

CHARTIST

No.17

4 p

September 1972

T.U.C. —

Soldiers' Trade Union Rights Movement

PREPARE TO BRING THE TORIES DOWN!

ORGANIZE THE ARMY!

IN BRITAIN, WE HAVE JUST emerged from the greatest industrial crisis since 1926. Against all the predictions that "the TUC would never call a General Strike" and that "the Labour Party would never break the law", the Chartist—alone of all the working class press — has been proved correct. Under sufficient pressure our so-called "leaders" will go to virtually any lengths — short of seizing power — to retain their control over our movement so as to sell us out once conditions permit.

In the last week of July, the Tory Government was faced with an ultimatum: either release the "Pentonville Five" or suffer a General Strike sanctioned officially by both the TUC and Labour's NEC. And not just a 24-hour "protest" strike. Asked on a BBC interview what would happen at the end of that period if the five were still in prison, even Vic Feather felt forced to say "In that case we would have to continue". And Labour's Chairman, Anthony Wedgewood-Benn, who is certainly no revolutionary, said things in that week which earned him the tag "Robespierre of the British revolution" in the editorial columns of the Times! Had they resisted, the Tories and their class would have faced more than a mere "protest" General Strike. They would have faced from our movement a challenge to the very bases of their power and a situation which our "labour leaders" would have been quite unable to control. Being as yet un-prepared for such an all-out show-down with our movement, they had to release the five. They decided to postpone the in-

evitable General Strike—to "buy time".

For both sides now, one crucial question is becoming the question of the army. By threatening the use of troops — and banking on the inability of either our official leaders or the "revolutionaries" to cope with them—the government succeeded in preventing a continuation of the Docks Strike. But this threat only worked (a) because of the blatant treachery of the TUC and the Dockers' official leadership and (b) because given this collaboration, it was relatively easy to divide large sections of the working class against the dockers. Against a united movement — a movement like the miners' strike or the struggle around the "Pentonville Five"—the use of troops would become risky for the Tories in the extreme.

In addition to the "normal" social instability of Britain's army—which is one of the most class-structured in the world—another factor is making its appearance now for the first time. When the Transport and General Workers' Union began its campaign to organize the army in 1969, it received almost as little active support from the soldiers as it did from the then Labour Minister of Defence. Since then, however, an oppositional grouping has begun taking action within the British Army itself—to the extent that within the last month, officers have had to instruct soldiers in virtually every camp in Britain to avoid reading its literature and to report where possible on its activities. The grouping, founded in May last year, calls itself the "Soldiers' Trade Union Rights Movement".

In addition to the right to join a union,

- their "Soldiers' Charter" demands:
- POWERS for the Soldiers' Union to order "work-to-rule" tactics.
- SOLDIERS' COMMITTEES to have access to fatigue records "to ensure fair play".
- ESTABLISHMENT of a Jury system at Courts Martial.
- FULL REVIEW of Military Law.
- ABOLITION of the Mess System.
- NEGOTIATIONS for "an agreed hair-cut and hair-length standard".
- ENTITLEMENT to privacy.

- RIGHTS to political activity.

Virtually all the "other ranks" would support a trade union if they were allowed to. But they urgently need outside support—above all from the TUC and the Labour Party. It is in the interests of our whole movement that we give it. If there is one way to make the Tories think twice before relying on the Army in the coming General Strike—it is to secure trade union rights for the soldiers themselves and bind the Army ranks to our movement.

TONBRIDGE ENGINEERS STAND FIRM

by Cllr. Denis Knight



T.R. CREFFIELD AND SON LTD of Tonbridge, Kent, do not allow their workers to be trade-unionists.

In fact there is no trade union organisation in the whole of the Vale Road industrial estate where the engineering firm (producing gear boxes for Ford's and British Leyland) is situated. This entire part of Kent has recently been becoming a source of unorganised cheap labour for firms which have moved in to take advantage of it.

Working conditions at Creffields are bad—the accident rate high and the atmosphere of the Factory has started to be ignored by a casualist and anti-management.

On 22nd July 1972, 100-odd workers came to a head, and 10 men and women downed tools. Their demand was for the elementary right to form an AUEW branch and to elect shop-

stewards.

The response of the management was predictable — a lock-out. The only element of "subtlety" in their tactics has been the payment of a bonus bribe (or "loyalty money", as they call it) to those of the work-force (mainly office staff) who are still accepting their dictate.

The call from those locked out is for the blacking of all Creffield products — particularly by workers at the Ford plants at Dagenham and Halewood. All Labour Party members and trade unionists must mobilize to see that this is done!

As George Tapp, Chairman of the Tunbridge Wells Trades Council said at the factory gates after the workers had marched through Tonbridge (see photo above), "If one worker is fighting, then it's everybody's fight."

Soldiers' Unions in Europe

● In AUSTRIA, non-commissioned and other ranks have been members of a trade union since 1956.

● In GERMANY the Public Service and Transport Workers' Union initially met with strong governmental resistance to armed forces organization, although the Soldiers' Association had been founded organizing rights in 1955. The Department then granted recognition to a union of 100,000 members in 1961. The Department then granted recognition to a union of 100,000 members in 1961.

● In DENMARK, Armed Forces trade union membership began in the 1930s. In 1966 the S.F.O. (non-commissioned officers' union) amalgamated with the Union for Senior Non-Commissioned and Warrant Officers, and the amalgamated union

now has membership in the Army, Navy and Air Force. The government consults the union on all personnel matters and has promised full collective bargaining rights when membership exceeds 50 per cent.

● NORWAY's soldiers have had a trade union since 1847. Today, 99.9 per cent of the Norwegian TUC members are in the armed forces. The union is part of the Federation of Labour Unions and the Norwegian Soldiers' Union and the Norwegian Soldiers' Union.

● In SWEDEN, the proportion of servicemen in the TUC is particularly high: 99.9 per cent of the men belong either to the Swedish Officers' Association or to the TUC, Sweden's civil service union, which has a special section for policemen and servicemen.

THE CHARTIST

Editor: Chris Knight, 7 Park View, Olive Rd, London NW2.

Published by CHARTIST Publications.

Printed at 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1. (T.U. all depts.)

Build The Revolutionary Party!

For the first time in Britain since the war, conditions are developing which make possible the building of a mass revolutionary party of the working class. A "dual power" situation is beginning to arise. The central issue of politics is becoming — quite apart from the propaganda of the "revolutionary" sects — the issue of state power itself.

"Who is to rule — the elected Parliament or the TUC?" Beneath this confused formulation of the Tories and their press lies today's reality of trade-union power. The very existence of the trade union and labour movement — despite the efforts of its leaders — is becoming a threat to the state as such. Despite themselves, the TUC — and even the Labour party NEC — officially sanctioned by majority votes the General Strike call "to free the Pentonville Five". The Government was co-erced. A force is arising within the state which is stronger than the state itself.

It is in this situation that the Socialist Charter Convention meets. The National Organizing Committee majority — supporters of the Chartist — propose transforming the Charter movement over the next few years into a disciplined mass revolutionary party affiliated if possible to the Labour Party. This means turning it immediately into a democratic-centralist organization based on the philosophy of dialectical materialism, the experience of the Russian October Revolution and the trotskyist transitional programme. Given this organizational and ideological foundation, the transformation of the Socialist Charter movement into a mass revolutionary force will take place as the dual power situation its-

Uganda Asians

As the hue and cry against the Asians builds up—and as the media hang on every word of Enoch Powell's—how convenient a diversion it all seems from the class-struggle! It is no accident that it is just now, as Britain slips towards a pre-revolutionary crisis, that the National Front are being given the headlines.

The Asians' expulsion is a direct result of the African policy of the British ruling class, whose tool Amin has always been since his training at the officer-cadet school at Mons. But it is no use using "logical" arguments against the fascists. The only way our movement can deal with them is to turn up on their demonstrations in

self develops from its present embryonic form to a full-blown pre-revolutionary crisis.

In our movement, reformism — the refusal to face up to the question of state power — is a direct reflection of the real weakness of the working class. As long as the working class feels weak, it will look to its "leaders" to act for it, to "negotiate" and to soften the blows which capitalism delivers. Only when we are really becoming strong do we begin to believe in our strength. Only when our whole class is being actually mobilized, when it is proving invincible, when it is checking the state machine and even forcing it to retreat, can workers in large numbers begin to cast off their inhibitions, understand their real political strength and develop an active will to master the state. In other words, it is only now, when a situation of dual power is tentatively developing, in which the old state machine is being checked and challenged in a practical way, that we can expect to find reformism's grip over the working class beginning to break for the first time in decades.

Today above all it is necessary to come out with the full programme of social revolution. We must state boldly at every opportunity, to every meeting of tenants, trade unionists or Labour Party members we can address:

Comrades, if the power is to be taken, we must take it ourselves. It is to the task of breaking reformism's hold, constructing a mass revolutionary party and conquering the power of the state that we Chartists are firmly pledged. The moment to strike the first blow is now.

overwhelmingly greater numbers so as to physically clear this human scum off the streets.

We Chartists are for the right of all people, from no matter where, to enter Britain if they wish and in as many numbers as they wish. Only by an uncompromising stand on this issue can we mount any resistance whatsoever to the fascists. And only by smashing the fascists and their Tory sympathisers, uniting the whole strength of our movement regardless of race and seizing the power of the state can we end unemployment, build all the houses we need and wrench out racial prejudice by its roots.

RIGHT: Enoch Powell refers to "so-called British passports" at the Merri-dale Ladies' Luncheon, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton on August 16.



Below is an extract from the proposed new 'Socialist Charter':

Comrades! Brothers!

NO Government will act in our interests. keep rents and prices at levels we can afford to fight for them. NO Government will act against landlords and employers. NO Government will act in our term....

UNLESS

WE, Brothers and Sisters, organized in our own Labour Party organizations and our political No Government will act for us unless we ourselves streets and housing estates, our own place whole ARE ACTUALLY RUNNING THE C

No leaders in Parliament are going to do anything for us. Do they know what it's like to keep a family of four or five in a Council house on a wage of £20? Or to be made redundant at 40 and face years on the dole? Or to live on the pittance given an old age pensioner? Do they know at all what life for the working class is like—these middle-class lecturers, lawyers, directors and others who are supposed to "represent" us in Parliament? Of course they don't! How could they?

Seize the Power

Unless we organize OURSELVES to take over our factories and take over this whole country built up by us through our labour—then we are lost. Unless we take back what the employers, the landlords and the Government have robbed us of we will be crushed. We must take POWER—power over the whole land, over all the banks, all the factories. Nobody is going to take it for us. We could fill up the whole of Parliament with Labour MPs—and they would still sit there letting big business and the bankers run the country. No, if the power is to be taken, WE OURSELVES are going to have to take it.

General Strike.

We must prepare now. Prices and rents are soaring. Our wages don't keep up. Jobs are fast disappearing and the Tories are denying our most basic rights. Matters cannot go on like this. A breaking-point must come. A rent strike and all-out General Strike situation is approaching, forced on us by the Tories and the employers. Prepare for the General Strike! Demand your leaders prepare! Join your tenants' association, go to your trade union branch meetings, tell your local Labour Party just what you think of them and support us CHARTISTS in our fight for power in ALL the organisations of the working class. Act now! There's no time to lose!

Action Now

We want action, and we want it now. And wherever we CHARTISTS are strong, we will see that we get it. On the rents question we will force the Labour Councillors into the open, bring them face to face with the trade unionists and tenants who voted for them, insist they refuse to collaborate with the Tories, pin them down and force them to fight or be thrown out from their positions on the Council and in the Labour Party. Wherever we have rock-hard support in our local Labour Party, and a real base in the tenants' associations and trade unions supporting us, we will stand for Council ourselves and keep doing so until we have broken the dominance of the Tories and right-wing Labour

Councillors altogether. We will see to it that no local sweat-shop employs non-union labour at pitiful rates of pay without everyone knowing about it, without the Trades Council being made to fight, without the trade unions being involved and without the workers themselves receiving all the help they need. In every area where we are strong we will work to bind the Trades Council with the Labour Party to produce a political and trade union body capable of welding the local working class into an invincible fighting force.

Labour Party.

In this way we will build up a nation-wide machinery of struggle inside and outside the Labour Party. We CHARTISTS are the LEFT wing—the REAL left wing—of the Labour Party Young Socialists and of the Labour Party. We say: the Labour Party must become OUR party, the party of OUR trade union, tenants' and other organizations, the party of OUR class. It must break from the property-owning class and from the Tories completely. If it does not, then we will break from it. But we don't want to break from the Labour Party, to split the unity of our movement, to help the Tories. And we don't intend to. The so-called "extremist" and "communist" miners, railwaymen, dockers, building workers and others who are spearheading the movement for a General Strike are on our side of the Labour Party, not Harold Wilson's and the Parliamentarians'. And as we move into an all-out General Strike situation, it will be these militants and ourselves whom the majority of the working class will support. So why should we split from the Labour Party?

If our ideas have the support of the majority of the working class, then we will insist that the Labour Party opens its doors to us fully and that we are represented in proportion to our real strength. We will want seats on the NEC and our own people in Parliament, with every single MP and Party official paid no more than a skilled workers' wage and subject to immediate right of re-call. If the right wing don't like it then they can leave the Labour Party and join the Tories where they belong.

Council of Action.

Once we have control of Labour's grass-roots machinery we will set up a mighty Council of Action (following the precedent of the Labour Party in 1920), mobilise our full strength in industry, paralyse and break up the Tories' state apparatus and establish ourselves as a Labour Government which will not flinch from the severest measures against the landlords, the employers and the old ruling class.

NO Government will guarantee our jobs, protect our real wages and our power for us, the working class, against the abuse of the slightest use to us in the long S...

...unless tenants' associations, our trade unions, groups ARE THAT GOVERNMENT! ourselves, through our control over our own industry and over the state power as a COUNTRY.

National Plan.

We will immediately legislate the takeover of all major industrial concerns, the banks and the land—without compensation and under working class management and control. We will then plan the economy, not permitting a single able-bodied worker to be forcibly made idle, not allowing any more cuts in rail or bus services, not allowing any more useless offices to be built while there is a housing shortage, taking over all the mansions and palaces such as Buckingham Palace for the homeless or for use as recreation centres for all, not allowing in industry any more capitalist anarchy, waste, duplication of research, "built-in obsolescence" or production for profit instead of need. An all-embracing national plan of production will then be worked out allowing the mighty material and human resources of the country to be used to the full. This plan will not be imposed from above but a continuing process of conscious administration of materials and things by everyone involved:

tenants supervising the architecture of their future homes, consumers' organisations making criticisms and stating their needs,

workers collectively supervising the management which they have elected and which is recallable at any time, artists, scientists architects and others presenting their ideas to mass meetings for acceptance or rejection in an atmosphere of fullest democracy and artistic and intellectual freedom.

Workers' State.

In this way "the state" will be us—not this or that group or party but all of us workers "by hand or by brain" with control over the economic conditions determining our lives. This

will not be a "state" in the ordinary sense of the word. We will not need a state as the Tories need it—to threaten and oppress the people as a whole by means of the army and the police. The state will just be ourselves, the working class as a whole, and all arms there are in the country—as long as they are needed at all—will be kept from the hands of any private group, watched and guarded in the hands of the tenants' associations, shop-stewards' committees and the united, responsible, directly recallable organizations representative of all the working class parties and groups.

Our armed forces will not be used to prop up shaky Sheikdoms and corrupt regimes abroad, to defend private investments in Malaysia, Africa and South America, to divide and oppress the Irish people or to break strikes in Britain. On the contrary, they will be used to defend our own class-interests against our class-opponents throughout the world. They will not be used to threaten Russia, China, Cuba or Ireland but to defend us and our movement internationally against the powerful United States monopolies, the South African, Greek, Spanish and Portuguese semi-fascist regimes, the reactionary Common Market governments and all the other capitalist regimes throughout the world which will line up against all that we stand for.

Socialist World.

Workers' Britain will be a beacon of the oppressed of the whole world. We will stand as uncompromisingly for political freedom and workers' control in the East as for the destruction of imperialism in the West. Our revolution will continue the work begun in Russia in October 1917. Socialist Britain will break up the post-war "balance of power" and throw all international relations into the melting-pot. We will be but a few short steps from the Socialist United States for Europe and Socialist Federation of the World.

"The fundamental controversial question, on which everything else turned, was this: Whether or not we should struggle for power; Whether or not we should assume power."

Leon Trotsky

(writing of the period leading up to the Russian October Revolution, 1917, in "Lessons of October").



A Sound Investment

Only weeks after announcing plans to scrap 10,000 jobs in Britain, the British Steel Corporation is planning with the West Germans to build a multi-million pound steel-works abroad. The Corporation, which lost over £17 million last year, hopes in this way to avoid the "strikes and high labour costs" of operating in Britain. The new works will cost the B.S.C. £500 million and will "remove the necessity for the Corporation to replace many of its

out-of-date steelmaking plants which are earmarked for closure" in this country. The site of the new works? South Africa, of course. Says the Sunday Telegraph (27.8.72) "The South African site is ideal. It is a naval base with a natural capacity to take the world's largest cargo vessels. It also offers much lower labour costs than in Europe and an almost strike-free record." Trade Unions are illegal in South Africa.

A.S.T.M.S. Ditherings

By Jon Pickering and Glyn Beagley (ASTMS No. 8 Divisional Council).

The Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs is one of the most prominent unions recommended for expulsion from the TUC.

But its failure by June 30 to have removed itself from the Government's Register of Trade Unions is a damning indictment not of the membership as a whole but of Clive Jenkins and his supporters in the leadership.

By a large majority ASTMS Annual Delegate Conference in May resolved to de-register — despite the prior absence of any real campaign by the leadership against the Industrial Relations Act. But a separate vote was required to change Rule 1 of the union's constitution, which declares that ASTMS is to be "a registered trade union".

The NEC's seriousness in "fighting" to de-register was seen when it treated

this vote as separate business — and held it at the very end of Conference, when a good section of the delegates had wandered out of the Conference Hall to watch the Cup Final on television! The rule change narrowly missed the needed two-thirds majority.

Our own section of ASTMS — No. 8 Divisional Council (representing the London Area) — outraged at this result, has been demanding an immediate re-call Conference ever since. At long last (after evading the issue until half the Divisional Councils in the country were supporting the demand) the NEC have admitted that there is an emergency justifying a Special Rules Conference. All ASTMS members must mandate their delegate firmly to de-register and fight for a new leadership in the union. There must be no telly-watching this time: — the survival of our union is at stake.

Action in Lambeth.

By Kevin Moore, Chairman Lambeth Labour Party Young Socialists.

ON AUGUST 9, LAMBETH Council met behind locked and guarded doors to vote on whether to implement the Tories' Housing Finance Bill. While they were doing so, a body called the "Lambeth Council of Action" was meeting "to fight the right-wing Labour traitors" in another part of the Town Hall. So after tenants in two coaches (organized by the Labour Party Young Socialists) had demonstrated against the rent rises outside, most of them agreed to the organizers' invitation to stay for this meeting too. The tenants—about a hundred attended altogether—were anxious to organize against the right-wing Labour Councilors voting to put their rents up.

The main speaker at the Council of Action was one Vivian Mendelsohn, a member of the Socialist Labour League. She spoke for nearly an hour, about the treachery of the stalinists on Upper Clyde, about the Docks Strike, and about a General Strike which would lead to a General Election and a "Labour Government pledged to socialist policies". When a heckler asked about the rents, she admitted there was a rents struggle going on, but said it would be a "diversion" to dwell on it. She went back to reading out her speech.

An old lady who asked "What are you lot doing about our rents?" was told by a Socialist Labour League spokesman from the floor not to get bogged down in "single-issue politics": her struggle was the same as that of the workers on Upper Clyde, of the dockers and of the whole working class to bring the Tory Government down. The old lady walked out.

It was now becoming clear that the SLL organizers had no intention of supporting the tenants or of showing them the real necessity of revolutionary politics arising from their own experience in the struggle. Instead they were trying to hold back the tenants who wanted a fight, trying to force "left" phrase-mongering on them to cover up for their own inability to lead them in any real movement at all.

Chartist speakers demanded that the "Council of Action" live up to its name. "Where's the action?" they asked, to loud cheers from all the tenants, "we don't want to be preached at, we want to fight! Let's see those Labour Councilors next door face this meeting and tell us they're putting up our rents!" "You say we must expel the right-wing traitors from the Labour Party" said Bryn Heaven of Vauxhall LPYS in a hard-hitting speech "but what are you people actually doing about it?" Other Chartists agreed on the need to bring down the Tories. "But what do you advise we do in the coming General Strike—return to work with the offer of elections, trusting in the election of a Labour Government 'pledged to implement socialist policies!' But nobody in Parliament will help us! If we have a General Strike, we must use it to seize state power." Vivian Mendelsohn's answer was that "to raise the question of power during a General Strike would lead to adventurist acts". What abject, counter-revolutionary centrism! And the only "action" these people could suggest was to come to the next Council of Action meeting! No wonder nearly all the tenants marched out when Norwood LPYS comrades announced the coaches were waiting to go, leaving the SLL to "pass a resolution" in an almost empty hall.

The idea of a Council of Action is that, like a Soviet during the Russian Revolution, it stands "above parties", unites workers of all shades of labour opinion and lays the foundation for an alternative state machine. If the SLL were serious revolutionaries, they would have brought up this question of the state, raised the need to create a party to carry through the seizure of power — and organized, alongside us Chartists, to remove the right-wing Labour Councilors from their positions. They would have fought within the Lambeth labour movement to create a potential alter-

(CONTINUED Col. 1 next page)

NO RETREAT ON BUILDING WORKERS' CLAIM!

by a North London building worker

WITH THE SELL-OUT OF THE DOCKS STRIKE, THE BUILDING workers now bear the brunt of the struggle against the Tory Government. For the past ten weeks we have been fighting for our claim:

- £30 for a 35-hour week
- an extra week's holiday per year
- improved sickness benefit.

And since the "rank-and-file" Building Workers' Charter group forced the unions to lodge the claim in the first place, we have been fighting despite the efforts of our official leaders.

The Charter group emerged three years ago, mainly out of the struggle to end the "Lump". This is the system of labour-only sub-contracting, encouraged by the big contractors to destroy trade unionism in the industry. Under it, workers are registered as "self-employed", paying no tax and insurance. Among its results have been scandalous corruption, a worsening of already appalling working conditions, black-listing, sackings at will, the highest accident figures of any industry, long overtime working, low basic wages and approaching 200,000 registered unemployed — a bigger proportion of the million-strong work-force than in any other industry.

Of the four unions involved, the largest is UCATT (the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians), with 250,000 members. Its right wing General Secretary is George Smith, this year's Chairman of the TUC. Like Vic Feather, he is at present sitting in on the class-collaborationist talks with the Confederation of British Industries and the Tories in an attempt to sell us yet another "Incomes Policy". Under Smith's leadership UCATT's official policy in launching the present action was to restrict it on a selective site basis on the pretext of limiting the National Federation of Building Trades Employers (headed by Sir Kirby Laing) "where it limits their profits most", i.e. in hotels with strict penalty clauses, offices and redevelopment schemes.

It took only a few weeks however, for most building workers to see through this policy, acting as it did as a brake on the development of the struggle and involving fewer than 20,000 men out of a total of 350,000 organized workers (not to speak of the million in the industry altogether). Our call for an official national stoppage echoed around the country, with Bristol and Birmingham taking the lead — closing practically every site in these cities and moving on to organize picketing of the brick and cement works and to demand Transport and General Workers' Union blacking of all building raw materials.

Building workers can win this struggle. True, we are up against not only the building employers but the Government too. But the Government itself can be defeated — as the miners' have shown — if only we are prepared for a fight to the finish. If the

union leaders refuse to declare official the national strike already under way under rank-and-file initiative then we must go ahead without them and fight to the end. The tactic of the flying picket — used extensively and successfully in the big cities — must be spread to stop all construction work until the claim is nationally met. Of the unions we demand: ● no repetition of the sell-out deal attempted by UCATT in the sixth week and prevented only by the mobilization and demonstrations of building workers throughout the country! ● Quit the confusing, splitting and strike-breaking policy of negotiating separate company agreements. ● No retreat until the full claim is won — particularly the demand for a shorter working week, essential for the creation of much-needed jobs and an ending of long overtime working! ● TUC — extend the action and organize to ensure this struggle is not defeated through the absence of strike pay and lack of funds!

By using its huge potential resources, the TUC is in a position to ensure that the employers and the Government are defeated. It is not just that it could secure the needed finance for out strike. More than that, in extending the action it could prepare our unions and the rest of our movement for a General Strike which would remove the employing class from power. We demand it do so. The struggle around our claim is as good a starting point as any. For this is a struggle not just concerning building workers. It is an integral part of the battle of the whole working class to smash the Industrial Relations Act, end unemployment and bring down the Tory Government and those it represents. A victory on our claim will lay the basis for a real struggle to clean up the building industry, to end the phenomenal profiteering of the contractors, the land speculators and the property developers of the Harry Hyams variety, and to stop soaring house prices and the rocketing rents under the Tories' Housing Act. It will enormously strengthen our whole movement in the fight to nationalize the construction industry, the land, banks and the building societies under workers' management, bring the control of building into the hands of those who are capable of constructing the houses, schools, hospitals and social facilities we so desperately need.

Irish Labour : SMASH COALITIONISM !

Valerie Veness

The shoddy alliance between Irish Labour leaders and Ireland's "Tories" — the Fine Gael party — has been smashed by events in recent months. The leaders of the Labour Party had agreed to form a coalition government with Fine Gael after the next election and to transfer votes under the proportional representation system in the Free State.

ent to mobilize any campaign for a "No to the EEC" vote (albeit on a miserable "Irish sovereignty" basis). In the face of this, the 21 per cent who voted NO appears almost as a triumph! This debacle for the "left" led directly to another — Labour's collapse in the Mid-Cork by-election. The Fianna Fail not only held this former Labour seat but did so with an enlarged majority, while Labour limped home a poor third behind Fine Gael! Such were the fruits of the Labour Party's refusal to distinguish itself from the Gombeen capitalism of its electoral rivals.

Revolt

The result of this was to spark off a revolt among rank-and-file delegates in the Labour Party Committees. First into the fray was Galway Council, which stated it would not work for any coalition and demanded that the Parliamentary Party fight as an independent socialist force. It was soon joined by Dublin and Cork Councils. And now Matt Merrigan, a leader of the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union, has come out in their support.

Party

What is needed now within the Irish labour movement is a democratic-centralist revolutionary party capable of linking the heroic struggles of the northern republicans with the day-to-day issues faced by southern workers, and leading a real organised campaign against the Corish's, O'Briens and other traitors who disgrace the name of the Party founded by James Connolly.

Conference

A step in this direction could be made this autumn, when the "left" of the Irish labour movement are holding a conference to discuss the way forward. Impelled by the new mood in the Party, even figures like Noel Brown TD (one of the few leaders of Ireland's 'labour left') are sensing the need to shift leftwards. As he told a CHARTIST reporter in Dublin recently, "this conference could be one of the most important for many years. Only a clear socialist programme, opposing Labour to the capitalists and their parties, can win us the support of the Irish workers." The tasks of these comrades are enormous. We look forward to an Irish equivalent of the Socialist Charter movement which will fight alongside us against British imperialism and replace the existing Labour leadership in Ireland with one pledged to realize the dream of Connolly and Larkin — of a 32-County Irish Workers' Republic.

CREFFIELD'S

Official Dispute (see front page). FUNDS URGENTLY NEEDED! Please send donations to the Creffield's Dispute Committee Treasurer: Mr. W. Fox, 7 Dodd Rd., Tonbridge, Kent.

Subscribe to the
Chartist (monthly)

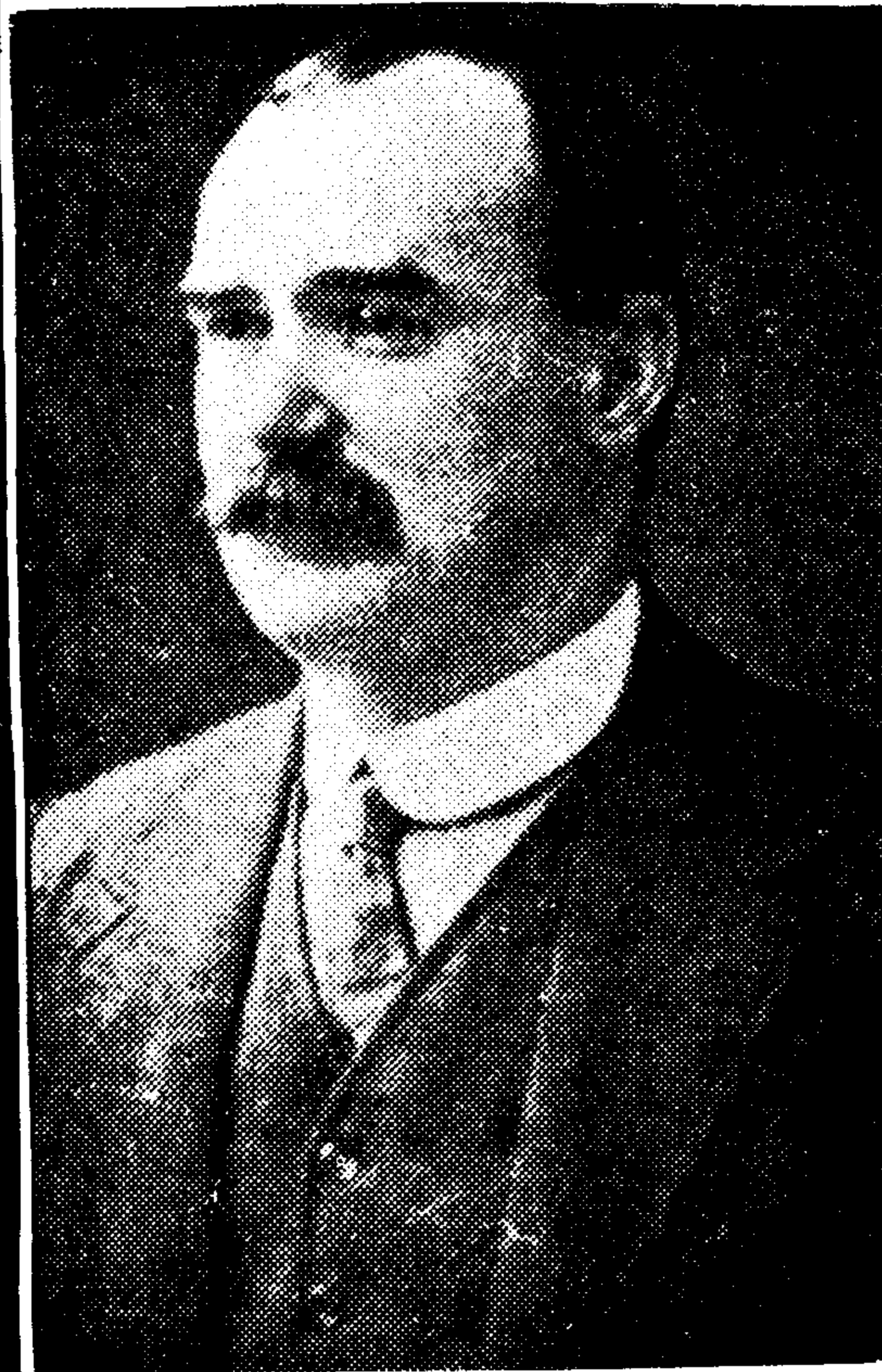
60p Per Year

name _____

address _____

(BLOCK CAPITALS)

send to Bill Thompson,
7 Park View, Olive Rd
London N W 2.



JAMES CONNOLLY
FOUNDER
OF THE
IRISH LABOUR PARTY

Referendum

But that was before the Referendum on the Common Market. The results of this banged the first nail into the coffin of the Labour leaders' plans. Despite the formal "anti-EEC" position of both the Irish Labour Party and the trade unions (with the exception of the WUI), they mounted no serious campaign to counter the thousands of pounds worth of pro-Market propaganda poured out by the Fine Gael-Fianna Fail alliance. The Labour leaders — faced with the task of opposing not only the bourgeois parties but the Catholic hierarchy and the big farming interests too — preferred to keep their mouths shut. Scarcely better was the attitude of the Provisional Republican Alliance — who demonstrated what good socialists and republicans they were by campaigning for associate instead of full membership of the EEC! It was left to the Official Republican movement

The 'S.L.L.' in Lambeth (CONTINUED from previous page).

native local government in the area.

We Chartists are revolutionaries. We are not interested in just demonstrations and meetings and resolution-mongering in thin air. In Lambeth we intend to move tenants and trade unionists into political action against the right-wing traitors in the Labour Party. In doing so, we will be making much more concrete preparations for a "Soviet" in Lambeth than any number of meetings or demonstrations called by the Socialist Labour League's so-called "Council of Action".

In Lambeth, in every borough of London and in every city in Britain we must prepare for the coming

General Strike. Seriously to prepare means organizing for the conquest of the state. The General Strike will create conditions in which nothing but our trade union and labour leaders will stand between us and state power. The ruling class will be paralysed, our working class organizations will be transformed into mighty bodies quite capable of assuming state functions given the will. The power will lie there for the taking. So we Chartists say it bluntly: if we fail to seize power in the coming General Strike, it will not be for 'objective' reasons but because our own leaders will actively prevent us from doing so. And it will be not only the Harold Wilsons and Vic Feathers who will

do this. And not only even the "left" wing Hugh Scanlons and Michael Foots. We Chartists firmly believe that even the "revolutionary" groups — all of them, without exception — will when the crunch comes panic, set their faces against all idea of taking power, call us "adventurists" and so on. We Chartists are absolutely confident of this because, in the aftermath of the near-General Strike over the imprisonment of "the Five", they have already started, and because the present situation contains in itself in embryo already all the elements of the future General Strike. Unless the SLL make a drastic change in their "line" they will prove just another centrist obstacle to the revolution.