

C O N T R A C T
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1st Reel

DONAT CATTIN : Now, I must thank you all deeply once again, not least for the appreciation you have expressed to my colleague TOROS and, to me - perhaps more than we deserve - and wish you all a happy Christmas: a happy Christmas accompanied by calm assemblies which will approve the work of the two delegations.

TITLE : CONTRACT

The story of the "Hot Autumn" of the engineering workers told by Ugo Gregoretti.

A WORKER : Raise your hands please!

ANOTHER WORKER: I am in favour of the contract, of course, because we have never won a contract like this, at least not in my lifetime.

ANOTHER WORKER: When it comes to the next contract, perhaps I shall not be there, and it'll be you who'll have to fight for it, and you who'll have to fight for the unity of the unions.

ANOTHER WORKER: what did he say?

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ANOTHER WORKER : We must leave this assembly determined to defend the conquests won in this contract and to make sure that every single clause is put into operation; we must re-affirm our duty to repulse all repressive actions against us of whatever type and from whatever source they come: whether in the factory or at political or even government level. The working class has not been demobilised and is ready right now, to take up the struggle again against anyone who tries to limit or get out of fulfilling its conquests.

A TRADE UNION
OFFICIAL

: All those who agree that the national contract before you should be signed, raise your hands..... thank you!..... Against?..... Abstentions?...
...One against! Approved unanimously..... Work begins again at 2.30 this afternoon, and don't forget to clock-in. Good-by, comrades, and have a good Christmas!.....

COMMENTATOR :

Turin, September 25th : 4 a.m. Manual and white collar workers from the Veneto, Liguria, Lombardy, Tuscany and Emilia, arrive in their thousands in the silence of the night, and take up position in front of the gates of FIAT MIRAFIORI, Lingotto, Stura, Ferriere, and the great motor factories. This is how it begins, the first great demonstration of the workers'unity in the story of this dispute; a dispute

officially opened two months before when the three engineering unions sent a joint letter to the bosses, registered and with a pre-paid reply, containing all the demands which have emerged from the widest series of meetings among the workers ever held in the post-war history of the Italian trade union movement : 75 lire an hour more for everyone (about 1/-), a 40-hour week, equal conditions for staff and manual workers, new trade union rights in the factory; a dispute that was to last another three months, always characterised by new tactics and ideas, and which was to provoke from the bosses the most furious reaction of the last 25 years..

..... (shouts and slogans). And whatever happened to those "reasonable" trade unions, those "policemen" trade unions which the bosses had dreamed about and talked about so much that they come to imagine, to believe, that they really existed? That Montanelli had so movingly described in Corriere della Sera, the Times of Italy? Here they are! They are to be found in these long marches, among these workers who don't limit their demands to cash increase alone, but who want to change the factory, the society even! Certainly, these are very different trade unions from the ones which the new host of professors of trade unionism - blooming suddenly in the corridors of Confindustria and the editorial offices of the big newspapers, have in mind : "Are these trade unions" they keep asking; "this is fake trade unionism", declares one of the bosses papers, 24 Hours; "this is extremism,

infantile disorder of Italian trade unionism," echoes a statement of Confindustria (paraphrasing Lenin); It is a trade union freedom that is now missing," mourns Angelo Costa, new-found defender of trade union liberty at the end of the dispute because, "there can be no trade union freedom where the right to strike is used so much that the right to work is endangered." But on September 25th., in this very square, the answer had already been given: "The right to strike is something that we won with arms in our hands against the fascist and it is not for the bosses to try to make distinctions between legal and illegal strikes, or official and unofficial."

FIAT had already tried to prise open these distinctions at the beginning of the month, when a spontaneous strike of 800 workers was answered with a lock-out of 30.000.

This led the unions to ask for the opening of negotiations earlier than planned, on the 8th. of September with Confindustria, the organisation of private employers and the 10th. with Intersind, the employers' organisation for firms with state participation. The head of the Intersind delegation was Glisenti, and although the negotiations were broken off after 8 days, at least they had the advantage of discussing the merit of the workers claims. Those with Confindustria, on the other hand, were broken off on the first day

because the employers insisted on placing a pre-condition before any further discussion - they wanted the unions to agree to place limits on plant bargaining throughout the period in which the national contract was to apply, and this the unions refused to accept. We overheard a conversation between the private employers while they were discussing a question very dear to their hearts.

AN EMPLOYER : The principal problems, one that we must face with much attention, is, I believe, that of disciplinary measures.....

ANOTHER EMPLOYER: Quite!

FIRST EMPLOYER : naturally we must be scrupulously careful not to act in such a way as to undermine discipline in the factory, because discipline is one of the most important elements involved in the productive process, and besides, life itself teaches us that no organisation can survive which doesn't have firm, solid and clear disciplinary criteria.....

COMMENTATOR : The chairman of the Intersind delegation, Carpani Glisenti, is a young industrialist from Valtrompia who lives in a large villa with a full view over the valley, and especially, over the factory which bears his name. A view not now so consoling as it was, since

even there the virus of factory democracy had been breeding for some time.

A WORKER : Glisenti is once again at the head of those who want to make us afraid; when the assembly is over, let us go to the directors and get a positive answer from them, and if they won't give it, we'll come out on strike and take over the offices.

AN EMPLOYER : we must make sure, therefore, that the contract contains a list of offences - something very necessary from a practical point of view.....

COMMENTATOR : These old-type bosses, these bosses who so often use terms like these in the 70's but who don't seem to have progressed beyond the 30's, should go down into the streets at any time of day, in any city, and then, perhaps, they would discover the real and new facts of life of the 70's ; the youngest, most alive, most progressive and least intergrated working class ever known in the history of social conflict in our country (in Italy).

MEGAPHONE : Don't let anyone have any illusions : the engineering workers' platform of demands is sacred and inviolable.

COMMENTATOR : A new school of very young trade unionist is growing up in the heat of the struggle. But sometimes the emotion becomes too much.

A YOUNG TRADE
UNIONIST

: And we must repeat again the importance of making the trade unions into a single, united organisation; it may still be incomplete, it may still need transforming - we all agree about that - but we are the ones who must transform it, not the little groups or élites. Comrades, I am 19 years old, I have been at work a year and now here I am at FIAT; I have changed a lot and come to understand many things and for this I must thank the old ones here who have given me this experience.

COMMENTATOR

: The desire to shout, to be heard, to communicate their will to fight outside as much as inside the factory, be means of various forms of guerrilla action, is already corroding the power and interests of the bosses, and stimulates the imagination of the workers in the search for new, more immediate instruments of communication. (Shouts and slogans).

One might say that these metal workers aren't frightened of anyone, and certainly not by the severe warnings of the big employers, published in the right-wing newspaper, *Il Tempo*, on the grave and dangerous situation existing at the moment. On the contrary, its when they march under the windows of the big employers themselves that their capacity to take

the mickey is seen at its best. (Shouts, music and slogans).

While all the workers understand perfectly well that the battle for the contract is a moment of fundamental importance for class unity, not all agree as to the appropriateness of the whole platform of demands ratified in the assemblies in June, nor as to the slogans and complex strategy of the struggle as a whole; a small minority, grouped around "base committees", call for more radical demands, but despite this, they never become a consciously divisive factor in the class unity of the struggle. Here's one of them at a student worker assembly at Rome University.

WORKER OF BASE
COMMITTEE

: We want everything and now, because what they will give us is even now too little, and because even that has already been partly reabsorbed by the rising cost of living. We want wages to be based on the needs of the workers and not the requirements of productivity. We will also fight for the abolition of piece-work, even if many of our comrades in the unions don't agree, saying that there's piece-work in the socialist countries; in reply to that we say that these are not socialist countries.

COMMENTATOR

: It is true that this sort of remark generally draws much more applause in the universities than in the

factories, but it is also true that the most open of the workers in the factories, and in the trade unions themselves, make great efforts to transform this conflict of opinion, often a very bitter one, with the ~~dis~~ident workers and so-called "external groups", into an open and responsible political debate, so that it stays within the working class movement, and doesn't degenerate, as so often happens, into a sterile slanging match nor - which is most dangerous of all - into a weapon in the hands of the class enemy. "The relationship and debate between the unions and the little groups is a problem for the working class and differences of opinion must be resolved within its ranks. The bosses must not be allowed to draw distinctions between the unions and these groups; we consider every attack against them and the ~~dis~~ident workers as an attack against the unions themselves and the whole Italian working class". (Shouts and slogans).

And here we can see the fruits of this policy that we were able to record on film: the great majority of the workers at Ercole Marelli, a factory at Sesto San Giovanni near Milan, vote to allow a student from the Catholic University of Milan, often seen leafleting outside the factory gates and a bitter critic of the unions policies, to speak in their mass meeting.

VOICE OF UNION
REPRESENTATIVE :

The majority have decided to let him speak; let's
he what he is got to say.

COMMENTATOR :

Now the movement shows its great capacity for self-
determination.

MEGAPHONE :

Get into line. Those with armbands act as stewards
and keep at the sides of the demonstration - make
yourselves into a line.

COMMENTATOR :

The clearest and most noticeable aspect of this capa-
city is the engineers organisation of stewarding at
demonstrations, which appears spectacularly for the
first time at Turin on September 25th. The big capi-
talist newspapers were nearly speechless; two thousand
workers with armbands become the guardians of law and
order in a city invaded by 70.000 demonstrators! Not
a punch thrown, not even a slap! The police made redun-
dant! Then a great sigh of relief. Thank God! No civil
war: the engineers are responsible after all. (Monta-
nelli was right.)

But immediately after comes a sudden, worrying, horri-
ble doubt, "Oh, but are these by some chance, the
workers' police? The Red GUARD? "Let it be clear,"
pante Corrie=re della sera at this point, "that is sort
of organisation can in no way be a substitute for the
police forces of the state!". The ruling class has, as
usual, only understood a part of the truth; they ha-
ven't realised that the stewarding is not only a defence
weapon aimed at preventing and dealing with any sort

of provocation, including that arising from the very presence of police at demonstration, but it is also something much more important: the expression of a deep sense of responsibility, both individual and collective, which has developed out of the active participation of the whole working class in working out their own policies and forms of struggle. "We have a secret weapon", declared the national secretaries of the three unions at Turin on September 25th. "unity and democracy at the base: this is the reason for our strength and for the enraged counter-attacks of the bosses". The basic conditions for a really united action by the three union organisations were born in the factories in 1968 and '69 in the course of disputes with the bosses. During these disputes the right to hold unions meetings inside the factories assumed a primary place in the platform of demands at plant level, and the value of these meetings was soon confirmed in everyday practice; a practice that put into crisis the idea that only the trade union officials should take decisions, and gave birth to a series of united union committees, a system of shop stewards in fact, elected by the workers on the shop floor, able to establish new links between the workers and technicians at factory level. At the same time, this process caused many difficulties which arose from the confrontation between old and new concepts of the role of the unions; a process that can only be

completed when we have solved the problems of the links between these new structures and the union organisations at national and district level.

Another problem was how to get union leaders inside the factory, guarded by works police and the penal code. Not that it took the workers long to find the solution of Columbus egg (the obvious solution); they go to the factory gates, collect the union official and take him inside with them, and damn the boss and his guards! In this way, hundreds of officials of the three unions illegally entered all the engineering factories and shipyards of Italy during the second half of October; and in this way too, we film makers had our first experience of illegal entry and began filming the assemblies in the factories.

MEGAPHONE

: Here's the National Secretary of FIOM who will speak on behalf of all three unions.

COMMENTATOR

: The bosses certainly weren't happy with all this coming and going. AH, well, we must try to understand them!

VOICE OF SCREEN

: It's just been announced in front of witnesses that comrade Trentin will be prosecuted. We're used to these prosecutions.....(song).

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TECHNICIAN IBM

: Today we have won what the contract ought to give us: an assembly in the factory with a union representative. He got in because we wanted him to; he wouldn't have got in if we hadn't gone down to the gates to fetch him. This shows that we can win things only if we really believe in them.

COMMENTATOR

: Union officials who take part in the assemblies inside and outside the factories, never forget to underline the basic meaning of their presence there as part of the process of class unity.

GAVIDI

: one fact which carries the greatest hope for the future is that in this assembly at FIAT, such as we haven't seen for years, only one union official is speaking to you on behalf of all three unions.

COMMENTATOR

: Here are the technicians of IBM who at the end of the assembly took us back 'en masse' to the factory gates, because carabinieri were waiting there. The presence of the technicians in this struggle - as of many other white collar sections - is certainly one of the most significant events of this autumn.

SHOUTS & SLOGANS

: Bastards.

COMMENTATOR

: Nothing new at the bargaining table. Confindustria

won't budge from its precondition on the question of plant bargaining stating that, "the right to continue plant bargaining after signing the national contract, as requested by the unions, would be to legitimise the results of violent actions, nothing short of robbery, illegally imposed outside the limits of the national contract, by violent agitation and unscrupulous coercion on the part of the unions. "Well if that is what they think, there's not much room for discussion!"

SONG

: Comrade Workers/ there's a poster in the square/ a meeting at the branch/ the negotiations broken off/ the boss won't accept/ strike, from tomorrow, strike/ no-one goes to work.

SHOUTS & SLOGANS

: Come on, let's hear you! Contract! contract!

COMMENTATOR

: The demonstration at Naples is of the same symbolic and political importance for the engineers of the South, as that at Turin has been for the North. For the first time in history we see a mass meeting of the Southern working class. Walking with them you sometimes get the impression that you are once again in a demonstration in Milan or Turin, the same accents and dialects - used there by immigrant workers, but there in Naples in their natural surrounding - and the same slogans too, used in common throughout the country - another new and significant factor of this struggle....

SHOUTS & SLOGANS : Agnelli - Pirelli twin bandits! ; Contract!

COMMENTATOR : Via Caracciolo, the street of the great hotels, the yachting clubs, the gambling houses of the rich.

SHOUTS AND SLOGANS : SHIT.....SHIT!

COMMENTATOR : A working class struggle, let it be clear, is not a dinner party.

BENVENUTO :the road to unity is one-way only, you can only go forward and win new gains for the workers...

OFF SCREEN

MACARIO : It is true that we must.....

COMMENTATOR : The executives of the three unions meeting together;

MACARIO :try to get to a settlement in a short time, while at the same time being prepared for the worst and a long drawn out struggle. However it must be said that from the way we are leading the struggle we don't give the impression that we have much imagination or that we are really using all the available energy of the workers (not so much in a qualitative sense because.....)

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COMMENTATOR

: More imagination, inside and outside the factory. The problem of public opinion poses delicate questions. Here there's not so much a boss to attack as an ally to conquer, a public opinion that throughout the autūmn is continually battered by an alarmist offensive on the part of the bosses' press and poisoned by the "objectivity" of television programmes. (Shouts and slogans).

Imagination against the printing presses, imagination against the T.V. aerials and cathode tubes, imagination against disinformation, indifference, fear, complicity masked as neutrality. To get/over this wall and reach the general public when and where they least ~~ex~~pect it; to surprise them without frightening them, to say "good morning" courteously and explain in a few words what this struggle is, why we are waging it, and ~~why~~ it concerns them as well, why in fact, it is their struggle too.

MEGAPHONE

: Take the determination of the Italian engineering workers to your places of work, to your towns and villages; our united struggle continues until!

Confindustria accepts all our demands. However long the bosses resist, we will hold ~~out~~ a minute longer. Our thanks to all the railway staff and travellers for their attention: Thank you! (Shouts and slogans).

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COMMENTATOR

: It isn't an easy job to wake up the contented consciences of mature capitalism, but with every day that passes, the workers become more and more aware of the very important role played by public opinion in this sort of society and of the historical importance of awaking up the slumbering mass of exploited people by sounding the bugle of democracy right under their windows. Realising this the workers adopt new attitudes; correct their slogans, and radically change their tactics; superficially these changes may appear contradictory but in fact they are the consequent result of a deeper understanding of the processes at work.

SHOUTS & SLOGANS

: Close your shops/Close your shops!

COMMENTATOR

: Naples, October 16th.: Turin, November 13th.:

MEGAPHONE

: Don't close your shops; we're not hooligans, we're workers demanding our rights. Don't close your shops, we are your customers, we are the people who come to your shops every day: keep your shops open!

A WORKER :
(Page 12)

: Just a moment, Miss, we are engineering workers, we are asking all the shopkeepers to give us their solidarity.... we stick notices on the shop windows of those who have given us their solidarity.....

SHOPKEEPER

: You're coming tomorrow morning, are you?

WORKER

: ...Then you'll see that all the engineers will certainly come and drink their coffee here.

COMMENTATOR

: Before the great Rome demonstration at the end of November, it can be said that despite the desperate attempts of the bosses to prevent it, the majority of public opinion even of the shopkeepers, has been won over ;

STUDENT

(off screen)

: Most of these students here are schools kids with no preconceived ideas of ideologies: we just told them how important the workers' struggle was for them too and a group of them decided to come to the factory gates to discuss with you - all they learn from their text books is a lot of rubbish, how to become managers or possibly white collar workers.....

COMMENTATOR

: Students often take the initiative to go to the factory gates, like these kids from a Milan school, but soon, as we shall see, it will be the workers who take the initiative and can be seen outside the gates of the schools and universities.

STUDENT

:well, what we want is unity and unity is not

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an abstract thing, it is something practical, concrete: for instance you taught us that when there is enough of us together it is possible to take underground without paying..... and today we did the same.

COMMENTATOR

: The underground, built to take the workers more quickly from the city to the factory, here becomes a quick and valuable method of bringing the workers from the factory to the city, during the strikes, for the demonstrations, to the picket lines outside the employers' confederation, or the skyscrapers and palaces which house the headquarters of the big companies. The underground allows the dispute to reach the centre of the city ever more frequently, increasing the possible initiatives. Even strikes of 2 or 3 hours can be used for quick raids into the business centre. And these raids are free - with the tacit consent of Milan City Council the workers don't buy their tickets. This is the sign of a new situation of the greatest political importance. Since the beginning of November, the City Councils of the main Italian industrial centres - Milan, Turin, Venice, Genoa, Livorno, Terni, Sesto and many others have decided by clear majorities, overcoming traditional political allegiances, to give financial assistance, subsidies, and other help to the engineering workers in struggle. The cry of rage let out by the bosses when they learn of these decisions shows how hard a blow it is and how important is its political significance: "We have heard the decisions of the City Council with

indignation and sorrow" - say the Milan industrialists - "the public authority ought to have declared itself above this dispute, and not taken sides". The so-called neutrality of the public administration - another of the principal weapons of the bosses in class confrontations - is thus destroyed for the first time in Italian History. The bosses have understood it too, although within its ranks there are still some who don't.

MICROPHONE
(off screen)

: We now call upon the chairman of the Labour Committtee of Turin City Council, Valenti, to speak.

COMMENTATOR

: At the mock trial of FIAT, organised by the Turin engineers, someone tries to prevent city councillor VALENTI from speaking. But the atmosphere is already hot and tense following a sterile argument on procedural questions between various groups so it is perhaps only by chance that the explosion takes place now.

VOICE
(off screen)

: Councillor Valenti please come forward.....Stewards... stewards.....

PUGNO

No brothers, we want to go on with our discussion but if we act like this, Thursday's press will say that the workers were deeply divided among themselves and that the union has become their dustbin. This is

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not the truth, so please let us get on with the discussion, and so I call upon Councillor Valenti to speak on behalf of the council majority who have taken sides with ~~the~~ Turin workers ;

COMMENTATOR

: We have already referres to the behaviour of the press, to its attempts to exaggerate. Certain things that have happened, distorting their significance, and using infantile language typical of journalists who don't realise that they are witnessing something new. There are some exceptions such as for example this paper which publishes on its front page, the reply of the Pirelli workers to the idiotic headlines of LA STAMPA and CORRIERE DELLA SERA. The right-wing Roem newspaper write about the struggles from afar only when they can find an excuse to scandalise and frighten the reactionary and small-minded bourgeoisie of the capital with descriptions of 'evil and violence'; violence which, note well, is soon no longer described as 'Maoist' but 'trade unionist'. And this year the annual consummistic hysteria over the opening of motor ~~show~~ is relegated to the fourth page by the news and pictures of the cars destroyed the same day on the assembly li=nes. But the real, brutal, immoral violence is committed daily by these same newspapers against a public without alternative sources of information except, just imagine, the television!

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Well, the newspapers may belong to the bosses, but the television belongs to us. Its paid for by the working people, it is a public service, and so why shouldn't it be at our service or at least partly at our service and not just at the bosses' service. It is a problem felt widely by the workers, which they clearly express and which is capable of mobilising the engineering workers of Milan, Rome and Turin in some of the most important demonstrations of these months.

MEGAPHONE :

We are the engineering workers fighting for the renewal of our national contracts. We are marching to the offices of RAI - the state radio and T.V. service - demanding that.....

SHOUTS & SLOGANS :

(vogliamo la RAI con gli operai)
(we want RAI with the workers)

MEGAPHONE :

.....this public service be placed at the service of the working class that pay for it otherwise we will refuse to pay for our licenses.

SHOUTS & SLOGANS :

We won't pay for the license.....we won't pay!

VOICE OFF SCREEN :

There's a big demonstration coming : let's give the

comrades time to get into position.....we call upon a representative of the workers of RAI-T.V., now on strike, to speak.

REPRESENTATIVE OF
RAI WORKERS

: Brothers, we accept the five points you presented to us when you came to see us last week, on the question of RAI-TV - they are our points too. When you talk about freedom in the factory, we think of freedom inside our factory: freedom of expression is the only condition in which we can make the sort of programmes you want. So at last we are fighting with you, and without your support, we wouldn't be able to win our battle. We are fighting to transform RAI into a real public service for everyone, especially the Italian working people.

SECOND REEL

CLAPPER - UNION AUTUMN : 6, 2.

COMMENTATOR

: The result of this can soon be seen. RAI decides to begin a massive work of documentation of this struggle. A group of intellectuals and technicians begins following the dispute day by day in spite of many difficulties and a lot of misunderstandings.

DONAT CATTIN

: Well, lets get on with it - but only 3 or 4 minutes please.....or we'll have to begin all over again with the clapper.

COMMENTATOR

: In this way an enormous amount of really extraordinary material is collected costing tens of millions of lire - but providing a filmed document of exceptional historical and journalistic value (shouts and slogans).

In the first days of November, the Minister of Labour, Carlo Donat Cattin, officially proposes to the industrialists and the unions that the government should mediate in the dispute. The union executives, here seen in joint session, consult the workers and receive a mandate to "go and hear what the Minister has to say". In the meantime the articulated, or staggered strikes have increased their rhythm, reaching

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even into the medium and small factories, finding new forms of expression and new perspectives. (As soon as a strike finishes in one factory or province, another begins somewhere else, sometimes only for a few hours, sometimes for a day).

The comment of one worker sums the situation up: "Our strikes are now so articulated that they read like a railway timetable." All this costs the worker a lot of money, but it costs the bosses a hell of a lot more; for the first time they taste the bitter fruits of negotiations which take place without a moment for interruption of the struggle. And on the part of the workers, the will to continue even after two months, is as strong as ever.

VOICE OFF SCREEN

:on the 7th, lets hope that everything goes well, but if the bosses don't accept our demands, exactly as they were presented, at least they shouldn't delay the negotiations any longer, as they've done 4 times already, and we're fed up with these delays; they're waiting until we've spent the last penny in our pockets and start fighting among ourselves because some want to go back to work.

TECHNICIAN IBM

: I would like to ask a question of the trade union representatives present: are they thinking of different forms of struggle? For instance have they

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thought of doing something really decisive such as occupying the factories or even something of a deeper political character which would lead to a revision of the present system of factory ownership?

TRENTIN

: Well, I believe, there's another error we have to avoid : that of thinking that we can defeat the bosses in a single blow, by an intensification of the struggle over a couple of weeks. This is a possibility, but first of all we must be prepared to wage a harder, bitterer and longer battle - and the bosses must be taught this. And they must also be taught that the workers, and the unions, will always hold out longer than they will. If we don't just want the contract at any cost, if we don't want to find ourselves in one or two weeks forced to call off the fight, then we must clearly show our determination, continuity and ability never to give the boss a breathing space; without at the same time falling into the traps he still hopes we will fall into.

COMMENTATOR

: On the 11th of November the first meeting was held between the unions and the firms with state parti-

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cipation at the Ministry of Labour, with the Minister in the chair. On the 12th of November, the first meeting with Confindustria - the private em-
 ployers federation - the one we see here. The bos
 ses don't like the Minister, but being polite gen
 tlemen, they don't say it to his face leaving it
 to their scribes. He's also criticised - he should
 know better - for picking up working class language
 and calling the bosses not, employers, industrialists,
 'givers of work', the 'other side' but... bosses.
 "In Parliament, Honourable Minister, you said patronat
 for employers - thunders 24 Hours, one of their papers-
 "giving the vulgar French expression the scornful
 meaning so beloved of the communists!".

DONAT CATTIN

: Well, I want to say immediately that I've no intention
 of adapting a Palazzo Venezia attitude, - I refer of
 course to the balcony opposite Confindustria -.....
 (Well, I must make it clear first of all, that I've
 no intention of imposing my personal views on the
 parties.....)

COMMENTATOR

: In the first meeting -, the Confindustria delegation
 is led by its President - Angelo Costa, entrenched
 supporter of the precondition regarding plant bargai
 ning.

DONAT CATTIN

: I'm sorry to interrupt you, but I feel you're harbou
 ring an illusion if you think that a government, be

it lame, one-party, transistory, caretaker, with 4 legs, 6 legs - there are seven some of those - or what you like, can be asked not to have a policy. This is a nonsense. That's all I wish to say.

COSTA

:

Governments in my opinion, must have my policies, that is to say their overriding concern must be to serve the well-being of the country - on this I think we can all agree.

But if the policy of a Government favours one side more than the other, I don't believe it serves the well-being of the country.

BENVENUTO

:

(off screen)

Still faced with the same obstacle which we found before us as a pre-condition at the beginning of the negotiations, we must.....

COMMENTATOR

:

Giorgio Benvenuto, general secretary of UILM, repeats once again for Costa's benefit, the unions' principle position on plant bargaining.

BENVENUTO

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(off screen)

.....or this becomes only an expedient - the usual expedient of the other side to delay the settlement of a dispute; if this was.....

COMMENTATOR

:

But at this moment Costa has problems of his own.

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SONG : I hear the steamer whistling/ carrying my love away.

BENVENUTO :I propose that we remove this obstacle right
(off screen) away and enter into the merit of the proposals. Because
either this is a delaying tactic aimed at weakening
us or the other side mean it seriously in which case
we can't possibly accept such a proposal. For a start
we aren't in a position to do so : as Trentin said
before, we have no interest in even discussing it, we
have no mandate from the workers to do so.

(noises from Costa)

Let's make it clear then : if you continue to pose
the question of plant bargaining it means you don't
want the negotiations to continue.....

A BOSS :this isn't trade unionism!

BENVENUTO :and that you want a frontal confrontation on a
(off screen) question of prestige knowing very well that our unions
can't possibly agree.

DONAT CATTIN : Well, I propose as follows : the Minister of Labour
on the basis of his evaluation of the situation, pro
poses that plant bargaining (noises from Costa) shall
be omitted from the discussion and that on this quest
as on all others in which there are no formal proposal
we leave the 1966 contract unchanged.

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MEGAPHONE : Get into line. People of Turin, we're not hooligans
and delinquents, as the bosses' press describe us.....

COMMENTATOR : In TURIN, on the same day that plant bargaining was
abandoned as a precondition at the national negotiat
tions, FIAT asks the magistrates for summonses against
another 50 workers and trade union militants.

SHOUTS & SLOGANS : FIAT will be our Vietnam,

COMMENTATOR : The total summonsed, suspended from their work at
FIAT since the beginning of November now stands at
122. On the pretext of violence and damage to prop
erty, FIAT, without waiting for the magistrates'
decisions, takes the role of the judge and condemns
the workers concerned to be suspended without pay.

MEGAPHONE : The workers of FIAT today call upon the firm to
reinstate immediately those unjustifiably suspended.

SHOUTS & SLOGANS : Let them back in.....let them back in.
(One out, all out.....one out, all out)

A WORKER : I start by reading the letter sent to the suspended
workers, that most of our brothers in FIAT know
already, to let the people of Turin and all our
comrades, learn in what terms FIAT condemns those
who wage the battle for democracy inside the firm:

"This is to inform you that in relation to the recent grave acts committed by you inside our establishment we have laid charges against you to ascertain your legal responsibility. Pending the results of your case, we are also taking the precautionary measure of suspending you from work as from the date of receipt of this letter. Yours faithfully".

COMMENTATOR

: These letters, this language, is nothing new. Behind it we can see the ghost of the old managing* director, Valletta, where old techniques are now being taken out of moth balls in an attempt to destroy once again the working class vanguard in Italy's biggest factory.

But this time the attempt doesn't work; this time behind the 122 of FIAT there's a million and a half more and unions ready to risk the negotiations, the contract, everything to make Agnelli eat his words. And that's exactly what at this very moment on the morning of November 18th, Macario, Benvenuto, and Trentin are telling Agnelli in the study of the Minister of Labour. Agnelli does eat them.

PUGNO OFF SCREEN

: We have just been told that faced with the positions of the trade union organisations, and the strikes at FIAT itself over the last days, the suspensions have been withdrawn.

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COMMENTATOR

: The workers of Turin receive the news of the lifting of the suspensions in the Sports Stadium during the mock-trial of FIAT. Some of the suspensions are to be lifted in 3 days, the rest at the end of the month.

A WORKER

: I am one of the suspended workers from shop 32. First I want to thank you all, because if I and all the others are going back at work, it is not because of FIAT's charity but because of your solidarity.

SHOUTS & SLOGANS

: All, all, all, now - all - now.

WORKER

; Once again the working class of FIAT, after the strike of May and June, have shown their strength and solidarity, defeating Agnelli in his attempt to repress the new movement and the new shop stewards committee. I believe, and I want to stress what comrade Pugno has said, that at this moment it is essential for us to accept the proposals regarding the withdrawal of the suspensions in two phases. Why? Because if we find after November 30th that FIAT doesn't keep its word, then we ourselves can take up the struggle again as we have done in the last days. (shouts and slogans).

A WORKER

: Well comrades, today we're going back into the factory; and I tell you sincerely, from the bottom of my heart, that this is thanks to your solidarity, and

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this is what makes us happiest. It is clear that in these months we have achieved something, we've built something, otherwise today we wouldn't be going through these gates. Before coming to FIAT I had already got the sack 3 times, and I had never been taken back by a factory which had sacked me. Never : it is the first time; and I say this with special joy, comrades, because this is FIAT where in 20 years such a thing has never happened!...
... well, are we going in, then?

COMMENTATOR

: Two days before these workers go **back** at FIAT, police constable Annarumma gets killed during a demonstration.

It is a death that no-one respects except the workers, that everyone wants to use; that the right wing welcomes as a gift heaven and that the bosses immediately try to throw into the negotiating table

VOICE OF SCREEN

:no, this is one of the most delicate moments, but,.....

COMMENTATOR

: In Rome, the trade union leaders are very worried (shouts and slogans)

GALLI

: Oh, Bruno, you may laugh, but I don't believe that what is happened must make us take our trousers down and say....(shouts and slogans)....allright

he's dead but think how many workers the police have killed since the war.....

COMMENTATOR

: But if the union leaders are very worried, the workers are neither worried nor frightened. Of course they're sorry that a policeman, a peasant from the south, exploited worse than they are, by bosses worse than theirs, has died, but how many workers have died in similar situations? And then what has his death got to do with our contract? Why should we pay for it, pay the bosses for it, suddenly giving up all that we have conquered in three months of very hard struggle? From the base, in the workers assemblies the hysteria and alarms that have been shaking the country meet this single, firm, unanswerable logic. But there is one thing in this incident which deeply offends the worker:

SHOUTS & SLOGANS

: Workers in struggle are not murderers.....

COMMENTATOR

: The attempt to twist the episode at Milan against the engineering workers also has another aim : to create a widespread feeling of hopelessness and worry among the workers and public opinion in general, on the very eve of the great demonstration in Rome which the powers that be want to prevent at all costs. This demonstration outside the headquarters of Confindustria was decided on right at the beginning of the dispute and throughout has always been considered as the highest and most significant moment of the struggle.

GAVIOLI

:intensifying the battle and giving all the workers an appointment at Rome on November 28th, in Piazza Venezia, with Mussolini's old balcony on one side, and the bosses' home, Confindustria opposite it on the other side.
In that square we shall stop and occupy it for half a day to show all Italy that we are firmly determined to get our contract.

COMMENTATOR(2nd)

: But a complete army corps, including all possible branches of the police, blocked all access to Piazza Venezia on November 28th and stopped us reaching our objective. (Song, "Avola").
The presence of the police at workers demonstrations is nothing less than an objective provocation. The workers understand this perfectly well and they show it in their continual efforts to prevent physical contact between demonstrators and the police, but to get the bourgeoisie to understand it, even the enlighted ones, is much harder. After the events in Milan, a usually open-minded bourgeois M.P. asked in Parliament with heart-rendering sincerity :
"How is it possible even to consider that the very presence of the police can in itself constitute a provocation?".

Certainly for those who from their childhood have always looked on the police as the defenders of their private little world, their gates and their order -- an order constructed by their fathers and grandfathers in their own interests - the presence of the

police cannot be provocative - it is reassuring; but for the same reasons it is not reassuring, it is provocative, to say the least, for those who are pressing outside the gates, and who will no longer accept the order founded on privilege.

A TRADE UNIONIST :we've got nothing against the carabinieri and policeme, who are after all the sons of peasants and workers who have joined the police only to make a living.....

COMMENTATOR : Not that the provocation is always solely objective. One often has the feeling that it is intentional, that there's someone who wants trouble at any cost. And it was owing to the workers' great discipline that during the three months of the long and difficult dispute, there is only one serious clash with the police, in Milan after the demonstration against RAI (needless to say in front of a FIAT factory).
(Shouts and slogans).
The day after, the whole Milan working class gave its answer spontaneously in one of the most determined, dramatic and angry demonstration of the whole dispute.
(Shouts and slogans)

A TRADE UNIONIST

:we must make it clear where the violence comes from. We have seen that there is no violence in de monstrations where the police keep away, such as the march of the 10.000 at Milan recently.... because the workers are responsible people, no less than anyone else.

COMMENTATOR

: At Rome on November 28th, the provocation came from the skies. Slowly and deliberately a helicopter circled over Piazza del Popolo, packed with workers who had travelled all night, and marched all day. No-one who was in the square can or should forget that episode. But lets go back to the story in its proper order. In the early December there were two new events; first the squalid episode of the employer who fired on his workers; the second, more important and significant, the agreement reached with the firms with State participation, who were the first to give in -

A WORKER

:we said we would start together and finish together, and now.....

COMMENTATOR

: Intersind's offer of surrender is examined and fully discussed by the workers in the private and public firms, and all of them, not just those in the public sector, are called upon to decide whether to accept it or not. The great majority decide

to accept it. Now this new contract with the firms with state participation becomes the prototype of the contract to be won from the private employers.

A WORKER

: The last time I spoke I think I said that we ought to accept the new contract.....we also said that it would help to unblock the situation as far as the private firms are concerned, but this hasn't happened.....

COMMENTATOR

: In the discussion on the new contract, two basic tendencies emerge: one sees the agreement with Intersind, coming before that with Confindustria, as weakening the struggle in the private sector and contradicting the initial decision to start together and finish together; the second, which immediately prevails is to consider the surrender of Intersind as a majority thrust toward settling the dispute with Confindustria.

MEGAPHONE

:the battle must now be intensified to win our contract and resolve all the other problems that are still open.

A WORKER

: We will continue to strike for lower rents, against the cost of living, and for the reform of the taxation system; the fight for a new housing policy must go forward!

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- COMMENTATOR : The main points of the new contract are : "65 lire an hour more for manual workers - 13.500 lire a month more for white collar workers - A 40 hour week for everyone the end of 1972 - equal conditions for both manual and white collar workers in the case of sickness or accident - the right to hold mass meetings inside the factories - recognition of shop stewards.
- TRENTIN : This is the great thing that we want, there it is, it's this sort of contract, and the employers who sign it won't have any more strikes. This is how to create chaos among the ranks of the private industria lists.
- WORKER : What sort of chaos?
- TRENTIN : Well, if some of them can be taught that by signing this sort of contract they won't have any more strikes.
- MACARIO : They claim, and this is more serious; that they won't let the Intersind contract influence them in any way at all.....
- COMMENTATOR : It will take another ten days of staggered strikes, the threat of another total national general strike,

a new intervention by the Minister, the prospective of workers spending Christmas in the factories and sending the private bosses nasty Christmas presents, to convince the latter to give in. But before concluding our story we would briefly like to touch on another aspect - by no means a secondary one - of this dispute; the participation of the students in the struggle and the unions attempts to establish a new link between the working class movement and the students. The presence of students at factory gates has become almost a tradition and no longer so much as bitter critics of the unions, but rather as active supporters on the picket lines; what is really new however, is the ever more common presence of the workers and trade unionists at the gates of the universities, colleges and schools.

A WORKER :We are here to explain the causes which drive us forward in our struggle and to understand your needs so that we can find a common solution.

COMMENTATOR A certain uneasiness among the workers is understandable; they are about to enter the lair of the antitrade union wolf.

ANOTHER WORKER : They say come in and we can have a meeting in the faculty of arts.

A STUDENT : Let's make use of it then.....Yes to the workers' unity, no to the union's; let the comrades come in, without those.....(shouts and slogans)

- ANOTHER STUDENT : You don't even know the A B C of politics!
(Shouts and slogans)
- ANOTHER STUDENT : Considering the nature of this meeting I think it would be a good idea if you didn't clutter up the platform with that flag. Now, whoever wants to speak can but we want to make it clear that this is not a union meeting.
- SHOUTS & SLOGANS : Trade unions out, workers in : unions our workers in.
- COMMENTATOR : This episode at ROME university, on the eve of the big march, gives an idea of the sort of language which was still predominant in student/ worker meetings nearly three months after the dispute had began.
- A STUDENT :At PORTO MARGHERA, at FATME there have been strikes that went against and over the heads of the unions.
- ANOTHER STUDENT :I can't accept this sort of shits, especially from Piperno.....
- ANOTHER STUDENT :Let him speak!
- WORKER :You can't just leave the union, anyone who works, anyone in a factory will tell you what it means.....

how the boss exploits you. We want unity with the students - we recognise that they are united among themselves - but we must be united and not split up, otherwise the boss will make mince-meat of us/.....

A STUDENT

: But that lot don't represent the real student movement.

COMMENTATOR

: On December 12th a bomb explodes in Milan killing 16 people and injuring a 100. However this new act of violence strengthens rather than weakens the workers' case. This time the attempt to exploit the situation against the workers is so clumsy and obvious that the general public - opening its eyes at last - refuse to accept it; and many realise, that what the press calls "the great show of maturity" of the people of Milan at the victims' funeral, is in fact a show of the workers' maturity.

TOROS
(off screen)

: The meetings will be held in a suitable place provided by.....

COMMENTATOR

: At Rome the negotiations continue - in fact they speed up.

TOROS
(off screen)

:outside or in the immediate vicinity of the work-shops.

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- BENVENUTO
(off screen) : " or in the immediate vicinity" must go.
(Shouts and slogans)
- CARNITI : Let's cross out "in a suitable place" then, and
say nothing .
- TOROS
(off screen) : The law only sat that.....
- CARNITI : We don't want to write into the national contract
what colour the walls of the rooms for the meeting
must be painted.
- A WORKER : We must remember one thing; that if Confindustria
doesn't accept our conditions by Christmas, then
we'll spend Christmas in the factory.(Shouts and
slogans).
- DONAT CATTIN : I know that you don't like it bu.....
- COMMENTATOR : In the middle of December the Minister meets with
the parties, here the employers; and puts to them
his proposals to end the dispute. The bosses ac-
cept them with barely controlled rage.
- DONAT CATTIN :your abacus isn't working properly.....
While expressing understanding with your dissati
sfaction.....

Avvocato Garino!

GARINO : Objections first : there's an evident incongruity; if we say that the working week is fixed for all sectors and all categories, then why have point B at all, which talks about clerical and special categories.

SONG : Dear Mr. Boss with your beautiful white trousers/ get the money out, get the money out/...so we can go home.

SHOUTS & SLOGANS : Song and incomprehensible dialogue.

CARPANI GLISENTI : Undoubtedly, as I've said before, we are extremely worried, about the burden we are going to have to carry as a result of this contract. (Same song as before).

DRUMS

COMMENTATOR : Vicotry! Won! We have won! And here at last, almost at the end of our film; we see the Rome demonstration of November 28th. We haven't kept strictly to the order of events because this demonstration has all the contents of a victory march even though it came 20 days before (the actual) victory itself. Hundreds of slogans have resounded from one end of Italy to the other in these three months, slogans

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expressing every moment of the struggle, with an inexhaustable inventiveness; if they were all put together they would make an epic chorale telling the day by day story of this dispute. And for this day too, we have another : "Agnelli-Costa, questa è la risposta! Agnelli-Costa - this is our reply!"

The reply of 100.000 workers who have come down, come up to Rome. The reply to whom? To those who have tried once again, to block the path of the working class - only to be defeated as never before. They did all they could to prevent this demonstration, to spread alarm throughout the country, to build up the atmosphere of a civil war; and this with the help of ministers, the police, irresponsible journalists, political forces either openly or covertly of the right, and even abnds of fascists. But Agnelli-Costa questa è la risposta! Agnelli-Costa, Pirelli bosses, bosses' ministers, bosses' parties, bosses' police chiefs, bosses' judges and magistrates, bosses' press, bosses' T.V. and Radio: this is our reply: the reply of trade union city, class unity, the reply of history, as Macario said in Turin on September 25th.

SHOUTS & SLOGANS

: The people, united, will win!.....The factory will be our Vietnam.....(music).....power to the workers!

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COMMENTATOR

: A few days later, the big weekly magazine Epoca prominently publishes this letter from a reader :

(SPEAKER OF THE
LETTER)

: I am a young man of 25 and while I am writing this letter, the protest march of the engineering workers is passing under my window. I am studying to take my exams to become a magistrate. Whether I pass or not is beside the point; what saddens me is something else; I ask myself, what is the good of studying all this when right under my window I can see seven or eight offences punishable by law being committed with impunity. The penal code forbids acts of public intimidation, violence to persons ~~of~~ property, incitement to breach of the peace and to crimes against the state; and incitement to hatred among social classes. These are actual crimes, if I am not wrong, not rag day jokes. I have no intention of judging the rights or wrongs of the workers' claims.

I only ask myself what is the law that they have taught me reduced to if it can be thus trampled on and ignored by whatever social group chooses to make laws of its own? I ask myself if at this point it isn't better to choose a better paid profession rather than become a magistrate with the vain illusion that I can help the administration of justice.

What is left to a judge beside his salary, when justice seems dead?

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COMMENTATOR

: And here is the editor's answer : I hope for your sake and for mine that your exams go well, because Italy needs magistrates and judges like you. Well, this hope seems rather unnecessary to us : Italy doesn't particularly need magistrates and judges like him, it is got enough of them already. This is already being shown, and will be shown even more clearly after the end of the dispute in the thousands of charges against workers, trade unionist and students, in the imprisonments of journalists found guilty of crimes of opinion, and by the full use made of that most direct and authentic, cultural and moral expression of the Italian ruling class - the penal code.

SHOUTS & SLOGANS

: Repressing will not pass.....whoever makes use of fascist laws is a fascist himself....

COMMENTATOR

: But this time the reply is very clear. The wave of repression causes the students once again to take action at the side of the working class, but this time with a new consciousness and maturity. And workers and students involve new social groups in their struggle, watering the seeds of anti-capitalism in unexpected places among journalist, intellectuals, magistrates themselves, and radio and television employees. Evidently the lessor of the autumn have been of use to everyone.

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SHOUTS & SLOGANS

: Workers-students - unite and fight!.....

STUDENTS
(off screen)

: The students you see here this morning are not the students the working class used to see in the past; the traditional allies of the bourgeoisie attached to their privileges. We students here today are committed to the class struggle, and we say to the ruling class - you have lost an ally! We are trying to build an anticapitalist front, including various forces under the leadership of the working class. Therefore we say to the cancellors of the universities, to the police, to the fascists, the presence of the workers here in the university today, means that the university belongs to the people; and you must get used to seeing the workers leading the struggle in the schools, colleges and universities, you must learn.....

SHOUTS & SLOGANS

: The working class must take the lead everywhere.....

SONG

: Where is the vulture flying?
Fly away, fly away from my land,
The land of love.

The vulture went to the river,
and the river said no,
Vulture, fly away,
Vulture, fly away,
In my limpid waters
I now have trout and carp
No longer the bodies of soldiers

Making me red with blood.

Where is the vulture flying?
Vulture fly away etc;

The Vulture went to the wood
And the wood said No!
Vulture fly away
Vulture fly away
Among my leaves and branches
I want only the rays of the sun
Squirrels, birds and frogs,
And not the bullet from a gun.

Where is the Vulture flying?
Vulture fly away etc.

The vulture went to the mother,
And the mother said No!
Vulture fly away
Vulture fly away
I will only give my sons to a beautiful girl,
Who will take them to her bed;
I won't send them to be killed.

Where is the vulture flying, etc.

FINAL TITLE

: This film was made by film-makers, trade unionists,
and workers.

It(s the first film produced jointly by the
three engineering workers unions.

We hope that the next one will be the first film
produced

by the UNITED Engineering workers UNION.

THE END

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