

# SOCIALIST PRESS



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EDITION  
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## REJECT LEYLAND BALLOT

British Leyland management and every British employer will be delighted at today's 2-1 vote by workers in favour of a package of proposals including abolition of plant-level bargaining; acceptance of a pay increase of only 10%; a job-cutting incentive scheme; and 'fringe benefits' linked to vicious no-strike clauses.

Foisting this package of policies upon Leyland workers is a major step on the road to Leyland's ultimate goal: the introduction of US-style "master contracts" in which all negotiations are taken out of the hands of elected union representatives and given to appointed national officials.

But such measures could only be forced through with the assistance of union bureaucrats.

Plant convenors have been softened up by involvement in "participation" committees which have sucked them into open management roles and focussed their attention on the "state of the company" rather than the conditions of their members.

### Proposed

And the officials who head the Confederation and Engineering Unions not only endorsed the package but even proposed to Leyland the tactic of the secret shopfloor ballot.

The ballot tactic is of course a long-standing favourite with anyone determined to break union ranks.

Secret ballots were a crucial element of the Wilson government's union-busting 'In Place of Strife' White Paper and of the Tory Industrial Relations Act.

Their purpose is to force workers to act as individuals subject to Tory press propaganda and management lies, rather than as part of the organised labour movement.

### No information

This objective was made easier by plant convenors. Even while the press campaign for a 'Yes' vote hotted up and management put out a completely falsified version of the package, virtually no convenors produced information

on the deal, and only a handful called mass meetings.

Those few mass meetings that were held overwhelmingly rejected the management proposals.

This showed clearly that even if only TGWU convenors had mounted a serious fight on the issue in mass meetings, thousands more workers could have been swung against the deal.

### Leaflets

Only the Workers Socialist League and the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement, through mass leafleting of all major factories, launched a serious campaign against the proposals.

Communist Party led Longbridge stewards failed to challenge the right wing, refusing to make any recommendations either way on the ballot.

Stalinist convenor Derek Robinson had opened the door for some workers to vote for the package as a last ditch attempt for a pay rise.

He used a march by a handful of right wingers as a pretext for cancelling a strike for the annual pay review.

### Living standards

In contrast with this the Workers Socialist League has consistently argued that Leyland workers should lodge immediate claims for £100 a week linked to cost of living clauses in order to regain and defend lost living standards.

Through confusion deliberately created by right wing and Stalinist leaders, Leyland have now secured victory in the ballot.

But some questions remain to be answered even on that.

Who, for instance, controlled the ballot and its timing?

Why are plant-by-plant voting figures suppressed?

- Who controlled the voting?

- Why are plant results suppressed?

- How many workers know what the deal contains?



PHOTO: Dave Evans, IFL

Where are the 59,000 workers who allegedly voted in favour of the new scheme?

And the harsh fact remains that the ballot was rushed through by management in such a way that almost none of Leyland's 120,000 car workers knows even now what he was voting for.

The answer is clear. Workers cannot be bound by the results of such a ballot. The whole charade must be rejected.

\*All changes forced in as a result of the ballot must be resisted.

\*All existing manning levels must be defended.

\*Corporate pay bargaining must be rejected and wherever possible plant claims submitted, rejecting the 10% limit, and including cost of living clauses to protect against inflation.

\*Elected trade union com-

mittees must demand full access to Leyland books to reveal the true "state of the company" and show the need for nationalisation of Leyland along with the motor and component industries and the banks.

\*A campaign must be launched in the unions against all secret ballots, and for mass meetings to decide policy and to conduct elections.

Such policies would inevitably bring a collision with the Lib-Lab coalition government and the job-slashing National Enterprise Board whose task it is to force through speed-up in Leyland.

But only through such a fight and in the building of a new political leadership to carry it through can Leyland workers hope to protect jobs and living standards against the next spate of attacks.



PHOTO: Andrew Wlard, Report

## Miners must press £135 claim

The result of the miners' ballot on once-rejected productivity deals was awaited as we went to press with the national papers predicting a small majority in favour.

Both the Coal Board and the NUM executive have produced a torrent of propaganda in favour of the deal while only Yorks leader Scargill campaigned against.

The Communist Party refused to make any effort to uphold NUM conference policy against productivity deals apart from their damaging and ridiculous appeal to the courts.

The NUM executive want

the deal not so much for itself but because they regard it as an alternative to the NUM £135 a week pay claim.

The deal is a step backwards for miners and a total diversion from the pay fight.

It has already allowed the Executive to overrule the national conference and struck a savage blow against democracy in the union.

NUM members must fight for the £135 claim to be ruthlessly pursued regardless of the result of the ballot.

Productivity deals can bring nothing but an increased rate of exploitation for miners while the value of the puny extra cash on offer will be swiftly eroded by inflation.

### Inflation

'The miners' £135 claim itself makes no allowance for the protection of wages against inflation.

But it presents the miners' best chance of restoring their living standards.

It was because miners recognised this in 1974 that they threw out productivity deals then.

The fight for wages must go ahead now against the Stalinists and right wingers who are striving to tie the miners hand and foot.



Scargill



# SPANISH SOCIAL CONTRACT

Francoist Interior Minister Martin Villa has instructed the police to take tougher action against strike pickets which are still completely illegal in Spain.

That is one of the first bitter fruits of part two of the so-called Moncloa Pact.

## Filthy agreement

Through this filthy agreement the main workers' parties have agreed to give parliamentary support to a programme of anti-working class economic measures. That was part one. Part two, signed last Wednesday, a few hours before Villa issued his new instructions to the police, is supposed to be the programme of "demo-

cratic reforms" which the workers' parties received in return for accepting austerity.

Apart from some vague words about freedom of speech and assembly and the establishment of a committee including an MP to oversee the broadcasting service, the main point of the agreement concerns the police.

It proposes to reduce the autonomy of the police authorities and bring them under the closer supervision of the Minister of the Interior, and so, the Communist Party and Socialist Party blandly argue, under parliamentary and democratic control.

The Socialist and CP leaders, thus criminally give their blessing to the continued existence, virtually unchanged, of all the repressive apparatus of Francoism.

This "democratic" police force has been minutely trained in the suppression of democratic rights and all workers' and popular mobilisations.

With Martin Villa at their

head, there is every reason to think that they will continue to put their training to use.

## Formal blessing

The difference is that the Moncloa Pact now gives them the formal blessing of the purported leaders of the working class. The only possible principled demand about the Francoist police (and army) is for their complete dissolution and for the formation of workers defence squads to organise defence against the "democratic police force".

In every major workers' demonstration in Spain, masses of people show their support for these demands by chanting the slogan "Dissolution of the oppressive apparatus", thus paying no attention to the CP and Socialist bureaucracies in their night and day struggle to attempt to silence this principled, militant and independent demand made by millions of Spanish workers.

## Opposed by workers

We reprint below the text of a leaflet entitled "The UGT of Madrid does not accept the Moncloa Pact". This was issued last month by Madrid Bank workers and indicates the feeling against the Pact.

The Assembly of Industry and Local Union Federations of the UGT of Madrid decided in the meeting held on October 10 to denounce the so-called 'Moncloa Pact' in which the Government tried to get from the political parties what it couldn't get from the unions.

We denounce the agreements reached, which in fact represent a Social Pact which the UGT has always opposed. Through this pact signed without reference to the unions and against the unions another attempt is being made to make the solution of the economic crisis fall on the backs of the workers.

A wage cut is clearly and precisely outlined. Maximum wages are fixed which annul the factory or industry negotiations. The agreement also allows free sacking of up to 5 per cent of the workers who get more than the maximum 22 per cent wage increase.

On the other hand the Banks, one of the most important centres of the present Spanish economic crisis, carry on completely untouched when everyone knows that small and medium firms are failing because the Banks are denying them credits.

Because of all this we take this opportunity to declare ourselves once again against the Social Pact.

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We say no to any pact which tries to tie down the working class so as to solve a crisis not created by those workers but is the result of the capitalist system.

**NO TO THE REPRESENTATION OF BANK WORKERS!  
TO FREEDOM AGAINST THE SOCIAL PACT!  
LABOUR AMNESTY!**

Provincial Committee of the Trade Union of Banks, Stock Exchange, Savings and Credit of the UGT of Madrid.  
October 13 1977



Signing the Moncloa Pact

## Crisis in E. Europe

A demonstration against the influence of the Soviet Union and against the East German police took place on October 27 in Berlin.

At the end of the celebration of East Germany's national day, hundreds of young people assembled in the Alexanderplatz chanting anti-bureaucratic slogans and others in support of Wolf Bierman, the poet and singer expelled from East Germany a year ago.

Police attacked demonstrators, who kept reassembling when they were dispersed.

Reports speak of dozens of arrests and injuries.

## Romania strike

The 'denial' of the Romanian authorities only lent conviction to the persistent stories of a major strike of miners in the Petrosani region in August.

The strikers are reported to have kidnapped a local party bureaucrat and to have released him after their demands were met.

The 'denial' coincided with more signs that the Romanian bureaucracy is not resting easily in its bed.

Party Secretary Ceausescu last month made a series of bitter complaints in a meeting of party bureaucrats of the 'faults and serious deficiencies' of the Communist Party and the 'self sufficiency' of some of its bureaucrats.

## Polish problems

Polish Party Secretary Edward Gierek has also been doing some public airing of the difficulties of the Polish bureaucracy.

This took place in a session of the CP Central Committee called to discuss the success of last year's 'economic manoeuvre' which put up prices of basic foods.

Gierek admitted the persistence of 'difficulties sadly resented by the population'.

His report was a story of 'corruption, waste, theft of social property, alcoholism, negligence, favouritism, failure of management to respect planning norms and much else besides.



Unpublished pathologists' reports have revealed that black leader Steve Biko died as a result of head injuries, and that he suffered brain damage as well as acute kidney failure. These revelations point clearly to the South African police force as the killers of Biko, making nonsense of Police Minister James Kruger's claim that Biko had died because of a 7-day hunger strike. There are now reports that a public inquest into the death is to be held.  
PHOTO: Mark Rusher, IFL.

# AUSTRALIAN STRIKE SOLD OUT

After a 10 week long strike power workers in the La Trobe Valley, Victoria have voted to return to work in order—in the words of the shop stewards' Chairman—'to avoid being at the centre of a political issue'.

The dispute, which Prime Minister Frazer called 'the most serious in Australia's industrial history', cost over 450 million Australian dollars in lost production and wages, and at one stage saw over 5000,000 out of work.

From the Victoria State Government it prompted the declaration of a state of emergency, and from the Federal Government it drew wide ranging legislation giving Federal courts greater control over trade union affairs.

## Test out

As we go to press it seems likely that Frazer will get a chance to test in practice the efficiency of these laws in

curbing working-class militancy.

And ironically, his first victims are most likely to be the power workers who have just returned to work.

Although they were capable of crippling the entire Victorian state, the workers failed to win outright their 40 dollar wage claim.

Instead, the union bureaucracy—led by the President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Bob Hawke—browbeat the workers into returning while their claim is heard by Arbitration Commissioner Mansini.

But given that their claim has previously been rejected by the Commission (on October 18), it is highly unlikely if any further progress is going to be made in that direction.

Seeing the stoppage threaten to take on the proportions of a general strike, the union bureaucracy were obviously desperate to get a return to work and are now engaged in haggling which

# BRITISH TERROR UPHeld BY COURT

In a predictable decision by the Court of Appeal last week, four Irish political prisoners had their prison sentences confirmed.

The four—Carole Richardson, Patrick Armstrong, Paul Hill and Gerard Conlon—were all jailed for life in 1975 after the bombings at Guildford and Woolwich.

They had been among the first people to be arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act of December 1974.

Throughout their trial they claimed that they had been intimidated into making statements based on information supplied by the police.

It was on the basis of these statements alone that the life sentences were awarded—no forensic or any other evidence connecting the four with the bombings was ever brought forward.

Now those sentences have been upheld—despite the fact that the three men imprisoned after the Balcombe Street siege, together with Brendan Dowd who was arrested in Liverpool in 1975, all came forward to say that they had been responsible for the bombings at Guildford and Woolwich, and that the other four were completely innocent.

The judges threw out these statements without much ado.

For revolutionaries, though, the opinions of his lordship are neither here nor there.

## Victims of imperialism

We recognise that all of the 100 and more Irish political prisoners in British jails are victims of British imperialist oppression of Ireland.

The various offences which the prisoners are supposed to have committed—bombings, shootings, robberies—are all incidental to this fundamental fact.

That is not to say that we

condone the individualistic, conspiratorial terrorism of the IRA, or that we accept any responsibility for the utopian nationalist policies they espouse.

## Criticise policies

On the contrary, we criticise both the policies and the manner in which they are fought for.

But revolutionaries cannot remain neutral when confronted with a state intent on beating down all opposition to its exploitative rule.

Not only must we call for an immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, but we must demand that all Irish political prisoners be immediately freed.

## HONG KONG

Dozens of off-duty policemen went on the rampage last Friday, after a 2,000-strong police demonstration had marched on the headquarters of the government's "Independent Commission Against Corruption". The police are complaining that investigations into corruption within their own ranks are "unfair" in a society where corruption is virtually a way of life. The Police Commissioner Brian Slevin is now thought likely to establish a police officers' federation to enable grievances to be aired.

## ARGENTINA

The government in Argentina has been rocked by the biggest strike wave since the military overthrew Isabel Peron in 1976.

Despite the fact that strikes are illegal and the unions are run by the military, unofficial strikes led by railworkers, have swept the country.

The railworkers are claiming increases up to 200% because of the ravaging effect inflation has had on their wages.



INTERNATIONAL

# CHINESE BUREAUCRATS PREPARE NEW PURGE



Hua

A year after the arrest of the "Gang of Four" the dominant group in the Chinese bureaucracy has not been able to consolidate its position.

Desperate attempts are being made to "rectify the style of working in the Party" and to purge hostile elements. The National People's Congress has been put off

until next spring to give more time to eliminate opponents who might threaten to disrupt its proceedings.

The pre-Cultural Revolution Party training schools are to re-open, and academic achievement is to be once again the criterion for entrance to university.

In this way the group round Hua and Teng hope to build throughout the country "cadres" who will fight for

their political and economic priorities.

These include economic growth, the reinstatement of material incentives, the rapid modernisation of the army and relaxation on the cultural front.

### Production

Although it is claimed that industrial production has increased by 10% in the period January-August this year as compared with 1976, the problems of economic growth loom large.

There is a lot of talk on

the rights and wrongs of accepting loans from abroad.

Although this does not yet have official approval, a form of this exists already in the acceptance of credit deposited by foreign companies who export to China.

As part of the reintroduction of incentives, wages have recently increased and differentials have widened.

"Socialist competition" between factories is being encouraged.

Western technology is to be utilised to bring the Chinese army into line with modern warfare requirements and the toleration of western films and music is posed in the launching of a new "let 100 flowers bloom" campaign.

Alongside these domestic changes comes an even more promiscuous approach to foreign policy.

### Border dispute

Attempts have been made to restart discussions between Thailand and Cambodia on their border dispute.

Visits have been made by members of the leading quartet to the US and countries in Europe which

were not countenanced during Mao's lifetime.

This turn to closer relations with the capitalist countries has been accompanied by renewed attacks against the USSR being the main war-monger.

The US is denounced as in so far as it supplied weapons to the USSR.

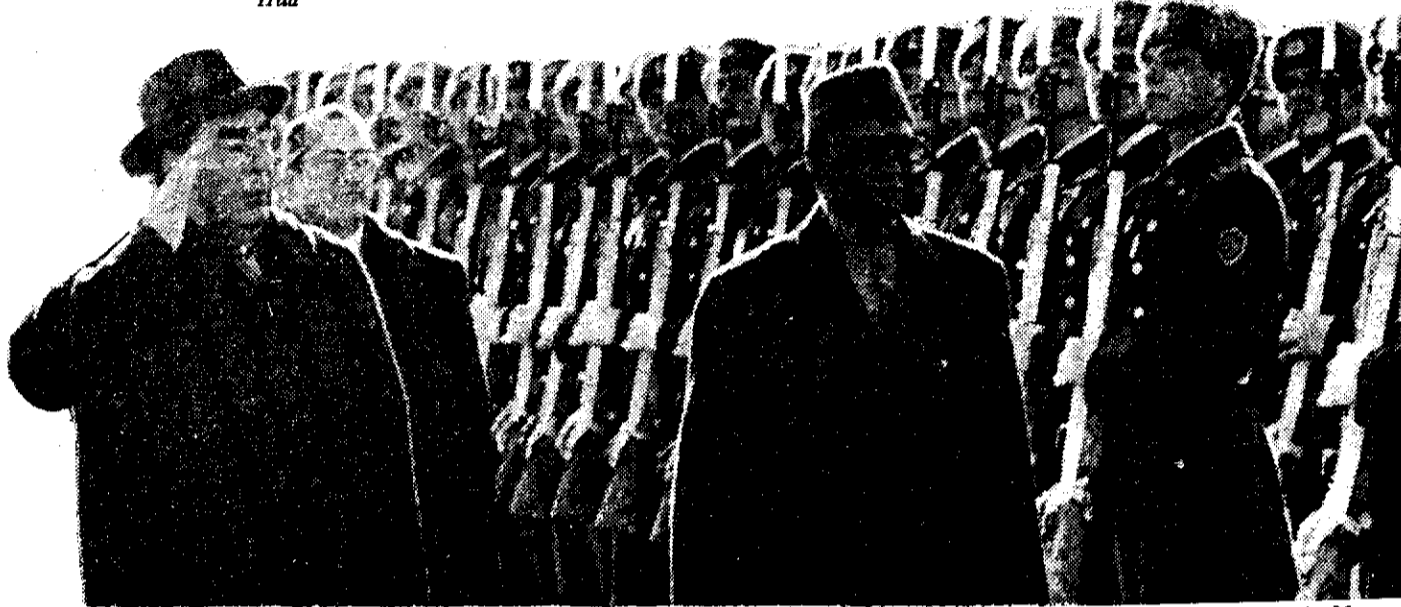
### Zig-zags

The Soviet Union must be kept weak agriculturally and economically, says Teng, that it will not be able to launch a war.

The right-wing zig-zags of the Chinese bureaucrats reflect very much their inability to deal with the conditions of a workers' state struggling to develop economically in the bureaucratically imposed confines of Stalinist policy of "socialism in one country".

It is this which dictates their need to deny all political aspirations of workers and peasants.

The realisation of their aspirations demands political overthrow of the bureaucracy under the leadership of a Trotskyist party.



Janata leader Desai with Soviet leader Brezhnev in Moscow

# INDIAN POPULAR FRONT IN CRISIS

In elections six months ago, the workers and peasants of India firmly rejected the repressive legislation and anti-working class policies of the Congress Party.

Although the right wing Janata alliance reaped a sweeping victory from this hostility, the ruling coalition now finds itself in as big a crisis as the defeated party.

United solely on this basis of opposition to the Gandhi dictatorship, this reactionary popular front has been unable to fulfil its wild election pledge of democracy in India.

### Platitudes

While it continues to thunder liberal platitudes, its economic policies of unbridled capitalist development and thoroughgoing allegiance to the bourgeoisie have resulted in mass disillusionment.

Internally, too, the coalition is riddled with dissension. The recent attempts to arrest Indira Gandhi on charges of corruption were made purely to divert attention away from the failure of the Janata.

But Gandhi, a more flexible operator than her successors, has taken advantage of these moves to challenge the new leadership of the Congress Party which displaced her after the election defeat.

### Pressure

This first attempt was unsuccessful, but no doubt Brahman Reddy (Congress President) will not long be able to survive further pressure.

To solve the economic

government claims to be following 'socialist' methods.

In practice this means encouraging any and every form of capitalist exploitation to develop the economy.

George Fernandes—leader of the Socialist Party and Minister for Industries—makes constant appeals to the bourgeoisie to 'do their duty by the country and learn to fight for what is right'.

He stresses that the Janata will ensure that no kind of ideology will hamper industrial development—or profits, of course!

But 18 months of the emergency slashed wages and since March workers have surged forward in a contin-

uous series of strikes.

At the same time there have been widespread battles between landowners and peasants attempting to occupy the land which legislation has formally granted them.

In this situation the role of the CPs has been predictable. Although the pro-Moscow Communist Party of India supported the Gandhi dictatorship up to and beyond the end, last week in Moscow, prime minister Morarji Desai joined with Brezhnev to declare their 'equality of national interests'.

At the same time Moscow is seeking a rapprochement with the national Stalinist

Communist Party of India (Marxist) which opposed Gandhi and gained support at the last elections where the CPI was smashed. The CPI (M) now organises its own popular front government in West Bengal.

The first priority for Indian workers and peasants is to break these popular front alliances between their parties and the Indian bourgeoisie.

This task requires the building of a Trotskyist party fighting on a programme including land nationalisation and expropriation of major industries alongside demands to improve and defend living standards and guarantee democratic rights.



## IN BRIEF



### HOLLAND

The outgoing Dutch Prime Minister has been trying to put together another "left-of-centre" coalition despite the revolt in his own Labour Party over a compromise with the Christian Democrats on the distribution of Cabinet portfolios. A special Labour Party congress is to be held this week (Saturday 5 November) to decide on the compromise.

### ECUADOR

The military government is to hold an enquiry into the circumstances surrounding the deaths of 25 striking sugar workers last week. The 25 workers from the Azfra mill were reportedly drowned

fled attacks from the police. Since the deaths there have been a series of strikes and student demonstrations calling for the removal of the Interior Minister Colonel Bolivar Jarrin and Labour Minister General Jorge Salvador Chiriboga.

### POLAND

Private farmers in Poland are now to be given a state pension—regardless of whether they hand their land on to their descendants or to the state. Formerly only those farmers who bequeathed their land to the state were entitled to a pension.

Over 70% of farm land in Poland is in private hands,

currently owned by farmers over 65 years of age.

### PORTUGAL

Immediate cuts in public spending are to be enacted by the Soares government. Current expenditure is to be cut by 20% and capital expenditure by 10%. Portugal's public debt is now £3.2 billion, and the balance of payments deficit is expected to rise to £1 billion by the end of the year. The cuts have been dictated largely by the IMF who are due to grant a \$750 million loan in order to offset the balance of payments deficit.

The first ever strike in the history of the young workers movement in Greenland is now under way.

During the night of 16/17 October, the Greenland miners employed in the Lead and Zinc mine in Marmorilik on Greenland's West Coast stopped work to back up their claim for equal pay with the non-Greenlander miners and for an agreement with GAS (the Greenland Workers Union).

The company, Greenex, (a subsidiary of the Canadian giant Cominco) has offered equal pay on condition that the union agrees to the introduction of the Danish labour relations laws, laws foisted upon the workers after the historic defeat of 1889.

### Company town

The mine is in a very out of the way place, and the company runs an old fashioned "company town", or rather, "camp".

They control the only means of transport to and from the area, helicopters, and the communications, such as post, telephone, telex, telegram.

The company own the dwellings, barracks, and also the workers' free time. Anyone not behaving in their free time (such as bother of various forms after drinking) or having guests staying over night can lose his job.

By controlling transport, the company has also hindered effective safety checks by factory inspectors.

### Shipped out

Indeed during a strike earlier this year by Danish miners, the firm called in police with dogs, put the strikers into the helicopters and shipped them out of the area and eventually back to Denmark.

## First-ever strike hits Greenland

again, the strikers were 39, including the strike committee.

The union—which started in 1956—has about 11,000 members organised out of a population of 40,000 and has no money to sustain a strike.

They have therefore appealed to the trade union movement in Denmark. Leaders of the Danish Trade Unions were all either convenient or otherwise indisposed when GAS tried to contact them.

### Picketing

However union locals at work places have begun to donate.

It has been reported that the strikers were picketing an attempt to stop the Danish miners from strike-breaking.

This year the Greenlanders met the eskimos from Canada and Alaska in conference. The first political party, Siumut, was founded in the summer and now has a presence in the Danish parliament. There are also pro-imperialist forces favouring collaboration with Denmark, and a "Marxist-Leninist" organisation calling for class struggle against the bourgeoisie elements.

Greenland is officially a Danish county but has its own National Council.

### Off shore oil

The inhabitants live purely by fishing and hunting until relatively recently. Another source of disengagement with Denmark is oil. The Greenlanders did not want any off-shore boring but it is proceeding. Spill doesn't dissolve in the Arctic waters, and with modest seals vanish from the scene.

The economic struggle of the GAS workers therefore connects completely with the struggle against Danish exploitation of Greenland.

# WILL LEYLAND CLOSE DOWN?

Ever since the oil crisis in 1973, every time British Leyland management have wanted to push through another attack on workers' conditions they have spearheaded their moves by threats of closure.

Since the toolroom strike in March this threat has reached deafening proportions. The main voices to be heard shouting it have been the union leaders.

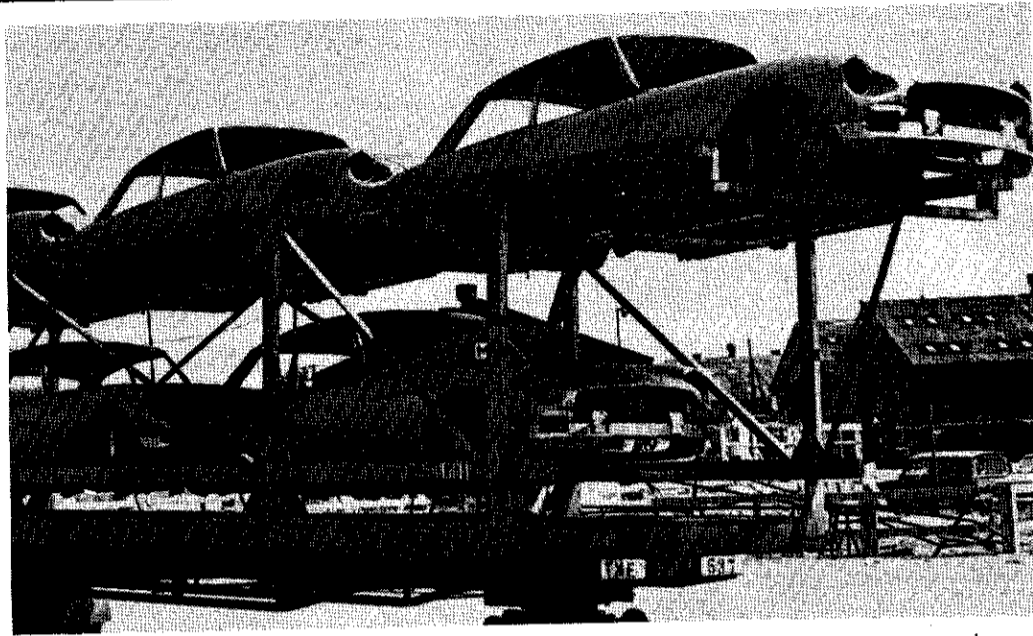
## Benevolence

These bureaucrats claim that the fact Leyland has not closed sections or shut down together was through the benevolent desire of government and employer to save jobs, or through the energetic leading of union officials.

But a document has now been obtained which shows how management's decisions on closure are based entirely on commercial grounds.

The document, produced internally by the company, has been shown already to all plant 'participation' committees.

In other words, virtually every right wing union convenor and leading steward at Leyland knew its content in May of this year.



The fact that action at almost any plant could stop production of specialist cars was a major factor in Leyland's rejection of Plans 'B', 'C' and 'D'.

At that time the company was proclaiming a dire financial crisis, and publicly airing four alternative "plans" — stopping production throughout Leyland for half an hour while foremen read out the options.

**Plan A:** Carry on as planned, but with productivity stepped up to levels "at least equalling the levels of our European competitors."

**Plan B:** Cancel the planned new Mini, and restrict the

medium car range—creating 30,000 redundancies by 1980.

**Plan C:** Concentrate on specialist cars only—from the Princess upwards. This would mean 50,000 redundancies by 1979.

**Plan D:** Concentrate on specialist cars but include limited production of the new Mini and other cars. This would be a move towards withdrawal from volume cars.

As these "options" were released every right winger and many 'lefts' began running to urge acceptance of Plan A.

They pledged to accept all kinds of speed-up in order to do this.

## Forefront

The Communist Party was at the forefront of those selling Plan A—producing a special pamphlet on it.

When the company finally declared for Plan A every "participation" supporter announced this was the result of their pressure.

In reality the company decision was based on an assessment of the repercussions involved in implementing the other schemes.

On marketing, for instance, the company background document examines the problem posed by implementing Plan C and producing only specialist cars with high fuel consumption at a time of diminishing availability of petrol.

## Sharp reduction

If Plan D were adopted, and Leyland began to pull out of volume cars, then there would be a sharp reduc-

tion in the UK dealer network.

But if Plans B or C—pruning back to concentrate entirely on specialist vehicles—were implemented, the document predicts:

"There would be a high risk of a "collapse" in the UK network leading to uncontrollable defections which would make the distribution of the remaining narrow product range virtually impossible."

In other words volume cars are necessary if only to help sell expensive cars.

The document also examines the effect of the various job-cutting options on industrial relations.

Pointing to the interdependence of Leyland plants the report shows that even if the savage cut-backs of Plans B and C were adopted:

"There are no models which would be required to be produced which could not be stopped by a plant which was being affected by the run-down."

Alternative B would probably result eventually in a return to production but only after a period of intense bitterness and with no guarantee that the remaining plants would improve in performance. There must be severe reservations on the practicability of C in terms of whether production ever would recommence.

Industrial relations and productivity are generally no better in the specialist car plants than any other plants. Inefficiencies in these plants are concealed by the higher unit economic profits.

The use of plant closures as a means of "bringing people to their senses" has been postulated. This is com-



Lord Ryder—drew up participation plan for British Leyland.

pletely unproven."

One key advantage of Plan A, the company report adds, is that the union leaders and management would work together in implementing speed-up.



New Leyland boss Edwardes

And in the next section, 'Financial Viability', the document goes on to reveal that Plan A has the potential of being substantially more profitable than the rest.

The document completely dismisses the prospect of the specialist cars surviving on their own—a slogan beloved

by the right wing:

"The historic non-survival of Rover, Triumph and Jaguar was due to their inability to expand their facilities or to update their model ranges unlike BMW or Mercedes Benz, and for them to be viable a far greater expansion than is practicable would be required."

The specialist car firms were previously unable to survive alone—and now with increased competition, their chances must be even slimmer concludes the report.

In other words, the Leyland monopoly flowed out of the economic necessities of capitalism, and the trend towards such monopolies cannot now be reversed.

Leyland's Plan A is not motivated by charity or by weakening in the face of pressure from union officials.

It is a conscious response to the economic crisis and a deliberate move to utilise these officials and convenors in imposing drastic speed-up on production tracks in pursuit of maximum profits.



Derek Robinson, Stalinist convenor at Longbridge: the CP produced a special pamphlet to back Leyland Plan 'A'.

The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist organisation fighting to construct a principled revolutionary leadership in the working class in Britain and internationally, and for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International on the basis of the Transitional Programme.

The WSL fights at every step against the existing leaders of the trade unions and the Labour Party — now firmly harnessed to the bourgeois politicians of the Liberal Party in an unspoken coalition arrangement.

Against their policies of class collaboration we put forward instead a programme which points to the independent class interests of the working class, its need to organise independently to overthrow capitalism, destroy its repressive state machinery and establish a socialist planned economy.

Only in this way can workers resolve today's problems of tumbling living standards, mass unemployment, slashed social services, racial, national and sexual oppression.

For more details on the WSL and its work, fill in the form below.

Name.....

Address.....

Trade Union Occupation.....

## SWP Rank and File Conference

The National Delegate Conference called by Rank and File for Saturday 26 November in Manchester promises to bring together a large number of militants from a wide range of industries and from current struggles of the working class over wages, cuts and union recognition.

However, the rank and file movement, which is dominated by the Socialist Workers Party has a history of bureaucratically organising such conferences and there is no reason to believe that this one will be very different.

As worshippers of the spontaneity of the working class both the SWP and Rank and File reject the fight to build a conscious political leadership in the working class through the fight for the policies of the Transitional Programme.

crazy in the Labour Movement, at its October 23 Conference decided to participate in the National Rank and File Delegate Conference and to fight for a clear programme to be adopted.

## Policy

Readers who are able to do so should attend the conference and fight for the following seven points of policy.

\*Break the 12-month rule and the 10% pay limit.

\*Reject productivity deals.

\*Fight for catching up rises linked to cost of living clauses.

\*Campaign for the breaking of the Lib-Lab coalition and for the removal of the right wing Callaghan-Healey leadership.

\*Abolition of cash limits in the public sector. For a sliding scale of public expenditure.

\*For equal pay.



PHOTO: Mark Rubner, LFL



Saturday's NAC demonstration in Birmingham.

# Abortion demo – minus the organised labour movement

2,000 demonstrated on Saturday through the streets of Birmingham in protest against the appalling lack of abortion facilities in Birmingham hospitals.

Coupled with the Lib-Lab coalition government's spending cuts, the right wing consultants in these hospitals have used every loophole in the 1967 Abortion Act to prevent women having abortions on the NHS.

One wondered, however, whether the empty back streets through which the demonstration passed were intended by the organisers to symbolise a return nationally to pre-1967 conditions.

## Single-issue politics

Other factors noticeably lacking, which of course reflect the single-issue politics of the feminist groups such as the National Abortion Campaign, were trade union delegations and banners.

Even the statutory "left" Labour MP was for once absent from the platform of the rally held outside the Birmingham Women's Hospital at the end of the demonstration.

At this rally it was left to a London consultant, Peter Huntingford, to cut through the "not the Church, not the state, women must decide their fate" chantings of the feminists.

He pointed out that the financing of the NHS is the central issue to be faced by the abortion campaign.

In his view: "There is nothing wrong with the legislation—it is the government who have never provided the NHS with the finance for abortion facilities and now they are cutting that finance further."

## Class perspective

Relegated to last speaker by the NAC Chairman Berry Beaumont was Val Keen from the ASTMS National Executive—the one speaker in a position to give a class perspective to the fight for abortion rights through the labour movement.

She correctly called upon trade unionists to pass resolutions through their branches and commit their national leaderships to support for abortion rights.

particularly her own union, ASTMS, can play seemed to elude her.

The WSL calls upon abortion rights campaigners to join the fight in the labour movement—in trade unions, trades councils and Labour Party bodies—to defend the NHS against the cuts.

Local committees must assess health needs, including abortion demand, and the financing of the NHS must be adequate to cover this need, rising point for point with inflation.

Strike action must be built

to stop the cuts.

The WSL supports NAC in its lobbies to expose the anti-abortionists in the Labour Party but calls upon NAC and its "left" supporters in Parliament to campaign to throw out the right wing leadership of Healey and Callaghan with its coalitionist policies of wage control and public spending cuts.

That leadership is now plotting with the Tories to introduce new laws to restrict abortion rights. Any attempt to restrict the struggle to a single issue protest would leave them a free hand.

# COALITION CUTS JOBS 'Dig faster' – Benn tells miners

Detecting the dire straits of right wing miners' leaders in their efforts to railroad in acceptance of the NCB's job-slashing, safety-wrecking "incentive" scheme, Energy Secretary Tony Benn decided to help them out.

Attempting to play on miners' distant memories of the days in which he posed as a 'left' alternative to Wilson and Callaghan, Benn issued a statement backing incentives.

## Evils

The plan, he claimed, was "designed to avoid the evils of past piece-work schemes"

and was based "on machine power, and not muscle power." Benn's present role in the Lib-Lab coalition cabinet is highlighted by this latest attack on working conditions in the pits.

## Erected

The Callaghan-Steel government was erected first and foremost as a means of cutting the wages of the working class as a means of increasing the rate of exploitation.

Now that the strategy has been widened to incorporate a concerted drive to increase effort and cut manning levels throughout industry, Benn clearly feels obliged to prove

anew his dedication to Callaghan. But if Benn as a minister has been pressed out into the open, other 'left' Labour MPs surreptitiously fulfil an equally reactionary role in their tacit acceptance of the Lib-Lab coalition.

The fight must be stepped up to break this rotten deal in which the Labour Party completely subordinated to the bourgeois politicians of the Liberal Party.

The right wing coalitionists and their 'left' defenders must be driven from a leadership positions expelled from the Labour Party.

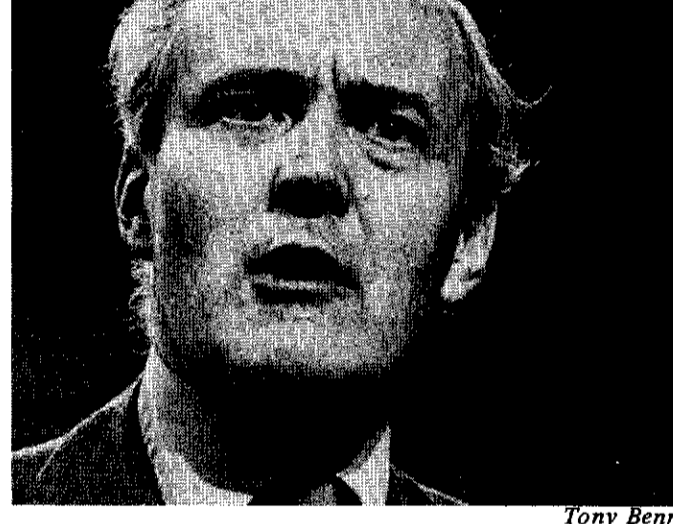
ARTHUR SCARGILL Yorkshire miners leader, has led a confused campaign against the NCB incentive scheme.

In between supporting reactionary legal moves by Kent miners to get a court injunction against the ballooning Scargill has been attempting to mobilise miners to vote against the plan.

He has also found time to give a two-page interview to Socialist Challenge.

But he saved enough time and energy to deliver a resounding left wing speech on October 28 in which he called for action to destroy the 12-month rule and the 10% limit.

His audience must have been impressed. He was speaking at the annual conference of that well-known left wing body, the Institute of Personnel Management.



Tony Benn

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

# EXPULSION OF NEWHAM NE CRYPTO-TORIES



Andy Bevan (fourth from left) and co-accused at law courts.

On Wednesday 26 October, seven members of the Newham NE Labour Party, including Andy Bevan, the Party's National Youth Organiser, appeared before the High Court charged with contempt of court, following a meeting of the General Management Committee which right

Before the hearing, constituency party members picketed the High Court to support their comrades before the trial.

'Militant' supporters from many parts of the country joined the lobby, raising the slogan "Hands off Labour" in a purely abstract manner.

Neither their slogans nor their speeches dealt with the concrete questions of how the constituency should proceed to ensure the

Of course any such procedure will bring the Party once again into conflict with the courts.

It is false to believe that the NEC can re-establish the functioning of the local party without a political confrontation with the courts.

technicalities.

Three of the accused have had their cases dismissed and the right wing witnesses who have appeared so far have been discredited.

Two more of the cases have not been proceeded with on the grounds of technical faults in the writs.

Every effort is being made by the authorities to avoid a confrontation between the labour movement and the courts.

## "Left-winger"

Last minute rearrangement of the court's time-table brought the case before Justice Payne—widely regarded as a "left-winger" among judges.

The cases are being argued in such a way as to avoid the necessity for political argument.

The CLP is now under the supervision of the NEC pending an investigation by the four man commission headed by Eric Heffer.

It is believed that this investigation will take place at the end of November.

Party members have not yet been informed of the terms of reference for the enquiry or invited to give evidence.

To avoid a bureaucratic evasion of the politics of the Newham NE events all party members should press on with moves to expel the crypto-Tories.

They should also insist on their right to give evidence to

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

# YOUTH LOBBY FOR JOBS

The Labour Party Youth Socialists, guided by the tam 'Marxists' of the 'Militant' Group, have called a national lobby of Parliament against unemployment on November 16.

Almost the only aspect of unemployment mentioned in the campaign literature for the lobby is youth unemployment, despite the fact that the majority of the current 1.5 million jobless are adult workers.

Nevertheless, with Communist Party backing and with feeling running high against unemployment it is certain that the lobby will attract considerable support.

The 'Militant' Group will do its best to ensure that those who do attend are kept within the confines of "pressuring" the Callaghan-Steel coalition government to introduce a programme of public works.

WSL members and supporters will be intervening in the lobby to fight for a awareness of the need to break the coalition if socialist policies are to be implemented.

And by urging lobbyists to focus on this issue in the meetings with 'left' Labour MPs we will fight to expose the abject refusal of 'lefts' to fight the coalition

# Ireland

## ROOTS OF TODAY'S CRISIS

### Part One

"Any nation that oppresses another forges its own chains . . . it is a precondition to the emancipation of the English working class to transform the present forced union (ie. the enslavement of Ireland) into equal and free confederation if possible, into complete separation if need be." (original emphasis)

In this way Marx assessed in 1870 the organic connection between the Irish struggle for national self-determination and the fight against the oppression of the working class in England.

Marx makes it clear that the English labour movement should accept this connection not as an abstract principle, but because it holds immediate practical significance for the class struggle in England.

He argues that "Ireland is the only pretext the English Government has for retaining a big standing army which, if need be, as has happened before, can be used against the English workers after having done its military training in Ireland."

Although written almost a hundred years before the out-

break of the present struggle in the north of Ireland, these statements point to a key aspect of the Irish crisis for British workers.

On the eve of the major clashes in Britain over wages, jobs and social services, the use of Ireland as a testing-ground for new means of political control must be a cause for alarm to every British worker.

In recent mass confrontations between workers and the police increasing evidence emerges that the police techniques used have been acquired first in Northern Ireland.

Use of perspex shields in baton charges and the aerial control of demonstrations by helicopter are some of the more obvious imports from the Irish situation.

#### Pretext

However, Ireland's role as a guinea-pig for new technology is overshadowed by its use as a pretext for the increasing erosion of democratic rights in Britain.

The introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism Act which allows for detention and deportation of Irish people without trial, sets dangerous new legal precedents, threatening the democratic rights of both British and Irish workers.

In any fight by workers in

Britain in defence of living standards or jobs therefore, the question of the continued British war in Ireland cannot be ignored.

The demand for Irish national self-determination is thus a vital demand not simply for Irish workers, but also for the British working class.

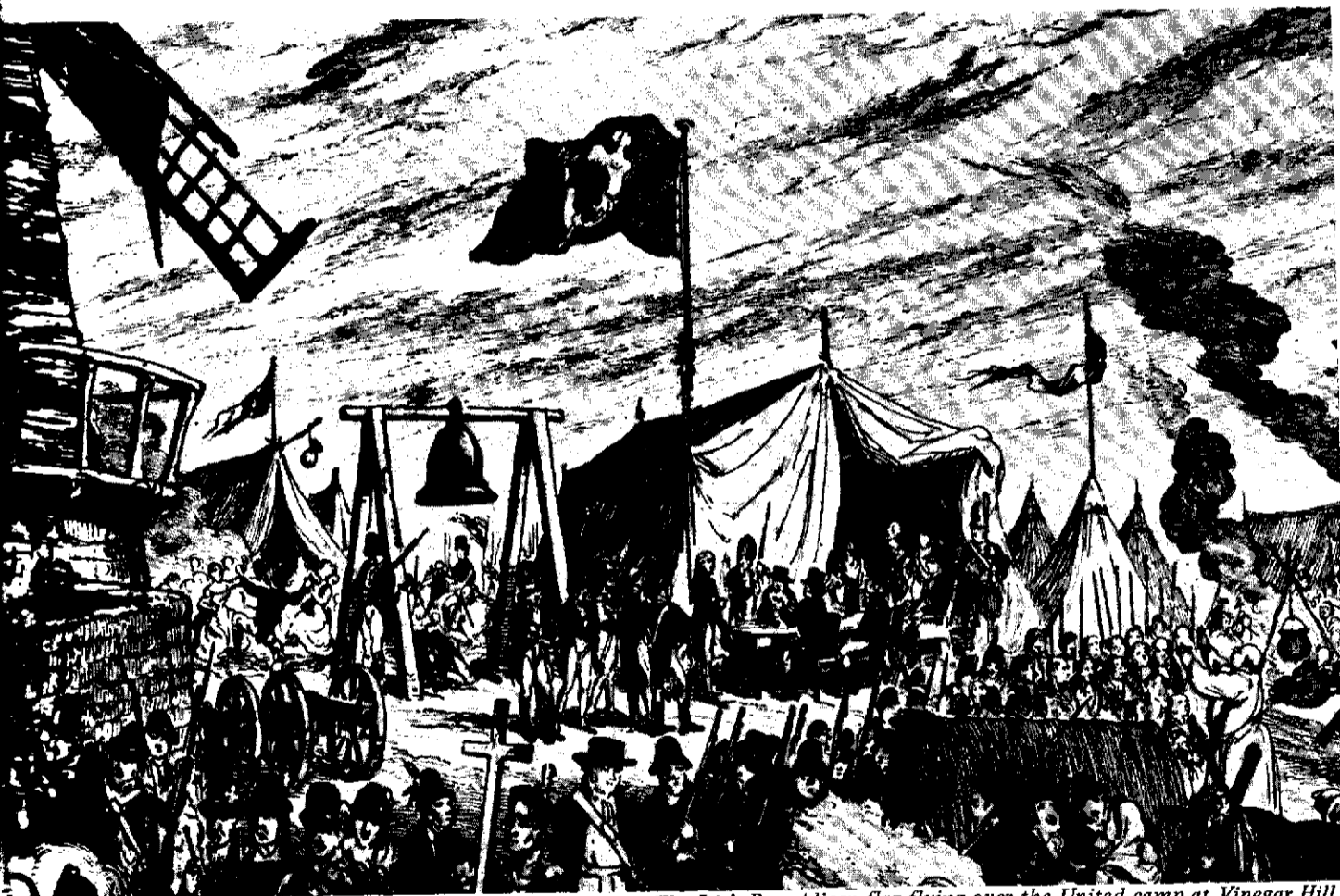
#### Acceptance

Yet the events of the past nine years have produced from the British Labour movement in general not support for the Irish struggle, but an acceptance of, and sometimes even misguided backing for the British government's policy of armed occupation in the Northern six counties of Ireland.

There are a number of reasons for the lack of any widespread solidarity on the "Irish Question" (which in many ways is really the "British Question"), the primary one being confusion over the issues behind the strife in Northern Ireland.

However, the haze of smoke which obscures the political realities of Northern Ireland arises less from the rioting, shooting and bombing than from the fiction of large headlines splashed across Fleet Street's news-copy.

The British press, particu-



The Irish Republican flag flying over the United camp at Vinegar Hill



latter could extract higher rents from Catholic tenants.

Many Protestant families who had been in Ireland since the Plantation were forced to emigrate again, this time to America.

And it was from across the Atlantic that the first stimulus for change in Ireland came in the late 18th Century.

#### Limitations

The American Revolution in 1776 struck the first blow of the colonies for self-government.

Engendered as it was by the restrictions on trade imposed by the English government, this revolution struck a chord in Irish industrial circles which were themselves suffering under British legal limitations on trade.

Irish export of cattle to England, profitable in the 17th Century, had been banned.

The woollen trade with England was choked by an import-tax, while trade with countries other than England was prohibited.

Every Irish industry, with the exception of the Ulster linen industry was crippled by these legal restrictions.

Therefore the example of America raised great hopes in Ireland and at the same time

The British Government in an attempt to remove the most obvious grievances passed a Catholic Relief Act (1778) which restored to Catholics certain rights of land ownership.

Under pressure from the volunteers, a body led by Henry Grattan, a Dublin barrister and M.P., the restrictions on trade with England were abandoned in 1779.

Grattan's plan was to remove the semi-feudal trappings of Irish economic life and establish a system on the English model.

Thus all his demands for legislative independence for the Irish Parliament were qualified by an insistence on the maintenance of the English connection.

The contradiction in his conception lay in the fact that to 'democratise' the Irish Parliamentary and economic system meant removing the Protestant Ascendancy clique which inhabited Dublin Castle; yet this clique was the essential military and political guarantee of the maintenance of the connection with England.

#### Compromise

Grattan was thus forced by his conservatism into

We must begin to unravel the intricate tangle of nationalism, religion and class conflict which constitutes Irish politics.

These elements are now the hallmark of most colonial and semi-colonial situations. However, it was in Ireland, Britain's 'First Colony', that the blue print for later colonisations was empirically drafted.

#### Economics

The policy of using religious differences to 'divide and rule' was first successfully used in Ireland.

Yet religion was not merely a means of maintaining political hegemony. It had its fundamental origins in economics.

A Protestant minister from the North of Ireland noted in 1870:

"All that is really important in the history (of Ireland) for the last three centuries is the fighting of the two nations for the posses-

reality nothing but a special form of the land war. The oath of supremacy was simply a lever for evicting the owners of the land.

The process was simple. The King demanded spiritual allegiance; refusal was high treason; the punishment of high treason was forfeiture of estates, with death or banishment to the Recusants.

Any other law they might have obeyed and retained their inheritance. This law fixed its iron grapples in the conscience and made obedience impossible without a degree of baseness that rendered life intolerable.

Hence Protestantism was detested, not as a religion so much as an instrument of spoliation'.

Rev. James Godwin  
'Land War in Ireland'

#### Disqualification

In the Cromwellian period, the 1640's, in Ireland the policy of using Catholicism as a disqualification for land ownership was taken to unbelievable extremes.

planted' from their homes to the most barren and wildest corner of Ireland, the province of Connacht.

Any Catholic who was caught outside this area, which was less than a quarter of the whole country, was sold into slavery or hanged.

#### Penal Code

This expropriation of the Irish Catholics was continued into the 18th Century by the Penal Code passed in 1692. This was a series of laws prohibiting Catholics from acquiring land, from entering Parliament, the professions, (except medicine), or commissions in any of the armed forces.

Catholic education was forbidden, as was inter-marriage with Protestants.

A son could take control of his father's land by renouncing Catholicism and conforming to the Protestant church.

The pretended zeal to convert Irish Catholics to Protestants was actually a means of turning Irish land into English

established during this period was thus the form which English possession of Ireland took.

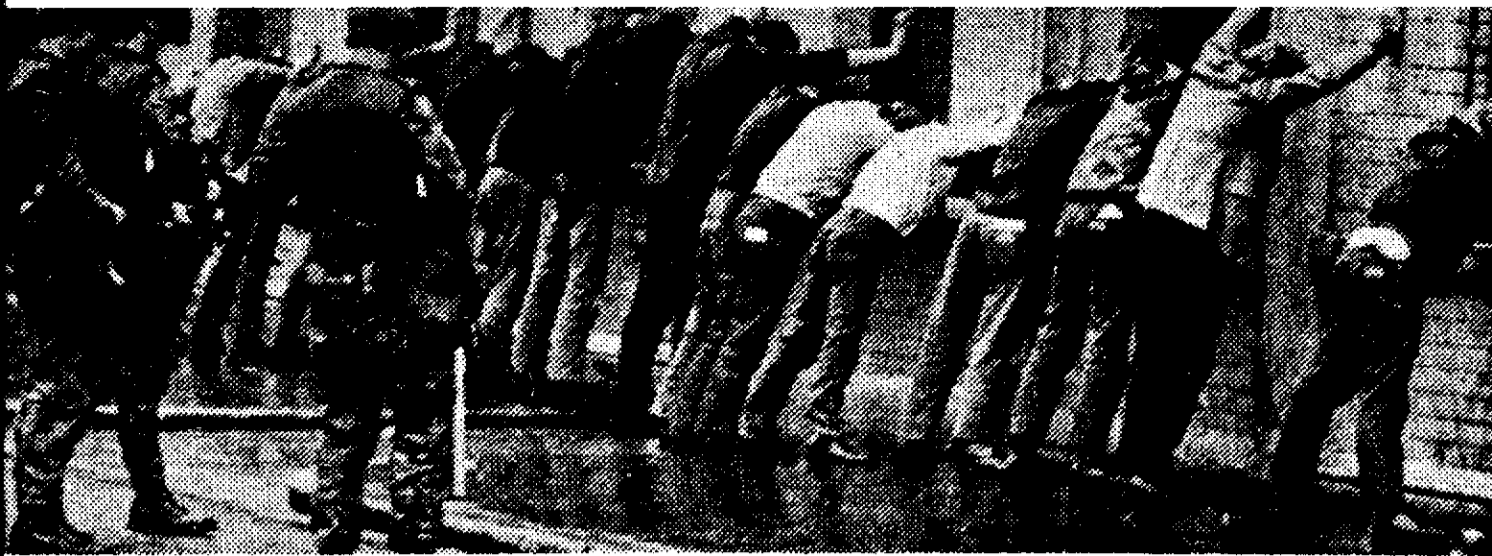
The Protestant landlords played the role of an English garrison in Ireland ensuring its continued subjugation.

The divisions in Irish society were thus not ones deriving from religious faith but from property ownership.

Protestant tenant-farmers learnt this to their cost when



despite the Penal Code, many were refused land by Protes-



larly since 1969, has performed the role of consciously mystifying the social and political issues which underlie the present conflict.

Instead of reporting this background information, they have chosen to portray events as an archaic 'historic' feud between Protestants and Catholics who cannot forget past rivalries.

This interpretation lends substance to their picture of the British Army as an independent philanthropic 'peace-keeping force' which is there to keep the 'two sides' apart rather than its actual role of strong-arm guarantee of con-

tinued British rule.

The distortions of the Press are compounded by the role of the Labour and Trade Union leadership in the continued subjection of Ireland.

Their abject class collaboration over other issues becomes out and out partnership with British capitalism on the Irish situation.

**'Bi-partisan'**

Their 'bi-partisan' policy has meant that Labour and Conservative Governments have both presided over internment, torture, murder and the intimidation of the

nationalist minority in the North of Ireland.

This has conveniently kept the issue beyond the pale of the political activity of the two main parties.

This complicity does not only apply to the right wing of the Labour leadership.

Tribunite 'left' M.P. Stanley Orme accepted the position of second-in-command to Merlyn Rees as executor of the armed oppression of the people of Northern Ireland.

The failure of the majority of 'Left' M.P.s to oppose this common policy with the Tories has helped render the

British Labour movement spectators on a life-and-death struggle which is integral to their own political future.

It is vital therefore that an independent initiative is begun in the British Labour movement, and the starting point for this is the clarification of the basic issues in the Irish conflict.

This series of articles is intended to begin this process.

Such a clarification necessitates a survey of the historical background to the present conflicts.



the much vaunted 'Grattan's Parliament'.

This gave the Irish Parliament formal legislative independence, while in reality the English government continued to rule by means of corruption in Parliament and control of the armed forces and administration in Ireland.

One of the most clear-sighted contemporary critics of the deal was Theobald Wolfe Tone, a Protestant barrister.

Tone wrote that this 'Revolution' was one 'Which, while at a stroke it doubled the value of every borough-monger in the kingdom, left three fourths of our countrymen slaves as it found them, and the Government of Ireland in the base and wicked contemptible hands, who had spent their lives degrading and plundering her...'

*An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland 1791*

By his unqualified assertion of Ireland's right to self determination, Tone avoided the contradiction of Grattan's position (one which is still prevalent among would be 'reformers' of the North of Ireland

A giant Repeal meeting at Tara, 1843

Ireland, he stated, meant ending British rule.

Inspired by the French Revolution of 1789, which had a powerful impact on Ireland Tone founded the United Irishmen in 1791, initially among Presbyterians and Dissenters in Ulster as a radical reform society.

Their three principles were:

1. Democracy
2. National Sovereignty
3. Union of all the people to achieve the other aims

The development of U.I. into a revolutionary society occurred through their links with the Catholic Committee.

**Conceded**

Tone managed in 1793 through this alliance to force the British government to concede the vote, not to the Catholic middle-class alone, as the latter had wished, but also to 30,000 Catholic peasant 40-shilling freeholders.

The entry of the Catholic masses into politics threatened the positions of the gentlemen of the Catholic Committee, which dissolved itself at the behest of the Government.

forces he described as 'that numerous and respectable section of society—the men of no property'.

**'Defenders'**

In Ireland this meant mainly the Catholic peasantry. Links were therefore attempted with the 'Defenders', an agrarian secret society formed in Ulster by Catholic tenants to protect themselves from the Protestant vigilante gangs known as the 'Peep-O-Day' Boys.

These thugs resented the influx into Ulster of Catholic farmers, who were used to paying higher rents and therefore constituted a threat to their economic position.

The 'Peep-O-Day' gangs constituted the new material for the foundation of the Orange Society in 1795.

**Cause**

With the outbreak of war between England and France in 1793, there were hopes among the U.I. that revolutionary France would assist their revolutionary

Wolfe Tone

nearly realised in 1796, when a French fleet with Tone on board arrived off the coast at Bantry Bay.

However bad weather prevented the French army from landing and the fleet returned to France, where Tone immediately began attempting to mobilise another expedition.

While the sight of this fleet off the coast greatly encouraged the U.I., it also alarmed the government.

**Vicious**

It heralded one of the most vicious chapters of British rule in Ireland.

Since the U.I. was best organised in Ulster, a force was sent there under General Lake to put down 'sedition'.

An Indemnity Act and an Insurrection Act were passed, the former to sanction any illegal act committed in the preservation of the 'peace'.

This gave unlimited licence to Orange Society and Peep-O-Day Boy gangs to ravage and plunder the holdings of Catholic tenants.

These gangs were later armed and put into uniform

**'B' Specials.**

The Insurrection Act made it a capital offence to administer an illegal oath, such as that of the U.I.

After 1797 had been spent waiting in vain for French support and early 1798 had seen the arrest of the entire leadership of the U.I., Lord Edward Fitzgerald called together a new directorate and decided on May 23 as the time for the rising.

However, before the appointed night, all the members of the new directorate fell into British hands. Fitzgerald was delivered by the treachery of Magan, a wealthy Catholic barrister.

**Uprisings**

Without the co-ordination of National Leadership, the rising became an unco-ordinated series of local uprisings. Although in certain areas—such as Wicklow and Wexford—these scored considerable successes against the Yeomanry and militia, they were destined to collapse one by one.

Tone landed with a French expedition on August 7 but was quickly defeated.

He was arrested, tried and sentenced to hang. He only escaped the rope by cutting his own throat in prison.

The defeat of the rising and the extent of the bloody repression by the army before and afterwards left the Irish masses in a state of shock for over two decades.

The Act of Union which was passed in 1800, was thus merely a new arrangement with a tiny minority of the population.

This change in the form of English rule was necessitated by the English government's fear of Ireland constantly being its 'Achilles' Heel' in its imperialist rivalry with France.

**Market**

It was designed to remove the danger of the recurrence of an invasion like that of 1798.

Economically it suited English business interests by guaranteeing it as a source of cheap food and labour,

This Act which was passed in the Irish Parliament only through bribery, threats to the Protestant Ascendancy, and promises of Emancipation (ie. entry into Parliament) to the Catholic middle classes, was the concrete denial of the existence of an independent Irish nation.



Grattan

The history of Ireland since 1800 has been the constant reappearance of this nation despite this legal conjuring trick.

The form of rule of the one nation over the other may have changed, but the core of it, the pernicious land system, continued unchanged.

Plots of land were let and sub-let many times over, with a middle-man taking his share on each sub-division.

The competition for a livelihood on the land had been greatly increased by the numerous bankruptcies in Irish industry caused by the union with Britain.

This removed the moderate protective duties on British goods which had secured a small home market for Irish industry.

From these linked economic consequences of the union emerged the two strands of resistance to British rule.

1. The Agrarian secret societies of the peasantry.

2. The liberal-national movement of the Catholic middle classes.

The Agrarian societies had been widespread in the 18th Century in the form of Whiteboys, Rockboys, Defenders and others.

However with the defeat of the 1798 rising, the liberal-nationalist movement took

# IN REVIEW

Spanish Communist Party leader Santiago Carrillo in his book 'Euro Communism and The State' declares himself a supporter of Khrushchev. The trend to Carrillo's chosen kind of 'Communism', he says, was reversed at the point of Khrushchev's downfall.

Such statements make it worth examining *Khrushchev Remembers*. In particular Volume One of these reminiscences shows the early emergence of the long time Stalinist bureaucrat who was to step into Stalin's shoes after 1953.

Nikita Khrushchev must have been one of the most sickening, grovelling bureaucrats ever educated in the school of Stalin.

That much is instantly clear from these memoirs which no doubt attempt to show him in the most favourable light.

## Leading role

Khrushchev did not just suddenly emerge with the death of Stalin in 1953. He had joined the Communist Party in 1918.

From the start he had supported Stalin in carrying through the purge of Trotsky and the Left Opposition.

Khrushchev was playing a leading role in the Party by the time of the Moscow Trials and accepted every zig-zag of policy and counter-revolutionary manoeuvre carried out by Stalin.

Running through all of Khrushchev's limited criticism of Stalin is a refusal to attack anything more fundamental



Khrushchev held back mass movement after death of Stalin

than Stalin's attacks on democracy.

And even this criticism was withheld until after Stalin's death.

In the meantime Khrushchev built up his personal position on the bones of people murdered by the Stalin machine, with the obvious involvement of Khrushchev himself.

The book is written to suggest that Khrushchev only suspected that things were happening, while dazzled by Stalin's theoretical strength and distinguished record.

But of course this is a cynical deception. Stalin had no theoretical ability, and his history was continuously rewritten to keep pace with



## Memoirs of a bureaucrat

"Khrushchev Remembers", translated by Strobe Talbot. Introduction, commentary and notes by Edward Crankshaw. Penguin Books, £2.25.

he himself joined the Red Army—then led by Trotsky—in 1919, and remained on the scene while Trotsky was first slandered and then written out of all official history books on Stalin's instructions.

And Khrushchev also must have known that virtually all his acquaintances of similar rank were being executed.

On page after page Khrushchev casually notes the shooting of this or that leading contemporary.

## Stayed alive

As he says of the post 1930 period:

'During the years that followed I stayed alive while most of my contemporaries, my classmates at the academy, my friends with whom I had worked in the Party organisation, lost their heads

In such an environment, Khrushchev, the 'survivor' reigned supreme.

His later criticism of Stalin's murders is based on the practical problem of consolidating a relatively stable bureaucracy independent of the whims of an individual, which could give its full attention to the long-term problem of holding down the Russian working class.

But, despite the appearance of strength, a stable bureaucracy in the Soviet Union is an impossibility, as Khrushchev himself found when he was stripped from all office in 1964.

While Khrushchev was grovelling to avoid the executioner's bullet he was also supporting every political position taken by Stalin.

## Excessive

This included the Stalin Hitler Pact of 1939, which very nearly led to the defeat of the Soviet Union by the Nazi war machine in 1941.

Khrushchev also entirely supports Stalin's attacks on Trotskyists. His criticism of the purges is restricted to the excessive purging of fellow bureaucrats:

'It was precisely during this period (1935-38) that the practice of mass repression through the government apparatus was born, first against the enemies of Leninism—Trotskyites, Zinovievites, Bukharinites, long since politically defeated by the Party, and subsequently against many honest Communists, against those Party cadres who had borne the heavy load of the Civil War and the first and most difficult years of industrialisation and collectivisation, who actively fought against the Trotskyites and the rightists for the Leninist Party Line'.  
(From *The Secret Speech at the 20th CPSU Congress: this vol. P.587*)

Of course Khrushchev nowhere attempts to explain Stalin. We hear only of the personal defect of his rudeness.

No connection is drawn between the exorbitant material privileges of Stalin's position and that of the bureaucracy as a whole—country houses, luxury holidays, etc—and the need to defend them by repression.

This is because Khrushchev himself emerged as the con-

The book goes on to reveal that the sensational Secret Speech itself was a measure of self-preservation on the behalf of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

## Head off

Khrushchev argued against opponents of the speech, pointing out that those wrongfully imprisoned under Stalin would soon be returning to their families and would raise questions that



Hungary 1956

would have to be answered. Fearing the explosive forces this could unleash, Khrushchev attempted to head them off.

But in doing so he was careful not to go too far.

The book casts interesting light on the relationship between the Kremlin and the leaders of the Communist Parties internationally;

'... we decided not to say anything about the open trials in my speech to the Twentieth Party Congress. There was a certain ambiguity in our conduct here.

The reason for our decision was that there had been representatives of the fraternal Communist Parties present when Rykov, Bukharin and other leaders of the people were tried and sentenced

## Pseudo Play for Today

Slanders on left wing groups are two a penny on the News. Last week's BBC television 'Play For Today' extended that slander to drama with Robin Chapman's play, 'Come the Revolution'

It was a tedious 'comedy' about a fringe left theatre group who get given the star treatment by a leading 'Trotskyist' actress, Beth Bailey.

She changes their show into a reiteration of simplistic slogans and assures them that their performance at a union rally could spark the revolution.

There is no doubt there are plays, even comedies, to be written about the left, but *Come the Revolution* was such crude right wing propaganda that it could only have been acceptable to TV because of its targets.

The 'left' theatre group has no politics. Its credentials are established solely by the fact that its members draw the dole as well as working.

Beth Bailey, the actress, is such an obvious jibe at Vanessa Redgrave that the part had to be cast to look totally different.

She rides in a Rolls Royce and then changes to a bicycle for the last mile. She patronises everyone in sight, concludes cut throat business deals on the side and produces her politics as the crudest series of clumsy propaganda points.

The programme ends with the moronic leader of the

theatre group gloomily watching the miners dancing with the women from the show.

'They don't need us do they?'

'What do we do?'

'Go home. They've got their own bloody culture.'

In that the play is a crude hatchet job on the left it is relatively unimportant. Its real slander is against the working class, portrayed in the shape of the miners as anti political, philistines.



Redgrave—slandered

'Nothing like a good dose of propaganda to get you started on the second shift', says one of them watching the show.

The play draws on experience that suggests Robin Chapman has never stepped into the real world.

The patronising pseudo theatre comes not so much from the performance of his wet group of lefties as from his own pen.

importance to the account of Khrushchev's early history as Stalin's trainee.

Prick any so-called 'Euro Communist' leader today and you will find a similar self-centred thoroughly opportunist and bureaucratic creature of Stalinism.

As the crisis of capitalism forces the bourgeoisie in every country to intensify its attacks on the working class, these bureaucrats, schooled solely in 'peaceful co-existence' with capitalism, move in support of vicious austerity measures, and to suppress the slightest sign of independent working class action.

In this they find a fitting father-figure in Nikita Khrushchev.

And, of course, he defends the brutal repression of the 1956 Hungarian revolution.

And, of course, he defends the brutal repression of the 1956 Hungarian revolution.





PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

# ANOTHER TORY BUDGET

Healey

The Lib-Lab mini-budget announced by Chancellor Healey last week was designed to ensure continued backing from TUC leaders for the 10% pay limit and to give the appearance of generosity while giving nothing of substance to the working class.

The puny tax handouts so

much trumpeted in the Tory press are merely the result of bringing forward changes due next April anyway, and have been more than financed by huge cuts in public spending now devastating the social services.

The £400 million supposedly designed to create jobs in the construction industry will find its way directly into the coffers of the privately-owned building firms.

In the meantime Healey has made lavish concessions to small businessmen and those who take frequent holidays abroad, while pensioners are insulted by a pathetic £10 Christmas bonus.

Pensions at present, even with rises due in November, still languish well below even the inadequate £18 for a single person and £23.30 for a married couple called for by the *Help the Aged* organisation.

Healey's magnanimous "tax free" Christmas donation of 3p a day over a year may create an illusion of wealth in the fortnight before Christmas but will do nothing to relieve long-term poverty among Britain's 8½ million pensioners.

Indeed 2½ million are already so badly off that they pay no tax at all and qualify for supplementary benefit.

In short the budget is well summed up by the *Sunday Times Business News*:

"To barely concealed Tory dismay, Denis Healey has become



Dix

the best Conservative Chancellor we have.

In his latest Budget he again observed, almost entirely, the conditions laid down by the International Monetary Fund... and he brought substantial relief to the backbone of the Conservative Party, namely the small businessman."

Yet TUC leaders have hastened to give the fake package their seal of approval, hoping against hope that the £1 a week tax cut will defuse the pay struggle.

Jack Jones, himself well on the way to a comfortable TGWU pension, declared the measures were "a step in the right direction".

David Bassett of the GMWU announced the package was a "good try" and that he would wait until April to see what followed.

And TUC General Secretary Len Murray claimed that "this package is useful, but more will be needed, and soon".

Not so impressed, however, were public sector union chiefs, who now face the certainty of policing further cut-backs in the social services.

NUPE assistant general secretary Bernard Dix complained that the latest package of Tory policies was "too little, too late".

Less printable

The comments of the 1.5 million currently on Britain's dole queues, now obviously condemned to an indefinite future of unemployment are likely to be less printable.

But while shedding crocodile tears on unemployment, the Labour 'lefts' of the *Tribune* newspaper simply moaned that Healey has made no further money available to the National Enterprise Board—which is now spearheading a job-slashing drive to cut manning levels in British Leyland and other industries.

In contrast to these 'lefts' who tacitly support the coalition, the answer to Healey's Budget from the workers' movement must be clear and categorical.

The Lib-Lab coalition that spawned the Budget must be broken, its defenders ousted from leadership positions, and a socialist programme adopted to fight a General Election.

By John Lister

# OUR POLICIES Open the books

A new series on the fight for Transitional Demands

British Leyland—a supposedly 'nationalised' industry operated a 'slush fund' for the payment of bribes to officials, dealers and distributors at home and abroad.

This much was revealed in

the secret speech made by deposed Leyland chairman Sir Richard Dobson, published by *Socialist Challenge*.

But this kind of revelation must lead on to further questions on the relationship between the "public sector" and the capitalist economy as a whole.

In such a situation the demand for an elected workers committee to thoroughly examine Leyland's books offers a clear perspective to develop the struggle both within the car monopoly itself and also far beyond it.

Starting from workers

awareness of widespread corruption at management level, the 'open the books' demand points to the fact that what is at stake is not a handful of corrupt individuals in one firm but a system in which similar behind-the-scenes deals, swindles and pay-offs govern the lives of millions of workers.

## Outlet

The "nationalised" Leyland empire, for instance, acts for the British capitalist class as a crucial outlet for the almost entirely privately owned component firms which are currently recording substantial profits.

In addition, Leyland workers face cuts in real wages coupled to savage attempts to cut manning levels on production tracks, in which the company relies on the support of convenors and union officials declaring the need to 'save the company'.

Yet at the same time huge interest payments are being made by Leyland to privately owned banks, each of which is turning in huge profit figures.

The 'open the books' demand is a means of exposing this state of affairs to the organised workforce in Leyland, and making this the basis of further action in defence of jobs and living standards.

## No illusions

As socialists, of course, we have no illusions. The problems that workers face in Leyland cannot be solved in just one company.

To resolve such problems it is necessary to fight for the nationalisation of the entire

motor and component industry, along with the banks and to run them as part of a planned, socialist economy.

But to achieve such a demand it is necessary to do more than proclaim it.

We must build a sufficiently broad mobilisation within the working class, starting from the existing level of consciousness of workers, and fighting to develop that consciousness in the course of struggle.

The 'open the books' demand, coupled to demands for the protection of jobs and living standards, offers a means to raise these questions in a living way in the workers' movement.

## First condition

Trotsky outlined the purpose of the demand as follows:

"A real economic plan requires concrete statistics, figures, diagrams. Naturally we are very far from that. The first condition for a first outline of the plan consists in setting forth everything that the nation possesses in productive, material and human forces, in raw materials, etc.

We must be acquainted with the real costs of production like the "incidental expenses" of capitalist fraud and for that we must abolish once and for all the fraudulent plot that goes under the name of business secrecy.

... we are staunch advocates of workers' control. We often meet this objection: "Control is not enough. We want nationalisation and workers' management."

However we do not in any way counterpose the two slogans. For the workers to



Trotsky

take over the administration of industry—which is absolutely necessary, and as soon as possible, for the well-being of civilisation—we must immediately demand workers control...

For nationalisation to operate in a revolutionary way, not bureaucratically, the workers must participate at every stage. They must prepare themselves for it, beginning now, in the management of industry and the entire economy in the form of workers control, beginning with their factory." (*Writings*, 1934-5, p. 225-6)

The open the books demand is thus completely linked to the fight for workers control of production and the overall struggle for the nationalisation of the entire economy under workers management.

The call for the opening of the books therefore has nothing whatever in common with "workers participation" schemes.

These are designed to incorporate layers of shop stewards and convenors into management, revealing selected management statistics as a stimulus to encourage such collaborators to oppose militant action by workers on the shop floor.

## Independence

While "participation" sets out to blur class lines and defuse struggles, 'open the books' starts from the independence of the workforce from the deals and interests of management.

As such the demand is equally valid in "private" or "public" sector enterprises, in 'bankrupt' or profitable firms.

It provides a means to direct workers' attention to their exploited position in society, and to point towards an independent class solution to such exploitation.

And in this context the demand is a fundamental aspect of the work of the Workers Socialist League within the mass workers

# PRESS GANG Day of the jackals

Like all impotent creatures the British Press is jealous of its virility.

Prevented by its own timidity and business connections and by repressive laws from investigating any of the real scandals in politics or business, it substitutes muck-raking.

Nothing pleases the Press more than to be hinting at sexual secrets of prominent figures.

T. Dan Smith was able to practice his corruption unhampered by the Press (while it was the common small talk of the North East), and Jeremy Thorpe's connections with the London and County Securities fringe bank have been allowed to slip into the mists of the past.

(Mr. Thorpe became a non-executive director of the bank in 1971 at £5,000 a year, for which sum he was apparently expected only to attract publicity to the group.

The publicity did eventually accrue when the bank collapsed with 12,500 small depositors at risk.

He was ticked off by a Department of Trade report for "an error of judgement".

When allegations about Mr Thorpe's sexual life were

vent hacks of Fleet Street ground into action.

For more than a year they have pursued Mr Thorpe from one statement to another under the disguise of 'Press Freedom' and allegations of a 'cover up' and a murder threat.

## Fourth question

The real question that they wanted to ask became clear at Mr Thorpe's press conference last week.

"Have you" asked the man from the BBC, "ever had a homosexual relationship?"

It was the fourth question of the press conference and the only one that really counted for these guardians of our freedom.

As Mr and Mrs Thorpe, his lawyer and Clement Freud tried variations on outraged dignity, the mob blundered on for several minutes turning the question over as if thumbing through a dirty magazine.

Four times they came back to the same question. Never mind about Norman Scott, the murder threat, the alleged cover up, what about your sex life?

They chased hard for just half a sentence around which to build their "Confessions of

Eventually Thorpe retreated behind a thinly concealed threat of libel action where the slaving journalists dared not follow.

They returned to their offices to inspire editorials that threw the mud back in Mr Thorpe's face.

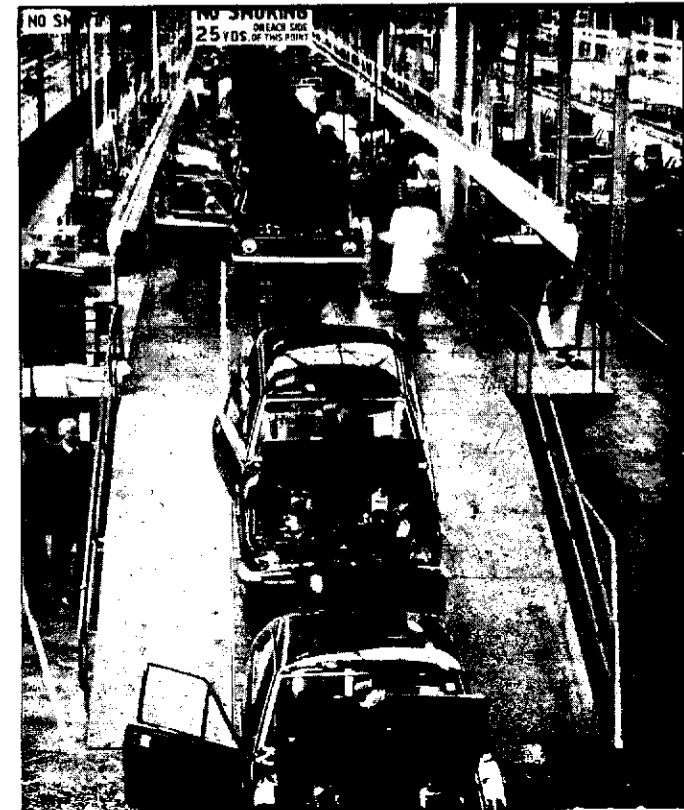
The *Daily Express* said: "It is not good enough and it will not put an end to all the rumours and awkward questions... The crux of the matter is his relationship with Norman Scott in the 1960's... How could such an innocent relationship have had such cruelly ludicrous results."

There is no reason to suppose that the Liberal Party is less free of corruption, shady deals and cover-ups than the two bigger brothers in Parliament, who have become almost inured to business scandals.

## Sex life

There may well be a job to do on the business dealings of the Liberals in general, Thorpe in particular and a cover-up on the Norman Scott affair.

But if there is one book that *Socialist Press* does not call to be opened, it is the



Leyland—outlet for private owned component firms.

# INDUSTRIAL NEWS

## Grunwick support vetoed by TUC

Workers Socialist League members and supporters were amongst the 200-strong lobby of the TUC General Council on Wednesday 26 October, called by the Grunwick strike committee.

Other contingents included delegations from the Rolls Royce and London Metropole Hotel strikes, postal workers from Cricklewood and London International branches and electrical and engineering delegations.

As the motley collection of bureaucrats filed through the lobbies, the bitterness of the strikers became clear.

Greeted with cries of 'scab', 'your 12 month rule is killing us' and 'how much longer on the picket line?', Jones, Fisher and Chappel were forced to mutter seemingly encouraging words about 'the need for blacking' and 'giving full support to the strike'.

However, as these leaders emerged and the results of the meeting were announced, the full extent to which these mouthpieces of the ruling class are prepared to go to sell out the Grunwick strike became once again crystal clear.

Only the bureaucrats of the UPW proposed any 'action'. They had it seems, agreed at the meeting to consult Grantham and his cronies at APEX ostensibly "to discuss" the feasibility of blacking action by postal workers.

Jackson of the UPW will go ahead with such a recom-

mendation to his members only if 'the union was assured financial indemnification by other unions in the TUC'. But this wasn't even discussed in the General Council meeting.

Although the results of the lobby may therefore seem to have had little effect, in fact quite the reverse is true.

As the WSL leaflet distributed at the lobby argued:

"The importance of today's lobby lies precisely in the fact that rather than 'ignoring' or 'bypassing' these union bosses, workers at Grunwicks are taking up the fight to expose their inactivity.

This fight must be relentlessly carried on. The strikers must ensure that it is spread over to other key sections of workers—post office workers must be encouraged to place demands on their executives

and Regional Councils and similarly with other workers".

A new mass picket has been called for November 7.

This is a welcome step and we call on all readers to actively support the picket which must serve as a focus and stimulus for workers who can strike in support or block the factory.

### Mobilisation

Mass pickets must not serve as the central plank of the strikers' policy since in themselves they are completely insufficient to win this dispute.

Only the mobilisation of workers capable of cutting off supplies and services to the factory—against their union officials—can lead these strikers to full reinstatement and union recognition.



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard, Report

An arrest on the Grunwick mass picket.

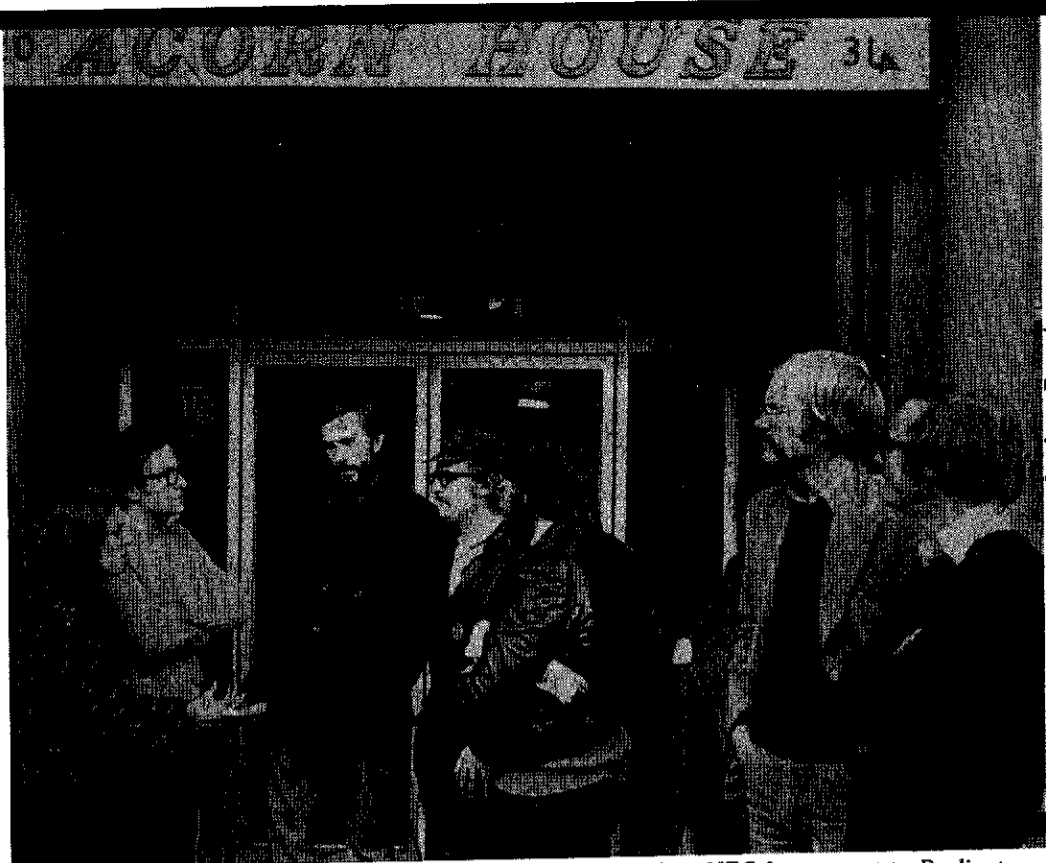


PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, Report

NUJ members lobby their NEC for support to Darlington

## PRINT LEADERS BID TO BREAK NUJ STRIKE

NATSOPA workers supporting the NUJ closed shop strike at Darlington returned to 'work' last week, furious at the action of their union leadership.

Tommy Ferguson, the NATSOPA FoC, had a stand up row with the official sent up to order them back.

Not only have his members been forced to cross NUJ, NGA and SLADE picket lines, but they were further humiliated by Westminster Press management on their return, being told that holiday entitlement had been forfeited by their action.

Their return has put the workers back on the company payroll, but with no work for them to do, so long as the NGA members stay out.

Everything points to a deal between Owen O'Brien—NATSOPA General Secretary—and Westminster Press, who own North of England Newspapers. NATSOPA have successfully pulled out of the dispute and stopped the £50 per person a week strike pay that they claimed was draining their funds.

In return, Westminster Press were so confident that NATSOPA's defection would end print union support that they had notices placed on the Northern Echo windows proclaiming 'We're Back'. A curtain covered this over optimistic slogan.

The NATSOPA workers are on basic pay—far less than their strike pay—and Westminster Press is expected to lay them off within two

weeks if the paper cannot resume publishing.

Thus NATSOPA officials have not only struck a blow against the strike but may have thrown their members on the dole in the process.

The NUJ is now committed to a series of guerrilla strikes throughout the rest of the group and are pressing for the NGA executive, meeting this week, to support these.

The NGA executive has already admitted that their members at Darlington would be very hard to persuade to go back to work.

But they are unlikely to permit effective support by their members.

If this happens NUJ members must go it alone with all out sympathy strikes and fight for local print support in defiance of the NGA executive.

### Wage claim

NUJ chapels throughout the provincial papers are voting on whether to strike over a £23 wage claim with numerous fringe benefits.

The Newspaper Society employers offered 10%, which has been accepted by their tame scab union, the IOJ.

The IOJ issued a statement that if any 'other group' won more than 10% they would expect the same.

The struggle for a decent wage in the NUJ cannot be separated from the closed shop dispute at Darlington.

An all out strike over pay must go forward hand in hand with all out strikes to win at Darlington.

## Lobby against Cuts

70 trade unionists from various hospitals came together last week to lobby a meeting of the Area Health Authority against savage cuts proposed locally in the Health Service.

The lobby, called by COHSE, was supported by workers in NUPE, ASTMS and UCATT—some in all of these unions answering a call to strike work for the period.

Representatives were hastily invited in by the AHA chairman, Labour Peer Lady McCarthy, who explained that NHS standards were all a 'comparative' matter and anyway, none of the plans to cut back over £2 million was finalised—yet!

These workers now face the need to take further action to defend the Health Service and their jobs. The national leaders of the public sector unions have called for a week of action from November 21—action which is to be limited nationally to a lobby of Parliament by allotted delegates, not to

Last year an unlimited demonstration and lobby of Parliament pulled 80,000.

These compromising union leaders must be exposed or pressured into fighting by a campaign to open and examine the accounts of Health Authorities and supply companies to reveal the rake-offs and misuse of

Health resources.

This campaign must be accompanied and fought for by the mobilisation of workers through strike action and the occupation and administration by workers of hospitals planned for closure.

In that way the fight can begin for our control of our Health Service.



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard, Report

DEFEND HOUNSLOW HOSPITAL. A delegate conference has been called by the Occupation Committee to be held at LSE on November 5. Enquiries to Carl Brecker at the hospital.

## Fight Alfred Herbert sackings!

Coventry machine tool manufacturers Alfred Herbert have announced the sacking of 460 workers.

The unions involved have been given a detailed breakdown of those who will lose their jobs—all that is missing is the actual names.

Taken together, the sackings will mean that Herberts are intending to shed 25% of its total workforce.

Bailed out by the Labour government to the tune of £68 million, just two years ago, Herberts blame 'lack of orders' and 'foreign competition' for the difficulties they now face.

AUEW convenor Tom Doughty is arguing for a strategy of import controls to help Herberts compete successfully—especially with German manufacturers—and thus make the necessary profit to secure jobs.

This is a complete dead end for the workers now under threat.

As the crisis mounts Herberts will continue to claim loss of profits as a pretext for redundancies and speed-up.

A policy to defend jobs must start from just that—not from some imagined common interest between workers and employer in the form of boosting profits.

The unions must demand the opening of the company books to find out if company claims are correct.

The information found there must be used to draw up a workers plan for production and nationalisation to provide the necessary investment.

An 'open the books' committee drawn from all sections of the workforce would help to forge a unity which at present is non-existent.

In the face of a common fate, militants within all the unions must campaign for united action, including strikes, and the occupation of the factory to force the company to open their books to

## Cowley stewards invasion

Workers from the Transport Department at British Leylands Cowley Assembly Plant invaded a meeting of TGWU Shop Stewards from the plant on Tuesday of last week.

The workers were protesting at the decision of right wing TGWU Convenor Reg Parsons to bar their shop steward, Alan Thornett, from a meeting of stewards to discuss Leylands proposals for centralised wage bargaining.

Shop stewards at the meeting said that the 100 or so workers made a very powerful intervention accusing Parsons of witch-hunting. They vigorously defended their right to decide who will represent them.

The vast majority of 170 stewards supported the Transport drivers and in the end Parsons left the meeting after refusing to change his position.

\*\*\*\*\*

British Leyland ordered a special sacking document to be drawn up last year for Asian families who take too long over visiting their families.

Leyland factories with a large number of immigrant workers were told to draw up agreements that would sack a worker on unpaid leave abroad who was not back on the decreed date.

The company told an industrial tribunal in Reading this week, that the policy was for both black and white workers but had been drawn up with Pakistanis and Indian workers in mind.

A Cowley worker who had signed the document although he could not read English and then was delayed in Pakistan through dysentery was told that whatever the outcome of the case the tribunal would not force Leyland to take him back.

\*\*\*\*\*

The AUEW's final appeal court last week unanimously deplored the action of the union's Executive.

The EC had refused to pass on to the court letters from the Sheffield District and from Smethwick objecting to the notorious Executive circular that backed the 12-month rule.

According to extreme right wing General Secretary John Boyd, the decision to suppress the letters in this way was taken unanimously by the Executive—which includes Maoist Reg Birch.

# METROPOLE STRIKE SPURS £50 WAGE BATTLE

The lead given by workers in the London Metropole Hotel, on strike for over three weeks for a £50 minimum wage, has added urgency to the fight against low pay throughout the industry.

The strike committee's lobby of last week's meeting of the TUC General Council—in which they were supported by fellow GMWU members from the Centre Hotels group—challenged Bassnett, the union's General Secretary, on his support for the TUC's 12-month rule.

This rule is being used by the union's full time officials Romp and Tilston and the employer to resist the claim.

### Arbitrary arrests

Arbitrary arrests of four pickets last Saturday have not succeeded in intimidating the remaining Metropole strikers and they are determined to hold out as workers in dozens of London hotels prepare for action on similar minimum wage demands.

First in line of these are the 600 union members in Centre Hotels where management are due to give their reply to the wage claim on November 3.

The following day GMWU shop stewards in Rank Hotels will be told of their company's response.

Grand Metropolitan, London's largest group with 22 hotels, have yet to answer a £50 per week minimum wage claim submitted in August.

Trust Houses Forte have been presented with the same demand from Strand Hotels a fortnight ago.

### No help

Conditions are better than ever to organise widespread action. To ensure victory at the Metropole and make the most of this opportunity, all-out strikes in support of the minimum wage policy are immediately needed.

Hotel workers can expect no help from the GMWU bureaucracy in this struggle.

It is the officials who are responsible for the present situation. Their members have been organised only to pay their subscriptions; there has been no attempt to mount any concerted cam-

paign against the millionaire tycoons like Maxwell Joseph, Tiny Rowland and Charles Forte who are making fortunes from sky-high prices and rock-bottom wages.

### Meeting

The London Metropole Strike Committee and the Hotel and Catering Workers National Action Committee are sponsoring a CDLM hotel workers meeting on Saturday November 5 at 3pm at the YWCA, Great Russell St. Central London.

Workers in the catering and hotel industry are invited to discuss spreading the fight for the minimum wage and the adoption of a programme to take the campaign forward.

Support must be maintained for the Metropole, both on the picket and financially.



Mass picket outside Metropole Hotel

A mass picket has been called for Friday evening between 6 pm and 10 pm. Donations should be sent to the Strike Committee, 76, Hatherley Rd., Walthamstow, London E17. Messages of support and offers of help should be sent to the same address or phone 01-723-4782.

## Keeping us in the dark

Blackouts throughout Britain due to the power workers dispute have been matched only by press blackouts on their claim and other pay disputes.

The action is over fringe benefits and 'backdoor' pay rises including demands for increased shift allowances and a travel allowance.

The claim is pitifully inadequate. Its main importance is in its challenge to the 12-month rule since the power workers' present deal does not expire until March.

The effect of their minimal action has been dramatic. Noone sitting by candlelight can fail to notice it. But press stories have been confined to exhortations to consumers not to use electricity in case there isn't any.

### Hit headlines

Strike figures have increased fourfold over the past three months—most of them over wages. But the only workers who hit the headlines are those who settle for 10% deals.

All over Britain the lights—and the news coverage of strikes—are going out.

## Printers' claim

The Newspaper Publishers Association have turned down a 35% claim by print unions representing Fleet Street workers.

Instead they have offered 10%, arguing that a larger settlement might invite government sanctions.

Meanwhile, leaders of 180,000 workers in general printing are preparing to submit a substantial claim in defiance of the 12 month rule. The unions involved are SLADE, SOGAT and NATSOPA.

### National paper

NUJ members in Fleet Street, most of whom refused to make Phase 2 settlements, are also putting claims to each individual national paper of up to 40%

But if the living standards of print workers are to be defended the most ruthless fight will have to be taken up against the leaders of these unions who despite their 'militant' stance at the TUC against the social contract have no intention of joining battle with the Lib-Lab coalition government—the author of the 12-month rule and the 10% limit.

# Troops to break Fire strike?

The Lib-Lab government is preparing to use troops to smash any attempt by firemen to win their 30% pay claim through strike action.

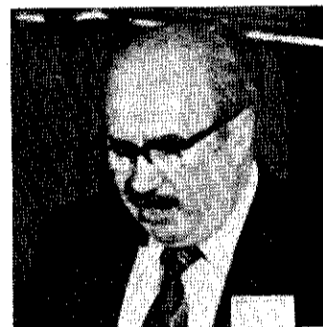
Should firemen walk out, troops will walk in to man fire stations.

The government are clearly encouraged in these plans by union leaders' scandalous inactivity in the face of RAF picket-busting at Heathrow in an effort to break the air traffic control assistants' strike.

Strike action by firemen seems clearly on the cards. Several areas have already called for strike action, and on Merseyside, firemen are threatening action next week if the government offer is regarded as unsatisfactory by a special delegate meeting in Eastbourne on Monday 7 November.

Birmingham, Manchester, Strathclyde and Oxfordshire have threatened strike action and three mass demonstrations of firemen have taken place in support of the claim.

The firemen's struggle is a key one for every worker in



the public sector. So far, every settlement in excess of the 10% norm has been in private industry, while the public sector has faced the added barrier of rigid government cash limits.

The labour movement must be mobilised to ensure that the FBU claim is won in full.

This means an immediate fight in union branches and Labour Parties to force the breaking of the Lib-Lab coalition which is plainly intent on confrontation with the firemen.

And it means fighting for Trades Councils to organise immediate supporting strike action as soon as any attempt is made to use troops to break FBU strikes.

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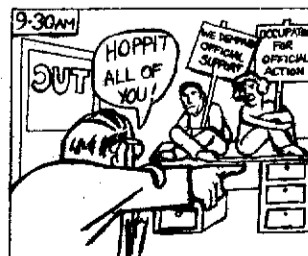




PHOTO: Mark Rubner, IFL

London picket against German government oppression

## NEW REPRESSION FOLLOWS GERMAN STATE MURDERS

The deaths on October 18 of three leading Red Army Faction figures has presented the West German government with more of a problem than just abating liberal public opinion concerning the ugly evidence now surrounding the incident.

As President Walter Scheel said last Thursday: "It presents the danger that our country splits itself into two enemy camps in which each blames the other for terrorism."

### Survivor

In response to the supposed suicides and the prospects of the fourth member surviving the ordeal to reveal the circumstances of the attack on her, the West German state immediately set up an International Commission to quash any suggestion of "an attack from outside".

The Commission's report was released last week. Predictably, State Secretary Klaus Bollig took up prime viewing time on all the TV networks to publicise the findings and to assure the population that:

"Beyond all shadow of a doubt, Ensslin, Baader and Raspe took their own lives".

All the evidence pointing to the contrary—the letters in which all four wrote that they had no intention of committing suicide, the statements by Irmgard Moller that she was stabbed, the tortuous evidence proposed by the state to explain how and when the two "suicide" pistols, explosives, a radio and the components of a secret communication net-

work reached the cells, the apparent deafness of the guards to the gunshots etc—was ignored.

More importantly though has been the effect these deaths have had on ensuring even tighter state repression. While speaker after speaker at Schleyer's funeral was appealing for a world wide campaign against terrorism, all three parties in the Bundestag were busy agreeing to new legislation designed to further restrict democratic rights and fuelling the already raging anti-radical witch-hunt.

Trials of suspected terrorists are to be drastically speeded up, and all defence lawyers will be excluded from court hearings.

Investigators will be authorised to tap phones, open suspects' mail and conduct indiscriminate searches for evidence.

All the special police units (the BKA, BGS, BSV, etc) will be reinforced and yet another so-called anti-terrorist group set up.

The activities of the latter were illustrated at the funeral of three members of the RAF on 27 October in Stuttgart.

### Body searches

Hundreds were on duty in riot gear, checking all mourners' identity passes and conducting body searches.

German press reports suggest that not a single trade union bureaucrat or MP has come out against these moves.

The task of demolishing the anti-working class legislation of the SPD/FPD coalition government and seeing to it that a workers' investigation into the deaths of the three takes place, assumes even greater urgency.

In a criminal bid to sell out the British Oxygen strike—the pay strike with potentially the biggest yet industrial power—union officials have persuaded convenors to recommend calling off action in support of the 30% pay claim.

The officials, headed by 'left' TGWU officer John Miller, had set out from the beginning to head off the action which threatened to drive a coach and horses through the 10% pay guidelines laid down by Chancellor Healey.

### Tenacity

Yet the tenacity of the strikers has been proved beyond doubt in the course of the three-week strike.

As the *Financial Times* pointed out:

"The roots of the strike... lie in their unwillingness to accept single figure wage rises, suspicion of productivity deals, dislike of complicated company work agreements... and resentment... at the way the company has handled negotiations."

If the convenors' line and the deceptive line put by Miller are rejected, whole sections of British industry could be threatened with closure within days, and the full claim could be forced out of BOC management.

### Productivity

Instead, Miller has argued for a return to work for an undisclosed "substantially improved offer" which Miller has hinted would then be made by management.

This offer is almost certain to be tied to productivity strings—in other words an attack on manning levels in BOC.

If Miller gets his way, then from waging a war on BOC in defence of their living standards, the strikers will now face the prospect of an offensive being taken up against them to force increased effort and job cuts.

This is the product of the reactionary line now being implemented by every union



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Healey

official in pay disputes that challenge the 10% limit.

Rather than strengthen and spread action to crush the pay limit and the right wing Lib-Lab coalition that spawned it, union bureaucrats see the preservation of this structure as the means of clinging onto their own privileged positions.

## Launch inquiry into car parts smash-up!

Fresh evidence that Leyland's books, and plans and production methods need to be thrown open to workers in the firm came this week with news of a plan to scrap £2 million of perfectly good spare parts.

Thousands of parts have already been destroyed by order of the management because Leyland dare not offend private dealers by offering the surplus spares cheaply.

Car seats have been slashed ariels bent, wheels sawn in half, manifolds crushed and carpets shredded in machines.

John Power, a senior shop

And when full-time officials move consciously to defend their entrenched interests, a conscious policy and a clear plan of action are the only answer.

\*No productivity deals or incentives!

\*No 12 month rule or 10% limit.

\*For catching up rises to make up for losses over the last two years, linked to cost-of-living clauses to compensate for inflation!

As we go to press convenors still have to win support for the deal at plant level.

### Continue

BOC workers must reject the spurious 'deal' hatched secretly between Miller and BOC management and foisted on their convenors by a wafer-thin two-vote majority.

They must vote at mass meetings to *continue* the strike for the full claim, and call for an extension of the blacking action that had already paralysed bosses' attempts to break the strike.



Power

steward at BMC service, Cowley who broke the news, said he had watched the smash up for years. Why?

Leyland's arrogance was supreme:

"We know our business. We know the best way of going about it.

The main reason for the scrapping policy is to protect our customers from the possibility of being offered obsolete parts by 'pirate' retailers."

Leyland workers should demand a workers' inquiry into the company policy, throwing open the business secrets of the 'nationalised' firm and the private parts and retailers firms alike.

John Power is perfectly placed as President of Oxford and District Trades Union Council to launch an inquiry based on the labour movement in the town.

His record, however, of stabbing every initiative within the working class and transforming Trades Council into a body which he hopes will do nothing, makes Power the last person to be capable of launching and carrying through such an initiative.

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With only one more post of the month to be delivered we are still a long way short of our monthly target of £600.

As we launch, with this issue, the weekly 'Socialist Press' we must stress once more that without a serious fight to raise the full £600 each month we will find it difficult to develop and expand the coverage and quality of the paper.

We urge all readers and supporters to join us in the fight to raise the money which is so essential to the maintenance and development of the weekly 'Socialist Press'.

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