

CHARTIST

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TRADE UNIONS MUST FIGHT TORY

PRICES SCANDAL

WITH CAMPAIGN FOR A RISING SCALE OF WAGES!

ON SEPTEMBER 7 last year, delegates to the TUC re-affirmed "opposition to wage-restraint in any form" and instructed the General Council to "refuse discussions with the Government or the CBI that have this in view."

In the twelve months since then, the TUC leaders have repeatedly defied this instruction. They accepted wage-restraint in talks at No. 10. They accepted the promise that prices would be held down in return.

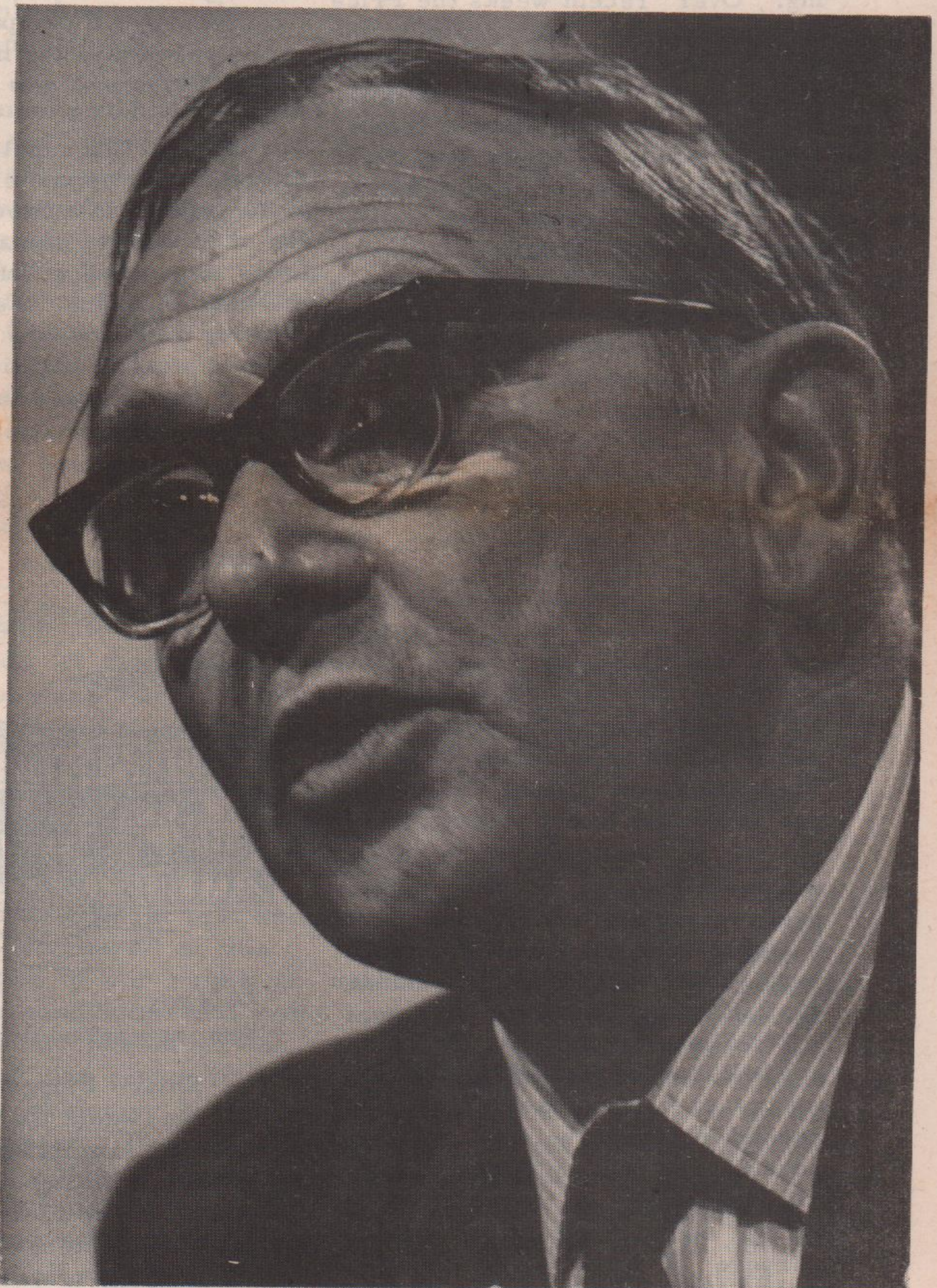
During the "freeze", food prices rocketed as never before. The rise has accelerated every month since. And the future? The provisional figures for food raw materials rose 5% in June. The effects have still to be felt in the shops.

Heath and his class can give

us nothing. To "talk" with them is sheer treachery. We demand our leaders break off immediately and mobilize the strength of our movement. They must campaign for a rising scale of wages—an automatic adjustment upwards of take-home pay according to a cost-of-living index worked out by the organizations of our own class. If they can't—let them stand aside. For some of us want to make one thing clear: if the Tories are hoping to solve their economic crisis—they're not doing so at our expense!

THE EMPLOYERS' inflation offensive is designed to cut down the food we eat—whilst charging us more for the little we get. Last year they did well—as these figures show:

Food Consumption per head per week	1971	1972	Increase or decrease
Liquid milk (pints)	4.74	4.62	-0.12
Milk processed and cream (pints)	0.42	0.43	+0.01
Cheese (oz.)	3.63	3.53	-0.10
Butter (oz.)	5.53	4.79	-0.74
Margarine (oz.)	3.15	3.52	+0.37
Other fats (oz.)	2.92	2.81	-0.11
Eggs, number	4.55	4.41	-0.14
Carcase meat (oz.)	16.41	14.96	-1.45
Bacon and ham uncooked (oz.)	5.12	4.68	-0.44
Other meat (oz.)	17.32	18.20	+0.88
Total meat (oz.)	38.85	37.84	-1.01
Fish (oz.)	5.15	5.05	-0.10
Fresh fruit (oz.)	20.07	17.54	-2.53
Other fruit (oz.)	6.66	6.59	-0.07
Potatoes (oz.)	49.18	46.70	-2.48
Fresh green vegetables (oz.)	13.39	13.20	-0.19
Other vegetables (oz.)	27.23	27.22	-0.01
Bread (oz.)	35.76	34.44	-1.32
Flour (oz.)	5.86	5.42	-0.44
Cakes and biscuits (oz.)	11.26	10.73	-0.53
Other cereals (oz.)	7.89	8.11	+0.22
Sugar (oz.)	15.80	15.02	-0.78
Preserves	2.71	2.56	-0.15
Tea	2.39	2.24	-0.15
Other beverages	0.97	1.00	+0.03
Total expenditure on food per head per week (£)	£2.31	£2.41	+0.10



ABOVE: Jack Jones, General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union. "You don't pay me to sit dumb", he told delegates to his union conference in July. No, brother, but we don't pay you to sell us Heath's wage-cuts either. (See p.3)

‘Almost every official and economist concerned with the Freeze, irrespective of his politics, is primarily concerned to limit money wages; and the price control aspects are put in primarily as bargaining counters and public relations gestures.’

Financial Times November 1972

INSIDE: REVOLUTION AND LABOUR →

THE CHARTIST

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For a Rising Scale of Wages!

ROCKETING PRICE-INCREASES are now threatening the living standards of millions of working-class families in Britain. Under the Tory "prices freeze", food costs have risen far faster than at any time since the war. The monthly jump in the retail price index—now approaching 2p in the pound—means that a worker on a fixed wage of £30 per week can lose 60p in a single month. This happened in April, when the retail price index rose to 176.7 points compared with 173.4 the previous month.

Today the pace is still accelerating. Over recent weeks the Price Commission has been granting the biggest increases so far on food and household products. And even the record increases allowed at the beginning of July—ranging from 2% to over 14% on basic family items like baked beans, sausages, jam, canned fruits and vegetables etc.—are but an omen of future massive increases which will gnaw even deeper into household incomes. By far the most serious increases of all have been in raw materials—now 23% above the level of June last year. The Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin recently warned that these increases have not yet worked their way through to retail prices.

The figures make a mockery of Heath's election promise that he would "cut prices at a stroke". Since his Government took office in June 1970, the purchasing power of the pound has dropped below 75 pence. The Tories have neither the interest nor the ability to cut prices. Inflation is in itself an attack on real wages—aimed at boosting sagging profit margins—and is inbuilt, as a world-wide phenomenon, into the very heart of the crisis-ridden capitalist system today.

While letting prices rip, the Tories are hell-bent on destroying workers' means of fighting back. This is the second prong of their attack—legal assaults on our democratic rights to free collective bargaining, to strike and to picket. The whole purpose of the Tories and their allies is to cut our wages to boost their profits. So far—thanks to the co-operation of our union leaders—they've been doing well. While holding down wages by law to below 8 per cent, they've made no pretence to apply the same law to profits. Company trading profits for the first quarter of 1973 were about 33 per cent higher than those made in the first quarter of 1972. June was a bumper month for both pre-tax profits and dividends. Profits advanced by 56 per cent, while dividends were 11.8 per cent higher, both records for this year.

Tory Chancellor Anthony Barber showed at the beginning of June that he was not at all satisfied even with this achievement in extracting profits at working-class expense. He said that the Phase Three Pay Board should hold back our wage-

rises—with "flexibility" to a figure actually below the £1+4% allowed under Phase Two. He went on to suggest the use of a new weapon to fool the working class. He favoured Threshold Agreements.

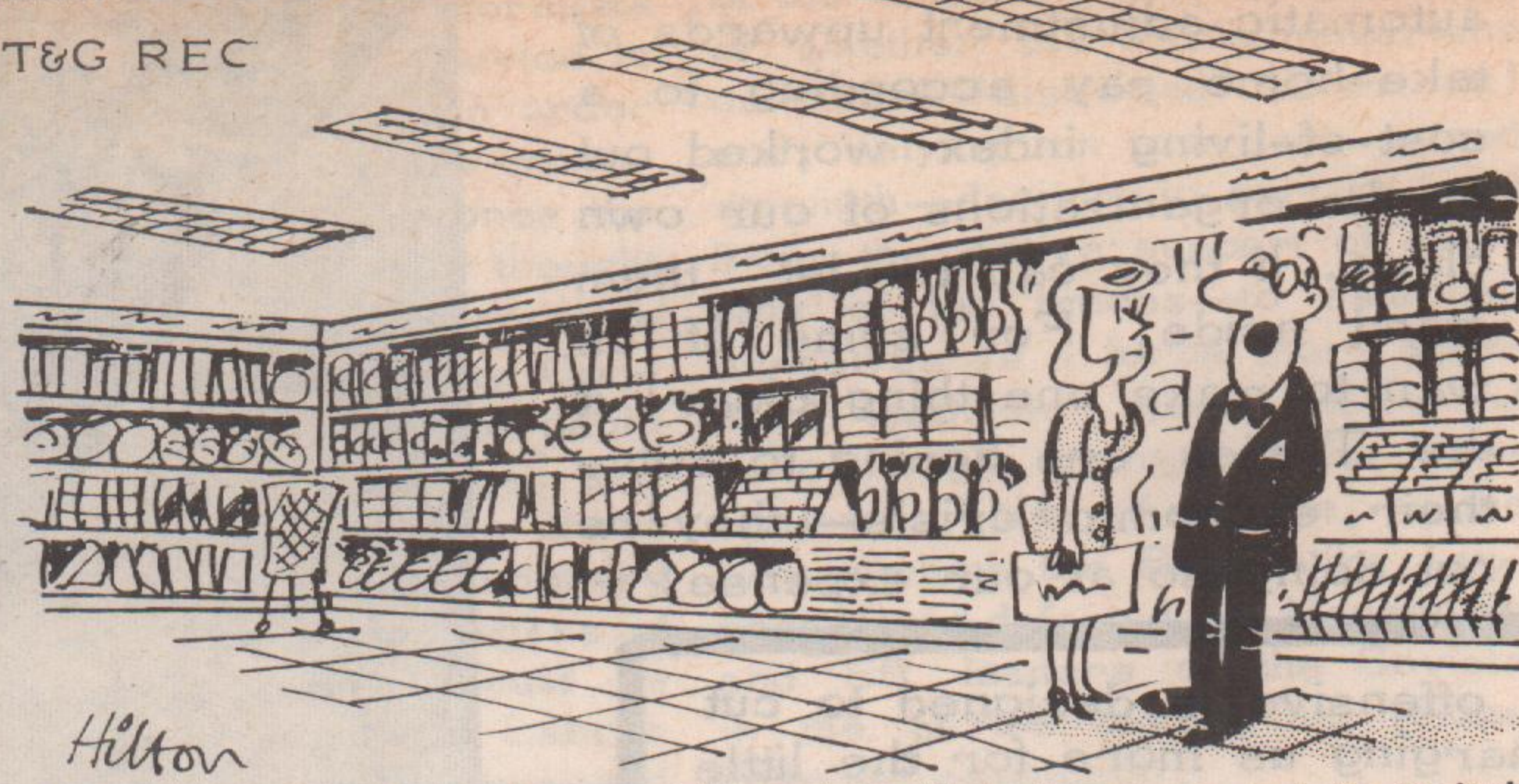
Threshold

The Threshold Agreement is an attempt to deceive workers into thinking that their wages are being raised automatically to cover increases in prices. A front page leader in the Sunday Times on June 24 referred to the idea as 'novel and striking'. The capitalist press has already begun a campaign to dress up and popularise the mystifications of this disguised new wage-cutting plan.

In reality, Threshold agreements achieve the opposite to what they are supposed to achieve. If accepted, they will systematically reinforce wages below the increase in the cost of living. We can see this working in three ways:

1. Progressive taxation and loss of earnings-related benefits mean that a wage-increase of, say, 16 per cent, will not cover a 16 per cent increase in prices (the present annual rate of food-price inflation).

T&G REC



"When you've finished the increases at this end it will be time to start at the beginning again."

2. The Retail Price Index—which the Tories would use to calculate the cost-of-living increase—distorts the actual working-class budget. For example, workers' households pay out a much higher proportion of their income on rents than is allowed for in the Retail Price Index. The wage-cutting, rent-raising "Fair Rents Act" only exacerbates this distortion. The Retail Price Index also makes greater allowances for luxuries such as Rolls Royce cars, Concorde trips and the like, few of which enter into the average working class budget (whatever the Tories might say).

3. Past experience of Threshold Agreements in the mid-sixties shows that wages do not adjust fully even to the given index of price-increases. It is only when price-rises reach a certain "threshold" limit that wages are adjusted up. If the threshold is, say, 5 per cent, then a 4 per cent increase in prices will not lead to a wage-rise at all. Wage-rises are always that much behind the increase in prices on average over a period as a result.

If you enter into a threshold agreement, therefore, you are undertaking a statutory commitment to accept a cut in real wages.

So this is likely to be one new form of the Tory attack on our living standards this autumn. Its success will depend on the collaboration the Tories receive from the trade union leadership. With Feather quite adamant about talking with Heath at Downing Street, and with Jack Jones (T&G), Sid Greene (NUR) and others lining up behind, the sham "cost-of-living clause" could well prove the smokescreen for a retreat from the major battles of the Autumn.

Campaign

Jack Jones may feel satisfied with his victory at the T&G conference on the issue of talks. But the mood of hostility towards him and his fellow-"lefts"—reflected in the firm action of the engineers in pulling Scanlon from Downing Street by the scruff of his neck—is now growing among workers fast. An unprecedented opportunity to build a really revolutionary leadership in the trade unions is opening before us.

● For every percentage point increase in the cost of living we demand an automatic increase in wages. We will not tolerate any reduction in our living standards to solve the profitability problems of the capitalists.

● This rising scale must be based on a WORKING CLASS COST OF LIVING INDEX. We can have no truck with Tory-inspired cost-of-living indexes which are incapable of assessing the real working-class family budget.

You might object that even with a rising scale, we would still stay permanently on the same level of real wages. We would only be running to stay in the same place. But in no way would a rising scale agreement rule out our annual claims for overall wage-increases. Quite the contrary. It would simply provide us with a firm guarantee against slipping backwards. Wage-demands would then be for increases over and above the base-rate guaranteed by the rising scale. All industrial bargaining, strikes and so on would then be for real increases, instead of only to maintain present standards. Profits today are soaring—so why shouldn't our living standards improve in proportion?

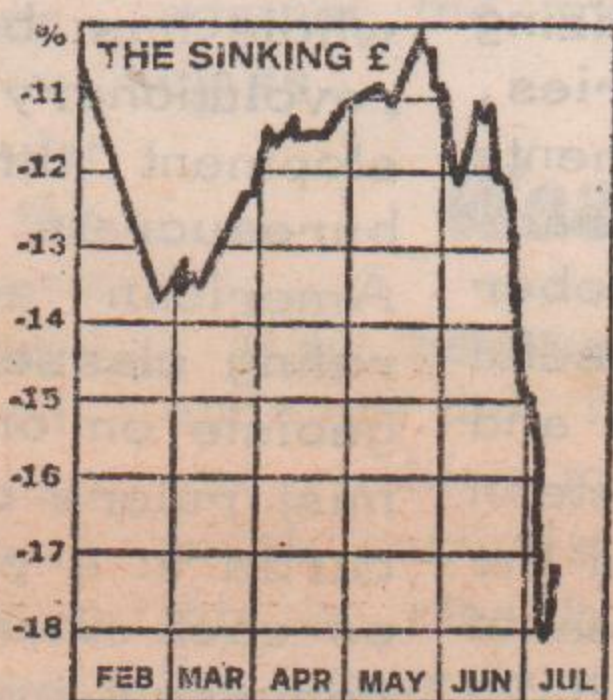
World Problem

To construct our own workers' cost-of-living index we require:

● COMMITTEES ON PRICES to be set up in every area consisting of housewives and trade unionists—and also all those suffering under the Tory offensive (tenants, pensioners, unemployed and so on). These committees should not only monitor prices but investigate their causes. Linked up with the trade unions and given real backing by the TUC and Labour Party NEC they could begin to acquire real power in each area and prepare the way for a take-over of distribution itself. If the ruling class can't hold down prices, then we will have to take over the chain-stores and food-industry and do the job ourselves. "But rising food-costs are part of a global problem", the Tories keep telling us. Precisely. The same is true of all the problems we face under the capitalist system. That is why we socialists are part of a global movement. The only real solution to world food shortages is the mechanization of agriculture in the "underdeveloped world". This in turn requires an expropriation of imperialist assets in these areas and the supply of tractors, harvesters and other equipment from the advanced industrial countries in accordance with a world economic plan. We must see the struggle for a rising scale of wages and for price committees in Britain as part of the struggle of our class internationally to control in our own interests the productive resources of the world. If our living standards are to be defended, there is no other way forward.

NO TALKS WITH HEATH!

WITH RESISTANCE to the trade union leadership's "talks with the Tories" building up, a situation of tremendous challenge is developing. Since last November, the Government's entire strategy of wage-cutting has rested on the collaboration of the TUC. Thanks to Feather & Co. we've submitted to "Phase 1", endured "Phase 2", and are now seeing our living standards eroding fast. We now see looming up an enormous balance of payments deficit—of well over £1,000 million—for 1973. The plummeting of the pound on the exchange markets is sending the cost of food imports to unheard of levels. And, as the global economic crisis surges swiftly towards all-out slump and trade-war, there is not the slightest doubt that the Tories will be forced into the most brutal assault on the whole of our movement in the period immediately ahead.



This is why the leadership of Feather—and of the "lefts" too—presents such grave dangers for us. Jack Jones is utterly wrong to imagine that through friendly chats at No 10 the Tories will change their minds.

By agreeing to "talks", refusing to provide the T&G membership with an alternative strategy of action, this "left", along with Feather, Tom Jackson, and Sir Sidney Greene only assists the further resurrection of this Government's battered credibility. Moreover, by politically disarming workers, by sowing illusions that "talks" can further our independent class interests and "restore free collective bargaining", Jones lays the basis for a defeat of the Labour movement at a time when we have the power and real determination—given the correct leadership—to march to victory. His treachery on this issue must be fought tooth and nail!

This is why we cannot underline too hard the significance of the decisions of the Engineers. The AUEW delegate conference and the conference of the giant Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions—representing over 3 million workers—told Hugh Scanlon in no uncertain terms—No talking with Heath! It was a decision reflecting the growing anger of millions of ordinary workers and housewives at the fraud of the "price-freeze" which the TUC leaders helped Heath to perpetrate on them.

It is on the basis of these decisions—not that of the T&G conference where Jones was able to deceive the delegates—that our whole movement must base its future strategy. Only by a clear policy of active opposition to the

Tories can the complete unity of our class be achieved. We must recognise the lessons of the last period. We should remember the enormous strength and combativity revealed during the miners', dockers', railway workers' and building workers' strikes last year and the might of almost a million workers who were striking at the beginning of this year. It is this strength that the trade union and labour leaders must base their activities upon. It is nothing short of reformist cowardice and a lie to speak—as Scanlon did at the Engineers' conference—of "a lack of will amongst workers to struggle against the Tory pay limits." Where was the "lack of will" among the hospital workers - to take only one example - in February and March?

Scanlon also told the engineers that the Tories' policies "are preparing an explosion that would make the stormy industrial events of the past two years seem only a mild prelude." And Laurence Daly at the National Union of Mine-workers' Conference warned "we will be in open confrontation with the Government this year." These statements are true. This autumn there's going to be no lack of will to fight on the part of the working class. The question is: what ACTION do Scanlon, Daly and the other "lefts" propose to secure the pay demands of their members and the defeat of the Tory attacks? It is not enough for them to supp-

port resolutions for nationalisation. Their 'support' for the programme of nationalisation - excellent in itself—is being used as a smoke-screen to hide their retreat from the practical task of mobilising to remove the Tories and the class they represent. What is needed is to link the political and industrial struggles into a single onslaught against the Tories. With socialist programmes of nationalisation adopted by the conferences of the AUEW, CSEU, NUM, G&M and T&GWU the way is open to do this.

The organised workers' movement is putting its foot down. The Chrysler and Perkins struggles—with the AUEW and CSEU votes against talks at No 10 - testify to that. Let's have an end to sipping and supping and class compromise with the Tories at Downing Street! If they want our support, our leaders must earn it. They must break with the Tories, break with the employers and stop trying to prop up the crumbling capitalist system. They must utilise the full strength available to them to take the power of the state into their own hands. They must make it crystal clear: the employers are NOT solving their economic crisis at our expense. And if they can't do this: let them stand aside and we'll act as needed ourselves!

- No talks with Heath!
- Prepare for the General Strike!
- Bring down the Tories!
- Labour - take the power!

DEFEND THE PICKET LINE

THE MAGNIFICENT victory of the Chrysler men should not blind us to the sinister implications of the managements tactics during the dispute.

East London thugs were hired to thwart the picket-lines at the Stoke plant, near Coventry. Their job was to get car-engines out of the plant. They hacked a hole in a wire mesh perimeter fence at dead of night and attacked a worker (John Doherty) with a spanner inside the factory. With the co-operation of Chrysler security guards, they got three tractors into the works. These were hitched to trailers loaded with engines and driven at 40mph directly at lines of pickets and police across the main gates. Both pickets and police had to jump clear as the drivers smashed through, hurling bricks, bottles and iron bars at those trying to stop them.

Throughout the same day, pickets were constantly harassed by staff cars trying to break the lines. Three men were knocked down, and one was hospitalized with head and back injuries.

The developments are sinister because they fall into a pattern of increasing violence against pickets in recent months. They

are a perfectly logical development from

- The trials and intimidation of 24 building workers at Shrewsbury and 8 at Mold on completely trumped-up charges arising from last year's strike.
- The formation of anti-picket police squads, the sinister activities of the mobile Special Patrol Groups and the arming of sections of the police—particularly with new high-velocity, telescopic guns.

As the international and British economic crisis deepens in coming months, we are going to see a steady increase in this kind of ruling-class violence. It is important that we start considering ways of coping with it now.

Those who control the army in Northern Ireland and the police in this country claim to work on the principle of "the minimum violence necessary". In their case it is necessary to take these claims with a certain pinch of salt. But the principle, nevertheless, is a good one. We can adopt it ourselves. The starting point is this: the picket-line is inviolable. We will use the minimum violence necessary to ensure that it remains so.

There is no need to talk about "arming the workers" at this stage. Anyone in our ranks under today's conditions who resorted to knifing, fire-arms etc. in "defending" the picket-lines would pretty obviously be acting as a provocateur. The principle of "minimum violence" to secure the given end must be applied.

There is no need to tell most workers this. It is clear common sense. When on March 9 a police heavy-squad tried intimidating dockers at a Hull private wharf, they met their match. The dockers turned out 2,000 strong and after a three-hour confrontation the police gave up and the management had to climb down in the dispute.

OVERWHELMED

Here it was the sheer force of numbers which overwhelmed the police. This is our real weapon—provided the police are unarmed.

But what happens when the ruling class start organizing paid violent thugs like the Chrysler-strike-breaking gang? Or what happens when they start using police armed with truncheons, or tear-gas, or fire-arms? Once

again, the principle is crystal clear. The minimum violence necessary to ensure the absolute inviolability of the picket-line. It is a pity, but there it is. Violence must be met with violence. The important thing is to do all possible to ensure that it is controlled, organized, efficient. This is where the responsibility of leadership comes in. If our labour and trade union leaders want to prevent violence getting "out of hand", they'd better start organizing the defence of the picket-lines themselves. For if they don't, workers can hardly be blamed for drawing their own conclusions and organizing their own self-defence themselves.

We will not use sticks and bars unless our attackers use sticks and bars. We will not start looking for other weapons unless our attackers start using them first. All we ask of our labour leaders is that they act for our class with the same method and determination as the police and army chiefs act for theirs. All we ask is that they accept the simple principle: that the minimum violence will be used which is consistent with the absolute inviolability of the picket-line.

NIXON - BREZHNEV PUSH 'P



ABOVE: SOVIET LEADER LEONID BREZHNEV. "I'm not dangerous", he told capitalists during his visit to America in June. He certainly isn't dangerous—except to the world communist movement he is supposed to represent.

"The quarter-century period of the cold war is now giving way to relations of peace, mutual respect and cooperation between the states of the East and West."

—Leonid Brezhnev, 1973

"...the existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with imperialist states for an extended period is unthinkable. In the end either one or the other will conquer."

—Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, 1918

COMMUNIST PARTIES throughout the world are hailing the Brezhnev-Nixon record—followed by the Helsinki 'European Security Conference'—as opening up a new era of progress towards peace and harmony for all mankind.

The latest hope is for yet another "love-in" this autumn—between Nixon and Chinese foreign Minister Chou-en-lai in New York.

Harmony

It may seem outrageous for us CHARTISTS to "sneer" at all this love and reconciliation. Aren't we in favour of it? Do we want the "cold war" all over again? What are we complaining about?

Well, we're very much in favour of world peace and social harmony. In an important sense, they are what the struggle for socialism is all about. The trouble is, we're dead certain we are going to get neither while the world is divided into rich and poor nations and exploiting and exploited classes.

To our minds, the fact that the leaders of the world's mightiest "super-powers" should start buying each other plush cars or signing huge trade deals doesn't remove the root causes of conflict at all. The opposite is the case.

We must ask ourselves why it is that the leaders of the capitalist and "communist" worlds have chosen just this moment for their unprecedentedly open collaboration.

Let us look at the background.

The years since 1967 have witnessed the collapse of the dollar, a swiftly escalating and insoluble world economic crisis unprecedented since 1929, the defeat by the Vietnamese revolutionaries of the military colossus of US imperialism, a revolutionary ferment in all Latin America, a near-revolution in France, pre-revolutionary situations developing in almost every country of Western Europe—and workers' upsurges in Czechoslovakia and Poland which have reverberated throughout the so-called "communist" world.

For the Kremlin bureaucrats as well as for the American ruling class a terrifying period of upheavals has begun. And on each side, the rulers have realized with a new clarity just how much they are dependent on each other.

Stability

When Brezhnev sent in his tanks to crush the developing anti-stalinist revolution in Czechoslovakia on August 21, 1968, he made sure he had got the agreement of US President Johnson over the "hot line" first. The Czechoslovak workers had begun seizing control of their own factories, electing their own managements and discovering afresh the traditions of the Russian October revolution. This posed a dreadful threat to "stability", peace and security throughout Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and the world as a whole. The idea of workers' democracy would have

spread rapidly into the so-called "communist" world. The entire "big-power" world was under threat. Johnson did not hesitate to the Kremlin support this challenge to "stability".

Pyramid

It was a mirror-image of this when President Johnson prevented the French ruling class from seizing power. He did so only because of collaboration both of "Communist" leaders and Kremlin bureaucrats. Did these "communists" prevent De Gaulle? The answer is to see. Had the French and students succeeded in quering state power—just a few days there was their own leaders to France would have staunchest supporter of the Czech workers against the Kremlin bureaucracy. The Moscow Stalinists have been prevented from their tanks.

Since 1968, Europe as a whole has been entering a revolutionary situation. The development threatens the ruling classes of both American and West European countries. The bourgeoisie on one side and the communist rulers on the other are playing cards in a pyramid. They are on each other. At the top represent opposite sides

Multi-National

Facts

- By 1985, between 300 and 400 multinational corporations will on current trends control around 80 per cent of all industrial capital assets in the western world.
- Production and sales of the subsidiaries of multi-nationals already exceed total world exports by \$200 billions.
- Thirty per cent of world exports is already done by multinational companies in industrial countries and this will rise to 50 per cent by the end of this decade.
- Between 35 and 60 per cent of manufacturing exports of different products are shipments from parent companies to foreign subsidiaries and not to independent foreign buyers.
- The short-term liquid assets of multi-nationals—estimated at around \$270 billions—exceed by 200 to 300 per cent the short-term liquidities of the national reserve banks and financial institutions. (It was sufficient that the companies moved only around \$8 billions or 3

liquidity in February 1973 to close the foreign exchange offices).

- In the expanding, modern, science-based process industries, which in a decade will be getting around 65 per cent of total industrial capital investment, such as petroleum, petrochemicals, chemicals, plastics, electronics, etc., the multinational domination is virtually complete. Already a few giants account for nearly 75 per cent of the entire output of each sector on a world basis: 7 in petrol, 15 in petrochemicals, 200 in chemicals, 10 in advanced electronics, 8 in rubber, 9 in paper, 5 in plate glass, 9 in auto, to cite only a few of many examples.
- Even these few apparently "independent" companies in each sector are intensively interlinked with one another through joint ventures like common banking controls, licensing relations, market-sharing arrangements.

Rubber provides an example. In spite of its link with Pirelli, the Dunlop Rubber Company produces tyres for Goodyear in several countries. Further, it has joint ventures with its French "competitor", Michelin. The latter, through its control of Kleber-Colombes, is now a partner of the Austrian Semperit Rubber Company, which produces radial tyres for American companies in its Irish plant. Semperit, it is expected, through its Kleber-Colombes-Michelin tie-up, will eventually be linked through a common holding company to the German multinational rubber companies, Continental Phoenix and Metzler. In this way the globe's rubber production will be effectively tied up.

- Paralleling the multinational concentration of production and commerce is the related concentration of the multinational banking system. Within a few years, about 10 to 15 joint global banking consortia will entirely dominate the financial markets.

Finally, the multi-national giants are successfully penetrating into the so-called "communist" areas of the world. The breakthrough of recent years has been achieved by a new form of business made possible through joint-venture co-production which is being substituted for traditional trade relations. Instead of imports and exports, the capitalist multi-nationals provide capital and technology and the Eastern partner strike-free labour, raw materials and plant.

LOVE-IN

The firms' profits are earned by selling a share of the output in their own Western markets, thereby getting a "strong" currency. The arrangement is considered to be highly beneficial to both sides—and goes a long way towards explaining the recent spate of "love-ins" between US President Nixon on the one hand, and "communist" leaders Mao-Tse-Tung and Leonid Brezhnev on the other.

THE ABOVE FACTS have been compiled by CHARLES LEVINSON, Secretary General of the International Federation of Chemical and General Workers' Union. They were published in the GUARDIAN of June 22. They show just how mistaken it is to think that we can defend ourselves nowadays against the employers without an INTERNATIONAL trade union and political organization. Some of our leaders are beginning to move in this direction. But we can't just hang about waiting for all of them to get off their backsides and act. The tasks are too urgent. That is why CHARTISTS are already forging links with rank-and-file groups in other countries—laying the basis for the new INTERNATIONAL we so desperately need.

'PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE'

the heart of the "capitalist" world. The "system" President Nixon is in agreement with the "oppression of the ruling class".

Yet at the summit they meet and prop one another up. World capital is the dominant partner. Yet if either power was "pulled away", the other would immediately begin to collapse.

Thus the smashing of the NATO alliance would be a death-blow to the Kremlin masters of the "Warsaw Pact". In relieving Eastern Europe and the "communist" world of the need for defence and the vast weight of oppression and fear which has suffocated the October revolution since the early 'twenties—would deprive the Stalinist rulers of the atmosphere and conditions on which their dominance depends. Correspondingly, the smashing of the Kremlin bureaucracy and the passing of armed power into the hands of the Russian and East European workers themselves would deal a death-blow to American Imperialism and the world bourgeoisie. In demonstrating to the Western working-class what communism and socialism can really be, it would remove from under the bourgeois rulers their main ideological prop—the argument that communism is the dictatorship of a small elite against the mass of the working class.

Weakness

It is because of this interdependence that Brezhnev and Nixon are rushing together. In the more frank journals of the bourgeoisie, this is clearly recognized. What the super-powers in their recent

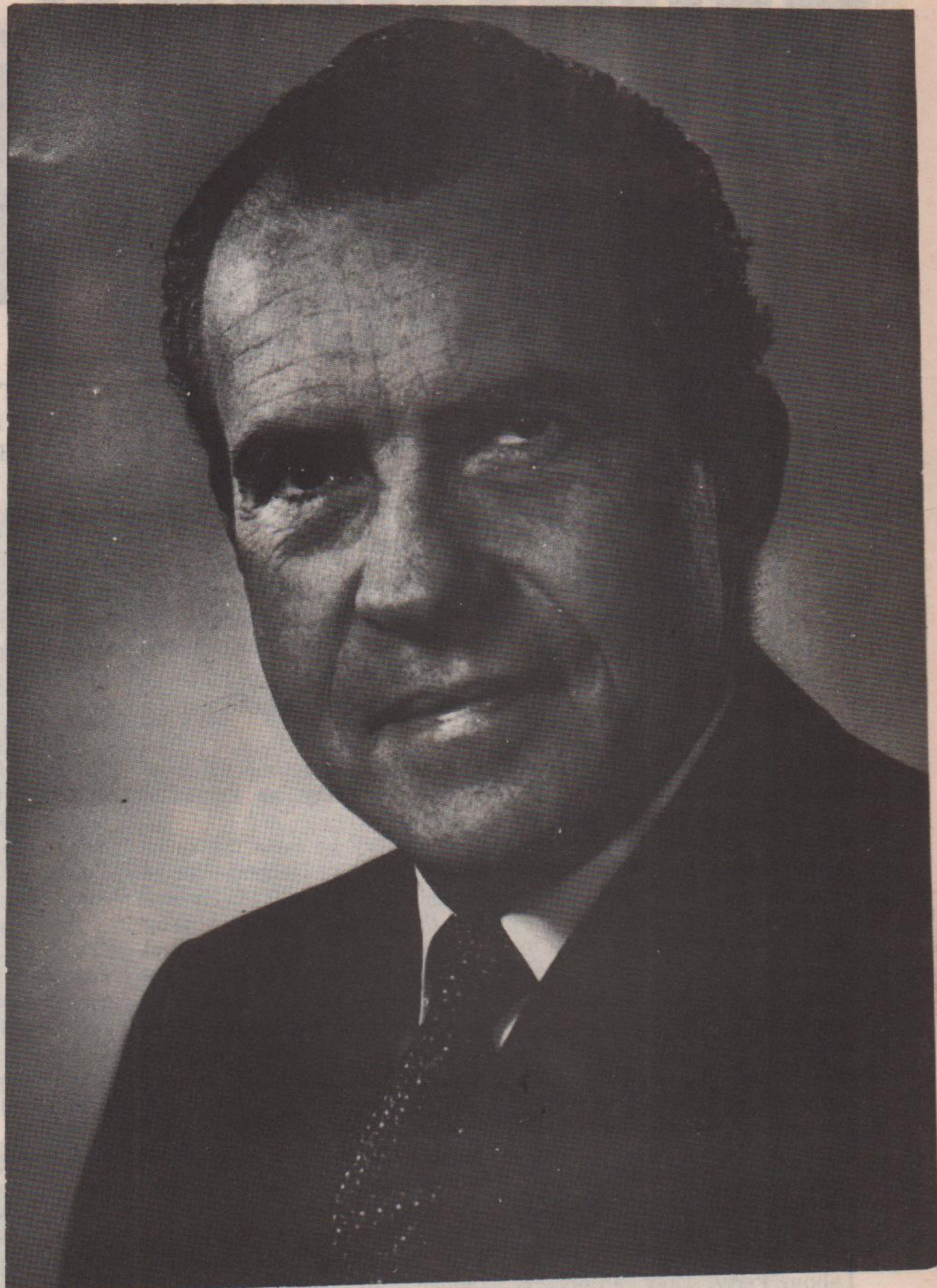
"summit" talks demonstrated, as Henry Brandon put it in the Sunday Times (June 24) "was the reciprocal recognition of a balance of mutual weakness between the two."

Privileges

Such ideas used to be called "Trotskyism". Now they are becoming common knowledge. If Brezhnev rushed to save Nixon from the "Watergate" scandal it was for a solid reason. Nixon's impeachment would be a body-blow to US imperialism—and the collapse of US imperialism would involve inexorably the loss of his own (Brezhnev's) and his fellow bureaucrats' plush limousines, private swimming pools, personal servants and usurped political dominance too. Brezhnev promised vast profits to US businessmen in exploiting the resources of Siberia for the same reason.

Communist

His motives were—and remain—primarily political, not economic. He wants to see the world capitalist system survive. He is not a communist at all. He is like Vic Feather in relation to the Tory Government. He keeps rushing across for "talks" because he wants to help the "boss" over a difficult patch. The development of the world socialist revolution requires that we kick him and his fellow-bureaucrats right out of the communist movement.



ABOVE: PRESIDENT RICHARD MILHOUSE NIXON, PRESIDENT OF the United States. Rose to political prominence as an anti-communist witch-hunter. Since the Watergate hearings—exposing him as a ruthless criminal even by the standards of the American ruling class—he's lost nearly all his friends. One of the few ones left is supposed world communist leader, Leonid Brezhnev.

CHILE

ON JUNE 29, Chilean 'Socialist' President Allende survived an army revolt when some tank units shelled his presidential palace in Santiago. Army chief General Prats, who escaped attempted assassination, led loyal troops in suppressing the coup as thousands of workers occupied their factories and poured into the streets in support of the 'Popular Unity' Government. Although Allende got through this crisis, it only confirms what the *Chartist* said last December about the fragility of the so-called 'Peaceful' road to Socialism.

In fact, the popular front regime has stopped short in its reform programme at what the Chilean ruling class will stomach. It has implemented the half-hearted land reform originally drawn up by the previous weak-kneed Christian Democrat Government, and taken over big foreign-owned industries, such as the copper mines (though now agreeing to pay compensation for them). BUT Allende has not touched the real power of the Chilean capitalists, and when he made a move towards taking over some of their firms, they organized a 'bosses general strike' to force him to retreat.

Though most of the Popular Unity votes come from the workers parties (Socialists & Communists), the coalition includes right-wing groups like the Radicals, and it

relies on Christian Democrat votes to get legislation through Parliament. The ruling class are clearly split between those who want an open military dictatorship and a nationalist wing who hope Allende can boost their control versus American capital, and keep the masses quiet by making 'socialist' noises.

It is true that the initial steps of the Allende regime (big wage-rises, price freeze etc.) made great gains for the workers. But since the basic free-market capitalist system was left intact, the economic crisis intensified — forcing the Government (urged on by the Communist Party) to attack its own supporters in the name of 'national unity' and 'building Socialism'. For nearly 3 months the militant copper miners at El Teniente and Chuquicamata struck to defend their living-standards against rocketing inflation (prices up 240% in a year!). As they were besieged in the mines by police armed with machine-guns, the miners were driven into the arms of the right-wing parties, who cynically used their struggle as a weapon against the Government.

Desperately Allende is trying to 'stabilize' the situation by coaxing army leaders back into his cabinet. But as the attempted coup shows, part of the military now fears he is letting the work-

URUGUAY

ONCE UPON A TIME, Uruguay was known as the "Switzerland of Latin America", complete with parliamentary democracy and a welfare state. But for decades her economy stagnated, bound hand and foot to British imperialism and dependent for export revenue on wool and meat (whose price for years steadily declined). This led to a decline in national production, raging inflation and increasingly corrupt and dictatorial governments. The 'Tupamaros' urban guerrillas gained certain working-class support for their attacks on the wealthy, but despite their heroism provided no way out of the impasse of Uruguayan society. Nor did the "Broad Front" coalition (a feeble imitation of Chile's 'Popular Unity') that contested the 1971 elections.

Last February the army finally declared it had lost patience with the politicians. It carried

ers get out of hand. The Chilean President has only two choices: either open the way for the return of the blackest reaction, or break with the bourgeoisie and mobilize the workers' movement and army ranks to smash the bosses' state power. On his present form, it must be said that things look grim.

out a coup which left President Bordaberry in power but installed the military in key posts to ensure the carrying out of a policy of "reform". The new regime initiated a "legal investigation" of the "corruption" of the old guard politicians. Their officers are split between traditional right-wingers and radicals who have sympathy with many of the nationalist aims of the Tupamaros.

Then, on June 27, the army replied to the refusal of congress to lift parliamentary immunity from an alleged Tupamaros leader. It got Bordaberry to dissolve Congress and institute an open military dictatorship. Press censorship was imposed and the schools were shut down. Though the generals attempted to buy off the workers with a 50% wage increase, 400,000 downed tools in a general strike and occupied the factories.

Bordaberry replied by banning the main trade union federation the CNT (led by the Communist Party), arresting hundreds of its leaders. As we go to press (early July), the outcome seems uncertain. The army is still split and unsure of its exact role, and the working class remains far from broken.

Martin Cook

REVOLUTION AND THE LABOUR PARTY

CHARTIST REPLY:

Dear Comrade,

WE REPRODUCE IMMEDIATELY BELOW A SHORT EXTRACT FROM AN ARTICLE ON BRITAIN IN THE MAY ISSUE OF THE AMERICAN TROTSKYIST PAPER, "CLASS-STRUGGLE". THERE FOLLOWS A REPLY FROM CHARTIST PETER CLEMENT IN CINCINNATI, AND A FURTHER RESPONSE FROM OUR U. S. COMRADES. ON THE RIGHT, THE EDITOR OF THE CHARTIST REPLIES TO THE LONGER CRITIQUE OF OUR POSITIONS. The correspondence is reproduced because of the importance of the issues raised.

Left centrist groups in the Labour Party such as The Chartist even had a better line on the general strike. Still, they adapt to Healy's opportunism when they only call for the expulsion of the right-wing

Labourites like Jenkins and Taverne who supported the bourgeois Common Market. True revolutionists in the Labour Party would also call for the expulsion of Harold Wilson and his whole gang of Social Democratic

bureaucrats and parliamentary fakers. Moreover, the Chartists have illusions that large sections of the British Army can be won over in a crisis situation, failing to see the need for a militia of workers' defense guards.

In your June issue you made some serious charges against the Chartist. We were accused of refusing to explain the treacherous role of the Labour bureaucracy, refusing to break with reformism and build an independent revolutionary party and refusing to recognize the class nature of the bourgeois army. We accept that if any of these charges were true, we would indeed be the "left-centrist" tendency you allege we are.

To the Editor:
Dear Comrade,

I cannot let your article on Britain, "British May Day Strike," pass by without any comment.

You say that "workers' political power is possible only by smashing the bourgeois state apparatus. For this reason, a revolutionary Marxist party is required," and you go on to say that "The tasks of British Trotskyists is to expose the parliamentary reformers and TUC fat cats. . . ."

A small group like the Chartists can best, at this stage, begin to build a revolutionary Marxist party by working within the Labour Party. They can not expose Wilson with slogans like 'Vote Labour with No Illusions,' but, rather, directly demand that Wilson, when elected, carry out his policies. If he did this he would have to seize power. We must explain that Wilson could carry out his socialist policies because he has the strength of the Labour movement behind

him at the same time we must make clear why we know he won't.

Similarly, we raise the question of the General Strike around the Slogan *TUC Prepare for the General Strike*, not by merely calling for a General Strike, as the SLL does. We explain why the General Strike is a powerful weapon for bringing down the Tories, simultaneously explaining the dangers of an unprepared General Strike.

Whilst in the Labour Party we are carrying out a two-pronged attack — one against the reformist leadership and one against the various centrist currents, particularly the "Militant" tendency (which your article fails to mention). You refer to us (the Chartists) as left centrists without giving any reason. We openly raise the question of a revolutionary party (affiliated to the Labour Party as was the old Independent Labour Party) in Labour Party meetings and in our press. We organize among the ranks of the army. we see

the need for preparing for the coming General Strike, and we are attempting to build the foundation for a Fourth International, with Trotskyists in other countries.

As to your reference to the "right wing Labourites like Jenkins and Taverne" we call for their expulsion (Taverne has been expelled by his local party) and for the expulsion of the other sixty-seven Labour M.P.s who voted with the Tories over Common Market entry. Demanding that Wilson expel these traitors is above all a demand against Wilson, since to carry out the expulsions requires a complete shake up of the party. Calling abstractly for the expulsion of Wilson would be mere ultra-leftism.

As to the need of a workers militia, it is correct to raise, now, the idea of such a militia to defend trade unions should they come under attack from the bourgeoisie. However, it is also necessary to organize amongst the ranks of the army now.

Large sections of the army can be won over in a revolutionary situation if the ground work is prepared now, if we have established some links beforehand. The *Class Struggle* article skips over the question of the army and consoles itself with the slogan "For Trade Union Defense Militias."

For two years the Chartists have carried out work amongst the soldiers by giving support to a small, but significant, revolutionary tendency in the army, The Soldiers' Trade Union Rights Movement. The fact that not nearly enough work is being done is the fault of the other British "Trotskyist" groups who have ignored appeals for help from the STURM.

No doubt on the eve of a General Strike these groups will finally see the importance of the army; unfortunately, it will then be too late.

Yours comradely,
Peter Clement
(Chartist)

But you are wrong. It is not possible to "prove" this merely with words. But the development of the revolution in Britain will confirm—in our view—that in this period we were the ONLY organization to have really broken with the rotten centrist capitulations which characterized ALL the various fragments of the old Fourth International at least as represented in Britain since the war.

It is not a question of how "left" one can talk. The point is that if you don't know HOW to raise the genuinely revolutionary questions in a way capable of gaining mass support, you will eventually do one of two things. Either capitulate to reformism for the sake of your "position" in the movement. Or withdraw into your shell as an ultra-left propaganda-sect in the hope of maintaining the purity of your soul.

In our view there is no lack of "sincere" Trotskyists in the world movement today. What is lacking is a grasp of Bolshevik tactics. In our view it was no accident that writings on tactics formed the bulk of Lenin's and Trotsky's output in dealings with foreign communists after October. These 'communists' suffered from the same disorders as have continued to afflict the world movement to this day. It must be understood that reformist and centrist conclusions stem with an iron logic from ultra-left methodological premises.

Workers' Militias?

Now to your specific points. All of them, in our view, reflect an entirely healthy suspicion of any group which may appear to have 'buried' itself in the British Labour Party. The movement's experiences of 'entrism' in the earlier post-war years provide the soundest grounds for such suspicion. That is the positive side of your attacks. The other side, however, is that all of your points reveal a complete failure to have grasped the kernel of Trotskyism—i.e. the lessons of the Russian revolution.

This is revealed not only in the whole burden of your critique but also in secondary details, such as your remark that "it is a serious error to imply that the bourgeoisie can be deprived of a military force". Under certain exceptional circumstances, the

Editor's Reply:

We want to first comment on the tone of Comrade Clement's letter. While making a sharp political defense of *Chartist* and similar criticism of *Class Struggle*, the writer maintains a comradely tone, designed to convince, not castigate. The ability to write such a letter seems to have been lost by various American "Trotskyist" groups, who are more concerned with factional, subjective personal characterizations and name calling than convincing political opponents. Thus we welcome this letter as an example of the serious political discussion so needed in the world Trotskyist movement.

The questions touched on in Comrade Clement's letter will be more fully discussed in future issues of *Class Struggle*. For now, we point out that *Class Struggle* does not oppose entry in the Labour Party. For a revolutionary organization in Britain which wishes to reach the working class, such entry is almost essential.

However, the pressures of such an entry, the desire to be heard by the ranks, always leads to pressures to adapt to the left-wing of the bureaucracy. This tendency is even stronger in a case like that of Chartist, which has virtually no public face as an independent revolutionary organization.

Thus Chartist attempts to distinguish between Wilson, who for years has been capitalism's ablest agent in the ranks of the workers and who for six years worked to get Britain into the Common Market, and the sixty-nine MPs who actually voted with the Tories on EEC entry.

The revolutionist's task is to explain the need to overthrow the entire bureaucratic apparatus. To accommodate to the bureaucrats' own game of playing

the "liberal" traitors against the "conservative" ones can only confuse and disorient the class as a whole.

Wilson has been exposed over and over again in front of the British proletariat. The task is not to propagandize for his exposure once more, but to directly explain his role and dispel any illusions about his ability to "change."

In the November 1972 issue of *Chartist*, the center article contained the lines, "Why don't our leaders act? When you think about it, it's an amazing way to carry on," and "They lack not the means, only the will to take power." Never does *Chartist* explain that it is not a question of "will" but of material interests. In fact, although criticism of the bureaucracy has sharpened somewhat in recent issues of *Chartist*, the actual role of the bureaucrats as the "labor lieutenants of capital" is never explained.

Logically extending their refusal to explain the real role of the bureaucracy, *Chartist* never explains, in any way, the real role of the Labour Party. To revolutionary Marxists, the Labour Party represents an obstacle to the revolution. It is a reformist wall which stands between the workers and state power. A revolutionary party must be built which will have to break from and politically destroy the Labour Party. Never does *Chartist* explain this. We do not know if they even believe it. It appears that they think the Labour Party can be transformed into a revolutionary vehicle.

The implication running through all of *Chartist's* articles is that the Labour Party will be elected, will not carry out a socialist program, the LP leaders will be replaced by revolutionary leaders developed in the Labour

Party organizations. Thus the May 1973 issue of *Chartist* gives the following perspective:

... With the Tories in a shambles, Labour will win the next election — assuming the leaders make even a modicum of effort. But the new Ministers will take office in a situation of extreme economic crisis and social disorder. Being anything but red revolutionaries they will simply buckle under to the pressure of a desperate and bankrupt ruling class [as if they don't serve the ruling class already] . . . They will refuse to take real power into their hands. . . . Unless we have built up a strong leadership capable of taking the reformists' place [transforming the Labour Party into a revolutionary party?] and taking power, the outlook for us will be bleak.

In the February 1973 *Chartist*, where the call is made for a revolutionary party (rather than just *Chartist's* usual call for a revolutionary "leadership" in the Labour Party and TUC), the relationship between the revolutionary party and the Labour Party is totally garbled. Thus the article states:

[The coming General Strike] will give us the opportunity to take over our factories, take over and administer our housing estates, win the armed forces ranks and take over the government of this country. . . . We require only one thing. To get rid of our existing middle class leaders and form a fighting leadership of our own class. We need a disciplined organization: a party — as part of our Labour, Co-op and trade union movement — to mobilize the mighty machinery at the disposal of the Labour Party and the TUC and carry through the conquest of state power. Help us build the Socialist Charter movement into such a force.

What is wrong here is that the

bourgeoisie most definitely can be deprived of its main military force even before the armed insurrection has begun. Nobody familiar with Trotsky's "History of the Russian Revolution" could have been ignorant of such a fact, since the October revolution provides us with the supreme example of it. If the Bolshevik seizure of power was virtually bloodless, it was because the bourgeoisie had been successfully disarmed in advance.

You are of course right to point out that workers' militias will be needed. If you have read our paper you should know that this point, in bold print, forms one of the central items in our "TUC—Prepare for the General Strike!" propaganda. You will find it (phrased as the demand for "workers' defence units based on the trade unions") in our March 1973 issue (p 2) and our April 1972 issue (p 1).

You should understand, however, that armed militias, like barricades, can only function in the context of a "holding operation" to gain time and retain the initiative until decisive units of the bourgeois armed forces can be won over. Even were we ourselves—the working class vanguard—to initiate the revolutionary offensive with a machine-gun to every man, this task would remain the one on which success or failure would hinge. As Trotsky puts it:

"There is no doubt that the fate of every revolution at a certain point is decided by a break in the disposition of the army. Against a numerous, disciplined, well-armed and ably led military force, unarmed or almost unarmed masses of the people cannot possibly gain a victory. But no deep national crisis can fail to affect the army to some extent. Thus along with the conditions of a truly popular revolution there develops a possibility—not, of course, a guarantee—of its victory."

(History of the Russian Revolution, Gollancz, p 139).

In Britain it is precisely now—as hired thugs are being organized against pickets in a nationally co-ordinated way for the first time in years—that the question of defence of the picket line is becoming of burning importance. Even in this context, however, to chant "workers' militias now!" would in our view smack merely of clowning. At this stage it certainly would not get us a flea-hop nearer to the goal of arming the working class in practice. One of the most important "Lessons of October" is this: that even their most daring offensives were launched by the Bolsheviks under the slogans and in the language of defence.

'Independence' or United Front?

But the full extent of your misunderstanding of the October revolution is only revealed when you deal with the relation between the mass movement and the revolutionary party. Trotsky

writes: "The problem of conquering power can be solved only by a definite combination of party with soviets—or with other mass organizations more or less equiv-

alent to soviets".
(Op. cit. p 1021).

For you, however, there are only two elements in the machine of revolution: the revolutionary party, and the working class. The category of soviets—or their equivalent—is one of which you are unaware.

Thus you indignantly charge us with failing to secure the independence of the revolutionary party. We fail here, in your view, by not preaching the need for a "break" with the Labour Party. Hence, you charge, "the relationship between the revolutionary party and the Labour Party is totally garbled."

We put it to you: was Trotsky's formulation "totally garbled" when he emphasized to his British supporters in 1925:

"The Communist Party will take that place in relation to the Labour Party which at present is occupied by the Independent Labour Party?"

("Where is Britain Going?", New Park, p 127)

We would remind you what that 'place' was. Trotsky explains:

"As the absolute majority on the Executive Committee and in the other more important institutions of the British Labour Party belongs to the Independent Labour Party, the latter forms a governing faction in the Labour Party."
(ibid.)

There can be no mistaking Trotsky's meaning here. The British Communist Party is to oust the ILP as the "governing faction" in the Labour Party.



Commissars of the Military Revolutionary Committee address a factory meeting of railway workers in Petrograd, October 1917.

Trotsky uses the analogy of the Bolsheviks who became the "governing faction" in the Russian Soviets.

Machinery of State

Are we saying, then—as you charge—that the Labour Party can be turned into a revolutionary party? Your theoretical helplessness here reminds one of the child who pondered whether a hundred miles could be turned into a year. His mistake wasn't his choice of the wrong figure. He just couldn't grasp he was dealing with two incommensurable kinds of thing.

You yourselves fail altogether to grasp the distinction to be made between (a) the mass, amorphous, "united front" movements and bodies of the working class (which are in themselves politically colourless) and (b) the real political parties within the working class, each wedded to a definite ideology. In the first category would fall the trade unions, the Russian Soviets, the British Labour Party and a good many other bodies in various countries of the world. In the second would fall the Independent Labour Party, the Fabian Society, the Bolshevik Party, the Menshevik Party and so on.

The organizations of the trade unions or of the Labour Party cannot be regarded as competing with the revolutionary party, because they are incommensurable kinds of things. We no more wish to transform the former into "a revolutionary party" than the Bolsheviks wished to turn the

Soviets into a revolutionary party. But neither do we wish to destroy this machinery—any more than the Bolsheviks wished to destroy the Soviets. The job of the revolutionary party is to politically destroy and **replace**, not the Labour Party, but the bureaucracy and leadership of the Labour Party—which of course these leaders themselves would regard as the same thing. If you like, with them, you can call it the "destruction of the Labour Party" in any case. We, however, look on our interconnected network of trade union branches, shop-stewards' committees, Labour Party General Management Committees and their various regional and national counterparts and conferences not as rivals or a threat to our existence but, on the contrary, as potentially our own working-class machinery of state.

Please don't charge us, however, with "imagining that the Labour Party is a Soviet". Firstly, we are talking about the whole machinery of the British labour movement, not just the Labour Party. Secondly, we are talking of the elective, rank-and-file machinery, not the paid functionaries and Members of Parliament over whom the class can exercise little or no control. Thirdly, we are referring to the labour movement's potential, not just its present structure and form. We are quite aware that, owing to the starkly contrasting histories of Russia and Britain,

PUBLIC MEETING

Thursday August 16th 8pm
Brixton Training Centre
close by Lambeth Town Hall

LAMBETH'S SUMMER SOCIAL PROGRAMME

AS WELL as all their political activities, Lambeth Young Socialists have a full social programme this summer to help increase their numbers. A successful mixed hockey match and a coach trip are to be followed by further day trips, football matches, and a dance, during the months of August and September.

LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS

For details of meetings write to your branch secretary:--
Brent East: Graham Bash 7 Park View Olive Road NW2
Norwood: Paul Moore 61 Selsdon Road SE27
Streatham: John Quirke 6 Mount Ephriam Lane SW16
Vauxhall: Brynley Heaven 68 Brook Drive SE 11
Rotherham: John Connelly 22 Bradgate Road Rotherham Yorks

LACK OF SUPPORT FOR SUSPENDED YOUNG SOCIALIST YS leaders break conference pledge Paul Moore

NOTABLY ABSENT from the recent meeting of Goole Labour Party's management committee was a representative from the national committee of the Young Socialists. Leading YS members had pledged at the YS conference at Easter that they would do all in their power to make sure that Dave Douglass, a Goole Young Socialist, was not expelled from the Labour Party; but despite several appeals from the local YS branch for a national committee member to come and defend them, the promised help did not arrive. In this special report from Goole, Maureen Douglass explains what has happened so far

BECAUSE OF all the promises of help from our National Committee at the YS Conference, we asked that Peter Doyle or Andy Bevan be present at our next Labour Party GMC meeting as observers. We even met Andy Bevan to impress it upon him. The usual promises were given, but when the GMC meeting opened

our members were very bitter to see no national or regional YS representative was present.

So the GMC decided that Dave's suspension would stand. But they did allow him 20 minutes to put his case, under pressure from the Labour Party's National Executive which must have been due mainly to the campaign of support run by

some YS branches and the CHARTIST.

The next thing the bureaucrats wanted to do was disband the YS branch, because we hadn't waited for the Constituency Party's permission before printing leaflets. That vote was lost, but our hands were tied with various restrictions.

REVOLUTIONARIES AND THE LABOUR PARTY

(continued from page seven)

Russia's 'Soviet' apparatus and our 'Labour' apparatus are opposites in almost every respect. It is perfectly clear to us which is the superior form. We have stated consistently in our propaganda that in order to become a state apparatus of working-class rule, the machinery of the British labour movement will have to assume the full democratic form of the Russian Soviets of 1905 and 1917.

And if you are worried that we are addicted to "Labour Party Constitutionalism", you can set your minds at rest. It is true that our aim is to become the "governing faction" in the Labour Party. But whether this is after the seizure of state power or before is a matter for events to decide. Certainly we have no intention of allowing the date of the overturn—in a revolutionary situation—to hinge on whether or not we have a majority on the Labour Party NEC. Only if the representative bodies of the British labour movement were perfect expressions at every moment of the will of the working class could we permit for ourselves such a procedure.

In actual fact we will split with the Parliamentary Labour Party, the bureaucracy of the Labour Party and as many of the Party's leading bodies as—on the eve of the direct assault—we have been unable to gain control. All we are saying is that we have no intention of surrendering to the bourgeoisie or its agents the mass rank-and-file bodies and machinery of the Labour Party at so crucial a time if we can avoid it. On the contrary, we want these bodies on our side, linked as they are by a million threads to the trade unions and to the traditional loyalties and consciousness of the British working class. And unless we are prevented, we will launch the conquest of power not simply in the name of the revolutionary

communist party (which would appear as a sign of weakness and isolate us) but in the name of the united labour and trade union movement as a whole. Similarly the Bolsheviks "cloaked" the October revolution in the 'legality' of the Soviets.

In a dual-power or General Strike situation, the reformists would inevitably pay lip-service to the workers' demands in order to retain their hold over the movement and sell it out once the opportunity arose. If they thought it necessary, they would convene an emergency Labour Party Conference. At any rate, to begin with, the mass meetings and assemblies would not be those sponsored by the revolutionary tendencies. The real organs of working class power would be headed largely by "left" Labour Party leaders, and composed mainly of Labour Party members and supporters. To prevent a sell-out, only one course of action could be adopted by the revolutionary party—and this would presuppose a previous period of consolidation within the Labour Party itself.

It would be necessary to confront the reformist leaders with the only 'impossible' (to a reformist) demand: "Take the power!" All our 'concrete' demands should be hurled at them within this context. We would have to demand of them: 'Break with the employers, take over the factories, issue an appeal to the troops, answer violence with violence, establish yourselves as an independent government, take the power into your own hands!' Assuming this really turned out to be a revolutionary situation—i.e. assuming the state was becoming paralysed, the armed forces were split and the masses were sensing their power and ready to go the whole way—then our demands would rapidly find an echo. It would then become possible to say to the Labour

Party leaders, in their own organizations and meetings and with the voice of the working class as a whole: Take the power—or we'll take it for you! Their refusal to act would finally expose them and make it possible for us to take their place. We would be in a position to declare "We are the Labour Party—not you!", to prove our point by organizing invincible demonstrations in the name of the Labour Party (regardless of whether the Parliamentarians or others 'disowned' us or not) and, relying on our own armed strength—deriving in part at least from the active support of sections of the troops—to establish ourselves as a force more powerful than the state itself—and hence begin acting as the Government. This, of course, is the way in which the Bolsheviks 'exposed' and defeated the Menshevik and SR leaders of the Soviets in the period leading up to the October revolution.

Lessons of October

It is the lessons of October, incidentally, which also indicate the absurdity of your argument that, since "Wilson has been exposed over and over again in front of the British proletariat", there is no need for a struggle to expose him any more. Unfortunately, it makes little difference how often the reformist leaders are 'exposed' in a non-revolutionary situation. If the workers aren't really in a position to take the power, then this will be reflected in their consciousness. They will lack confidence in their own independent strength—and resign themselves to their reformist leaders no matter how often these have been 'exposed'.

For this reason the Bolsheviks were unable finally to expose the Mensheviks and SRs until the eve of the seizure of power itself. The same will apply in our case.

Two points remain. Your attack on us over the question of the Jenkinsites shows that you

have not really grasped who they are. They are brazen pro-capitalists. Wilson and the rest still have to cloak their treachery in tatters of "socialist" verbiage. Not to distinguish between them in our method of attack would be to sink into childish ultra-leftism. The Bolsheviks carefully isolated the open capitalist ministers in the Provisional Government from the so-called 'Soviet' ones by their slogan "Down With the Ten Capitalist Ministers!"

Finally, you profess outrage that we should accuse the Labour leaders of having the means to conquer the power, lacking only the will. But this is in fact the essence of the situation. Unlike the Liberal politicians—and unlike your Democrats—the Labour leaders in Britain have at their disposal a mighty machinery and an organized working class movement which is willing to fight. They have at their disposal, in other words, the objective means to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie. It is precisely this which makes their refusal to act not mere incapacity but treachery. It is absolutely necessary to make clear that it is their will, their active desire to maintain the capitalist system—a will springing from (and not counterposed to!) their material interests as bureaucrats—which stops them from toppling the system. And nothing but their will. They will argue that they lack the means to act—blaming the working class—and that therefore their capitulation is not treachery at all. The Bolsheviks all along fought this trick, arguing that the Mensheviks and SRs had an enormous power at their disposal, and that nothing prevented them from using it but their own conscious treachery and desire to prop up the bourgeois system. In our view, the Bolsheviks were right.

Yours comradely,

Chris Knight.

Editor, The Chartist.