John McFadyen attempted to soften the blow, stating that "we were aware of the short-fall in orders".

He has threatened "industrial action, possibly including a strike" if the redundancies are imposed.

But workers should be immediately electing a trade union committee to examine Singers' books to prove the case for nationalising this international monopoly if jobs and conditions are to be defended.

Smiths stopped by pay sit-in

Over 500 workers at Smiths Industries in Cricklewood, London are facing lay-offs after a decision last Wednesday (November 2) by 106 piece-workers to reject their union leaders' "advice" to return to normal work.

The production workers at the plant, mainly women, have been staging daily sit-ins in support of their demand for a £5 a week increase in their bonus.

In a deliberately provocative move, Smith's manage-

workers' time cards saying that if the women were not prepared to work normally there would be no work at all.

But this attempt at lock-out has not intimidated the workers; on the contrary, it has strengthened their determination to win.

This determination must be tapped and utilised to the full if the wage demand is to be won.

There is apparently considerable support throughout the factory for the women's action, which now should be transformed into all-out strike action by all Smiths

Five point policy

The Oxford City nursery campaign, built out of the protest action of parents, teachers, nursery nurses and others last summer against the proposals of the Tory Oxfordshire County Council to severely cut nursery schools and classes, has now adopted a five point policy.

*The nursery campaign is opposed to all cuts in nursery provision and will organise lobbies, meetings, petitions etc. where necessary and aims to oppose actual closures by occupation.

*The campaign is in favour of expansion of nursery provision to meet the needs of all pre-school children.

*The campaign demands the reinstatement of the rising fives into first schools subject to parents' wishes.

*The campaign supports the actions of the teaching unions against the cuts in education spending.

*The campaign protests against 'confidential' council working parties, demands public access to all information and is in favour of committees of parents, teachers, trades unionists to investigate the educational needs and educational spending in Oxfordshire.

The campaign leaders are asking local trade union branches and Oxford and District Trades Union Council to support this policy and send delegates to a committee to investigate educational needs and educational spending in the area.

There are plans to hold a public meeting in December in preparation for the defence of the South Oxford nursery class which faces closure on

FARM WORKERS TO GET 12 percent

The Agricultural Wages Board, covering some of the lowest paid workers in the country, has awarded a 12-13% wage increase.

This news has incensed employers who are used to cheap labour, and who are being pressed to concede an increase above the 10% government norm even without a struggle.

And it will probably enrage farmworkers also, for whom 12-13% of a pathetic wage amounts to a pathetically small increase—far short of the claim submitted by the Agricultural Workers Union.

Shut off BBC

BBC technicians, members of the Association of Broadcasting Staff, have already begun action in support of their 30% pay claim by blacking out the Queen's Speech and an edition of Nationwide.

While workers will applaud the choice of both targets, it is obvious that such guerrilla action will be brushed off as irrelevant by the BBC.

All-out action, designed to paralyse broadcasting is the only way to force the BBC to increase its offer.

GRUNWICK - BLACKING IS THE ONLY ANSWER

trial run for anti-picket squad

The Lib-Lab coalition government is training a "third force"—the Special Patrol Group—as picket-busting, anti-union shock troops. This is the lesson of Monday's mass picket at Grunwick.

Systematic beating up of pickets was the method adopted by police.

About 8,000 pickets defied the APEX leadership and responded to the strike committee's call for support.

A group of about 60 pickets blocked the Chapter Road gate for about an hour. Then the police violence really started.

Police charged this group of 60, grabbing them by the hair or anything they could grasp, and then pushing them into a line of police.

Pickets were then forced to run the gauntlet of kicking punching and tripping. As soon as a picket fell, three or four police jumped on them, kicking furiously to the head and the body.

But this was only the start. As about 500 pickets formed up with arms linked at the end of Chapter Road, a squad of 200 Special Patrol Group was brought up in vans.

In wedge formation these SPG thugs charged into the line of pickets, punching and kicking at all in sight.

Kicked

Again any picket who fell was brutally kicked by groups of SPG heavies.

Once this section of the picket was split up, they were pushed along the road, kicked and punched by the SPG.

Anyone protesting or trying to take the number of policemen involved was savagely beaten.

One picket dragged into a police van had his face pushed through a window—and with his face a mess of blood was sat on by other SPG men.

Few arrests

Few arrests were made at this point. Orders were clearly restricted to physical attacks on pickets. All the time anti-union, anti-communist abuse was hurled by police—attempting to goad pickets into resistance.

The scab's bus did not even go through this

entrance. The display of force was for one purpose only: to test out the military discipline and training of the SPG.

Dispersing

After the picket, a protest march went to the police station. As this protest was quietly dispersing, out again rushed the SPG thugs—punching and kicking, and this time making arrests—which eventually totalled 108.

The Grunwick Strike Committee has announced it will be calling for a one-day strike in four or five weeks time.

Some strikers are also to go on hunger strike on the steps of TUC headquarters—demanding blacking of services to Grunwick.

They have also called for local workers to apply such blacking unofficially.

Meanwhile Home Secretary Merlyn Rees spoke in Parliament defending the role of the police—while 'lefts' still confine themselves to verbal protests.



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report.

'Left' Eric Heffer—where does he stand?

The Grunwick struggle is a microcosm of the class battles ahead. Conspicuously absent, however, were the Yorkshire miners who could soon be confronting similar attacks on their picket lines.

We must fight for support for the one day strike, centred on the demand for blacking both locally and nationally.

At the same time workers must intensify demands that the 'left' Labour MPs break from this strikebreaking coalition and actively mobilise support for workers in struggle.



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report.

Violence at an earlier mass picket

METROPOLE HOTEL STRIKERS LEADING £50 FIGHT

As the strike at the Metropole Hotel for a £50 minimum wage entered its fifth week, GMWU Regional Official Romp organised a meeting of scabs in the hotel to elect new scab shop stewards.

This act of back-stabbing sums up the hostility of union officials to the strikers who have dared to challenge the traditional low wages embodied in the wages council structure accepted by both bureaucracy and employers.

From the very first week of the Metropole strike, in which they attempted to disband the picket lines—GMWU officials Tilston and Romp have done everything they could to impede the struggle.

Now their efforts are directed to preventing the spread of the dispute to other sections of hotel workers.

The Centre Hotels branch, which had faced two postponements of their meeting

on the £50 claim finally met management last Thursday.

But the unprecedented attendance of National Official F. Cooper and an assortment of Regional full-timers was arranged to intimidate workers.

Although the £50 claim was lodged, the decision on a management offer of only 13% was postponed until November 22.

Official rebuffed

Rank Hotels workers, having rebuffed Tilston's attempt to whittle their claim down to £46.50, met a management offer of only 10% when delayed negotiations finally opened last Friday.

Workers at Grand Metropolitan hotels on the other hand submitted their £50 claim as long ago as August—and have only just heard from Romp that the claim "is being considered".

Weakness

The lengths to which officials have gone to sabo-

tage the £50 minimum wage indicates not their strength but their weakness.

Important

Despite the inadequacy of the £50 figure therefore, and despite the numerical weakness of the Metropole strike, it does have a crucial importance in the struggle against low pay in the catering and hotel industry.

Reactionary union leaders cannot be ignored. They act again and again to disrupt and confuse the membership. They must be fought and defeated.

To do this hotel workers have to see beyond the problems of their own branches and develop the campaign for the £50 minimum wage—answering the derisory offers from management by coordinated strike action.

NGA
delays
spread
of
strike

The almost endless ability of print union leaders to stall off escalation of the Darlington dispute was demonstrated again last week, when the NGA executive issued a call for 'talks' with the NUJ.

Plans for escalation throughout Westminister Press had already been drawn up by the NUJ and were being presented to the emergency committee on November 3 when the call came.

Immediately the emergency committee abandoned the plans until these talks have taken place.

Joe Wade, NGA General Secretary, gave no clue of what his proposals to the NUJ would be but he made it clear that continued support at executive level would depend on agreement.

Wade is expected to be making his inevitable bid to sell out the strikes in Darlington and London before they can be spread.

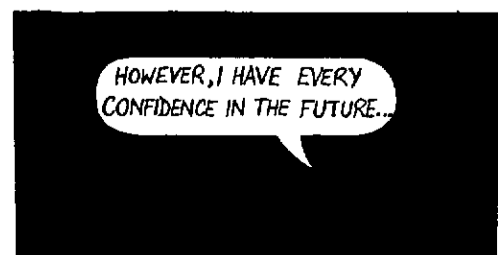
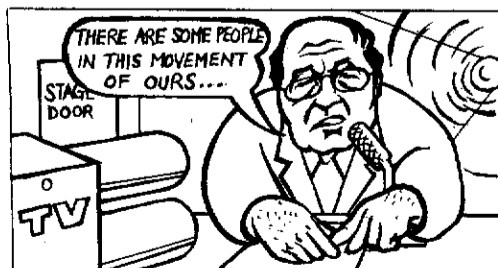


Wade

An all-out effort must now be made by NUJ members to get the national executive recalled immediately and have the strikes put into effect.

The mood among journalists throughout the group has once again swung heavily in favour of supporting strikes. The strategy of the General Secretaries appears to be to frustrate that support by a series of never ending manoeuvres.

The call to escalate was first made by the Westminister Press NUJ group chapel in early September.



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MASS REJECTION OF SPAIN'S SOCIAL CONTRACT



The November 5 march in Bilbao



on the part of the bureaucrats and most particularly of the Workers Commissions, who with one hand salute the Moncloa Pact and with the other beckon the workers to "action".

The demonstration also shows, however, how the main bureaucracies are approaching desperation point in their fight to hold back the working class.

Appear to lead

In order to cling on to their leadership of a working class which is ready for a serious fight against the Francoist government, the Stalinist and reformist leaders have to appear to lead a fight against those very measures which they have helped to design.

And it is obvious from

some of the demands of the demonstration that the only possible way to persuade the workers of their sincerity is for the bureaucracies to subscribe, even if only formally, to a number of very important demands.

These, if seriously pursued, would pull down the wall of class collaboration into which the Stalinist and reformist bureaucracies are trying to confine the workers' movement.

The demonstration organisers now intend to call a 24-hour general strike throughout Viscaya Province.

This again is designed to appear as an active measure while intending to demobilise the movement.

With each successful

mobilisation, however, and as workers develop their own struggles, independent of the union "leaders", against redundancies and falling wages, the bureaucracies find it more difficult to hold the workers in check.

"Democracy"

The arguments that "democracy must be consolidated" carries less and less weight as workers see that unemployment with "democracy" produces no more income than any other kind of unemployment.

They see too that the 'democratic' rubber bullets of the 'democratic' armed police are as hard as they ever were and just as likely to be

used against workers struggling for their rights.

It must have been with a feeling of chill in their bones, therefore, that the government and the bureaucrats of the workers movement listened to the chants which echoed between the buildings of Bilbao last Saturday night:

Against unemployment—workers' struggle!

Down with the Pact!

Fight and win—workers to power!

A vast gulf is opening between the Spanish working class and those who pretend to be its leaders.

Workers have shown themselves virtually unanimous in rejecting the popular frontist, anti-working class economic "agreements" which the party leaders entered into a month ago with Spain's Francoist premier Adolfo Suarez.

The workers' contempt for this "Moncloa Pact" has been made unmistakably clear. A wave of huge, militant demonstrations has erupted in virtually all Spanish cities in the last two weeks.

Not explicit

These demonstrations have usually been called around slogans which are not explicit rejection of the Pact.

They have often been supported by the main trade unions, whose attitude to the Pact has either been to support it (the Workers Commissions) or to "oppose" it in ambiguous terms (the UGT and others).

In Barcelona last week, for instance a demonstration of 200,000 workers was called by all the main unions around the deliberately confused slogan "For a way out of the crisis favourable to the workers".

Rejected

This was only a few days after the Barcelona Assembly of the Unemployed had called their own demonstration, supported only by the CNT and left political parties around slogans explicitly rejecting the pact and its consequences.

This march was broken up by the armed police with great brutality—still the standard procedure of Spain's new "democratic" police

force for dealing with any workers' mobilisation which is not sponsored by the Socialist or Communist Party leaders.

Workers Commission and UGT leaders started by trying to prevent the demonstrations.

Head off

Increasingly they are being forced to participate in the hope of heading off the mass movement against the Pact.

But they have been completely incapable of preventing hundreds of thousands of workers taking up slogans not only against the pact but also against the Suarez government.

After massive demonstrations in Madrid, Barcelona, San Sebastian and scores of other cities, the protest reached a new peak in Bilbao in Viscaya Province last Saturday when another 200,000 workers marched through the city in one of the most united, anti-capitalist and anti-government demonstrations seen since the death of France.

Sackings

The demonstration was called by the Commission of the Unemployed and the Coordinating Committee of Workers from "Factories in Crisis" (those that have taken advantage of government rules which permit uncontrolled sacking and the suspension of wage payments if the firm pleads bankruptcy).

The unitary leaflet refrains from mentioning the Moncloa Pact.

But no worker could fail to recognise that everything it protests about is a part of the Pact.

Opportunism

This exhibits the most naked political opportunism

WSL RALLY GREET'S NEW WEEKLY PAPER

Workers Socialist League members and Socialist Press supporters gathered in London on Sunday to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution and to launch the first edition of the weekly paper.

Alan Thornett, outlining the momentous events leading up to October 1917 described it as "the greatest

single achievement of the working class internationally".

"The only way that exploitation can be ended is by the ending of capitalism and the establishment of socialism, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat".

John Lister, editor of 'Socialist Press' said it would have been difficult to choose a more important moment to go weekly with action by

power workers, and the coming battles by miners and firemen and other major sections of workers.

He said that the role of the paper was part of the struggle to build a Trotskyist leadership in the working class.

"It is not enough to repeat 'magnificent miners out there on their picket line. It is the task of the paper to draw the lessons for the working class and to draw the best elements in the struggle forward."



POWER MEN SOLD OUT

The vultures of the capitalist press appear to have got their way with the power workers.

The leadership of the committee, by the limitation of their claim to fringe benefits, had shown themselves very similar to the Leyland tool-makers unofficial committee. Both tried to find a way round confrontation with the government on pay.

Although they have stood up to the leadership of their own union and to scabbing by another TUC affiliated union, the power engineers' association, the committee caved in under the pressure of the press campaign, combined with the determined stand of Energy Secretary, Benn.

Yet again the power of the working class was shown by the fact that this dispute had the potential to break the coalition government, particularly with the development of sit-ins for the first time in a national pay strike.

But the power workers face the continuing problem of building an alternative leadership independent of their officials.

As we go to press the strike committee has declared that it is willing to return to work under three conditions: that everybody is fully paid for the period of the work to rule; guarantees that their grievances will be discussed in the next pay claim; and the right of shop stewards to negotiate.

The committee has in other words abandoned the original claim.