

THEY MUST NOT FIGHT ALONE

THE FIREFIGHTERS OFFICIAL strike is now more than two months old. But public support for these workers, who earn barely over £40 for a 48 hour week, remains strong. The vast majority of firefighters remain absolutely solid and determined to win their claim for reduced hours and a 30 per cent wage increase to bring them up to the national average. Fire Brigades Union members have stuck out in the face of an intransigent Labour Government hell-bent on defending its wage-cutting 10% policy. Defence of lives and living standards is not a priority for the Callaghan Government. The 12-month rule, the big stick of unemployment, massive social spending cuts, incursions on democratic rights, the deployment of troops and the denial of social security payments to strikers have been the stock-in-trade of the Labour leaders to break not only the FBU but all workers up against the pay "guidelines".

The Tories are backing the government every inch of the way. Liberal leader Steel revealed the true nature of the Lib-Lab pact by threatening to call it off if Callaghan makes any concessions to the firefighters' claim.

MALICIOUS

The capitalist press has conducted a malicious campaign throughout the strike to demoralise the strikers, distort their case and blame them for deaths and injuries. At the same time, led by the Daily Mail, a disgusting campaign has been mounted to raise money for the uniformed scabs sent in by Merlyn Rees to break the strike.

Worst of all the firefighters, like the Grunwick strikers, have been abandoned and isolated by the TUC leaders. On Wednesday 21st December, the TUC General Council gave these workers an Xmas gift. By 20 to 17 they voted against a further appeal from the FBU for a campaign of support of their strike.

The TUC statement declared the whole trade union movement was in sympathy with the firefighters—"a sympathy shared by the General Council". Then Murray, Basnett,

Fisher has just joined them in accepting a previously rejected offer. The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering workers Union is due to lodge a claim for a £70 minimum wage for skilled engineers, related claims for other grades a 35 hour week, and full equal pay for women. But few engineers can have confidence in Scanlon and co who have kicked grit in the face of conference decisions.

Worst of all have been the Mineworkers leaders who have all but shelved their claim for £135 a week for face workers. The claim was made at the beginning of November. Immediately, the right wing led by President Joe Gormley and General Secretary Lawrence Daly proceeded to open negotiations with the NCB on productivity schemes to avoid any fight against the 10 per cent limit.

Miners resoundingly rejected productivity deals in a national ballot in late November. Now after more than two months of pussy-footing and delay on the wages claim, in frustra-

ALONE

tion many miners are being driven into the divisive incentive bonus schemes following the NUM Executive decision to ignore the ballot. Scargill, in a dangerous diversion, tried to take the union to the bourgeois courts—and lost. McGahey, Scottish President, has done a complete about-turn, as we indicated last month, and given the go-ahead to area productivity deals.

All in all the TUC leaders have done a good job in isolating the firefighters. The big battalions of the labour movement, with the power to hit big businesses' pockets, have been disarmed.

The lefts in the Labour Party have been little better than their trade union counterparts. Speeches in the

by Mike Davis
Scanlon (who abstained) and co, even had the temerity to proclaim that the TUC's attitude to the 10 per cent limit had never been in doubt. "the TUC are not party to it!"

If this is the case, millions of workers suffering the effects of pay restraint and whose income is now lower than it was in 1970 (according to the Treasury's own figures) will want to know what the TUC is going to do about the 10 per cent limit. The answer is clear from the treatment of the firefighters... sabotage every fight against the limit!

The General Council know very well that the September Congress rejected pay restraint. They know very well also that to put into practice that decision by supporting the FBU and other workers would not only jeopardise their cosy relations with the government as non-uniformed police, but also launch the labour movement on collision course with that government.

HEART

It is this the TUC fear more than anything. It is this that lies at the heart of the firefighters strike. This is why the TUC and Labour leaders have worked might and main to ensure the firefighters strike alone.

Millions of workers currently have claims in the pipeline. One million council manual workers have a 10% breaching claim pending. Leaders of two of the main unions involved have already capitulated and Alan



Photo: by Colin Chalmers

Firefighters lobby TUC General Council on December 21st

END OF THE ROAD FOR SOARES?

AFTER JUST 500 days in office, the minority Socialist Party (PS) Government of Mario Soares reached the end of the road last month. Defeated on a vote of confidence called on the issue of a package of austerity measures demanded as the conditions for a loan by the IMF, Soares was left with no choice but to tender his resignation. Not one deputy of any other party could be found to support the Soares Government on the confidence vote.

The downfall of the Soares Government is indicative of a breakdown of the social stability which has increasingly been imposed since the rightist offensive of November 25th/26th 1975. The Soares Government could suppress the social tensions unleashed by the revolution temporarily; they could not resolve them.

Underlying the present political

by GEOFF BENDER

crisis in Portugal is the intractable economic situation. The 50 million dollar loan offered by the IMF would have covered a twentieth or a thirtieth of Portugal's estimated deficit for 1977. A further \$750 million loan depended on the acceptance of the IMF's terms. Within Portugal inflation has been running at over 30% and a rise in consumption has provided the driving force for expansionary growth. (6% in 1977, 4% in 76, as against a fall of 3% in 1975). Little of this growth has taken the form of investment though and unemployment still stands at 17% - 600,000.

In particular there has been little investment in export sectors of the economy which are still largely in private hands. The government which owns about

half of all industry has accounted for 70% of investment, while 90% of exports come from the private sector.

In Agriculture, the co-operatives have been made the scapegoats for the underdeveloped and uncultivated state of Portuguese agriculture for generations. In fact, where the co-ops have had a chance to develop unhindered they have raised the level of output. 30% of Portugal's workforce still work on the land yet do not produce half of the country's food needs. Only a massive programme of investment and modernization can boost dramatically the output of food and reduce the backbreaking toil of the agricultural workers. No private concern before or since 1974 has shown any interest in such investment and yet the Soares Government was intent on the restoration of all seized land to its original owners.

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Commons and the feeble collection of "over" £400 Eric Heffer raised in Parliament is no substitute for openly challenging the Government on wage control outside Westminster. Michael Foot and Tony Benn have stood firm behind the 10 per cent limit—with not a word of criticism from the Tribune or Morning Star.

The firefighters must not be allowed to fight alone. They need more than collections and solidarity resolution, important though these are in the absence of strike pay. All unions with claims pending should be preparing for strike action now. This means a political confrontation with the Government and state. If it means forcing a General Election so be it.

The battle to generalise the firefighters strike will be a difficult one. Militants in the unions and Labour Party must start from the understanding that the tasks of uniting the working class go hand in hand with a defeat for the wage cutting policies of the Lib-Lab Government and a removal of the right-wing leaders.

THE RECENT REPORT published by the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is being quite cynically manipulated by the Fleet Street press. Depending on whether you read the popular papers or the 'heavies' then the Report's economic predictions for 1978 are summarized as being either 'encouraging' and indicating that 'Britain has turned the corner of economic recession' or, alternately, as 'gloomy' and further evidence that the structural crisis of world capitalism is still a long way from being resolved.

The views which the ranks of the labour and trade union movement are likely to be having pushed down their throats in the coming period are undoubtedly the former. The strong likelihood is that both the Parliamentary Labour Party and the Trade Union tops will be lining up to proclaim that the OECD Report shows that 'Labour's policies are working'. And with the almost absolute certainty that 1978 will be an election year, this will serve as a rallying call for unity behind Callaghan's pro-capitalist Lib-Lab Government and for

THE CHARTIST

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TWO VIEWS ON 1978

rabid denunciations of the socialist wing of the Labour Party as 'boat rockers', 'wreckers' etc..

The predictions of the OECD report will be presented as 'facts' - and these 'facts' in black and white terms mean:

- A balance of payments surplus for 1978 of £1800 millions;
- Real income rising by 2½%;
- Inflation in single figures;
- No further increases in unemployment beyond the summer.

Ironically, those who follow the newspapers and journals the capitalist class themselves read are already getting a glimpse into the real state of the world economy. This is why such epithets as 'gloomy' and 'depressing' set the mood for economic and world news reports and articles in such papers as the

"Financial Times" or the "Economist"

But in context, the upturn predicted for the British economy, and particularly the spectacular balance of payments surplus, have to be set against the fact of North Sea Oil. Against this temporary stimulus to the economy, the overall picture of world investment in industry and world trade is one of stagnation - if not decline.

The OECD report expects an overall real growth rate of 4% or less for the OECD area, which is a downward revision of the figure for 1978 forecast in June, last year. And this is expected to decline to a figure of 3% in the latter part of 1978. This slower economic growth rate in major industrial countries, coupled with deflationary policies by most governments in an effort to cut public spend-

ing and inflation will undoubtedly mean a worse position in terms of unemployment in all major capitalist countries - the UK not excluded. This depressed outlook is expected by the OECD to be further reflected in international trade. The report predicts growth rates in trade at around 4% in comparison with 6%-7% in 1977.

This is the way the capitalist class itself discusses the fortunes of its own system. The conclusions they have arrived at reflect deepening pessimism and despair. No panacea is to be found in the strictly short-term benefits of North Sea Oil. On the contrary, the economic policies of all the key industrial nations hinge on strategies to force their own working classes to bear the whole burden of a renewed bout of economic crisis.

Against this setting it is doubly dangerous for the labour movement to accept the line of Callaghan-Healey about a recovery in the economy brought about by Labour's policies. This line of reasoning will become the camouflage behind which the offensive against working class living standards will be renewed.

Book Review: 'The Politics of the Judiciary' by John Griffith

IN A CLASS OF THEIR OWN

By Bernard Misrahi

THE MAIN THEME of Griffith's new book 'The Politics of the Judiciary' (Fontana, £1.25) is that the judiciary would not be more progressive even if more of the judges' parents were working class. He believes that the role of the judiciary is to protect society against change from militant trade unionists, sexually permissive dope smoking students or Labour governments who interfere with the right of racists to discriminate against black people. He provides sufficient examples of reactionary decisions by the two highest courts in Britain, the Court of Appeal and the Law Lords (often known as the House of Lords) to refute any claim that judges are neutral or non-political.

Judges are elected by no-one. They are appointed by the Lord Chancellor (a Cabinet member), but carry on judging for life. They owe allegiance to no particular government but to their own conception of the 'Law'. Far from simply punishing those who break laws passed by the government, they can interpret a law in a spirit opposite to that of the legislators who drafted it, thus wrecking it.

emasculated

The courts have often emasculated more progressive Labour legislation. They discovered that the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act did not confer the right to picket effectively because the police could always determine how many pickets constituted 'obstruction' or a 'breach of the peace'. They recently buried ACAS. They ruled that schools in Tameside need not go comprehensive and that the Race Relations Act (1968) allowed social clubs to refuse membership to Blacks. They do occasionally support a Labour government. Lord Denning agreed that investigative journalists Agee and Hosenball should be deported.

Both the Labour government and the Tribuneite 'opposition' insist that the oppressed should not strike, picket or demonstrate for better conditions but should wait for a Labour government to pass the appropriate legislation. What is their answer when judges find

loopholes in their creations? Do they mobilise their supporters to break the law, when they are strong enough to do so? No! They moan about the judiciary always opposing them but insist they cannot change this judiciary. They promise to pass a new law, when time permits, that will be so expertly formulated that no judge can crack it.

Judges sometimes obstruct Tory legislation. In the Summer of 1972, the two highest courts came to two contradictory decisions to allow the Tory government to withdraw from two confrontations. They reversed two decisions of the National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC) set up by Heath to enforce the Industrial Relations Act. They lifted a fine from the Transport and General Workers Union by ruling that a union WAS NOT responsible for the actions of its shop stewards. A month later, they released five dockers from Pentonville prison, in double-quick time, by ruling that a union WAS responsible for what its stewards did.

Judges also chair many Royal Commissions which whitewash action by government agents. The Widgery report demonstrated that British paratroopers did not murder fourteen unarmed civilians on 'Bloody Sunday' in Derry, 1972. Scarman 'proved' that the International Marxist Group were to blame for police killing anti-fascist Kevin Gately at a demonstration at



"Of course if we can do without juries altogether we can use the boxes to try these criminals a dozen at a time..."

Under the Diplock Commission no-jury courts are no longer a joke.



Red Lion Square, London, in 1974.

Judges do not need new legislation to increase repression against their enemies when old legislation will do. Why convict Shrewsbury building workers of 'assault' - penalty 3 months - when they can be jailed for 3 years on a charge of 'conspiracy to assault'? In 1971 the editors of 'Oz' were convicted of 'conspiracy to corrupt public morals'. The charge of 'blasphemy' was resurrected this year to prosecute the editors of 'Gay News' for publishing a poem about Jesus.

no-jury courts

Diplock's commission led to the establishment of no-jury Diplock courts in Northern Ireland where confessions (beaten out of a suspect) could be used as evidence. In this country too the courts have always encouraged police to change their rules to make arrest easier and have amended their own rules to facilitate prosecution. Order 113 was served on leaders of students occupying Warwick University. This enabled the authorities to get an injunction even though they didn't know the names of ALL the occupants.

If judges can do this without special legislation, imagine what they can do with the Criminal Tresspass Law which now makes squatting a criminal offence, or with other repressive legislation! If such repressive laws provoke a response that the government cannot handle, then the courts will do their best to let that government off the hook.

In most industrialised western countries the capitalist class rules mainly by persuasion and only rarely uses armoured cars or guns. The judiciary play an important

role in this 'persuasion'. Disputes can be settled peacefully in the courts, by an agreed set of rules, rather than by confrontation. And if the highest court in the land makes a decision you don't like - tough! That's the Law! If you don't like that law, you must strive to change it, constitutionally, through another arm of the state - Parliament. But when the NIRC jailed five dockers, trade unionists found a very quick way of reversing that decision. They went on strike immediately and threatened a general strike.

protect

Such defiance is rare. Not only do right-wing leaders prattle about respect for the law, but even militants like Arthur Scargill take their union to court. Many socialists claim they have no respect for the judiciary, then try to get selected as Justices of the Peace. "We'll change the system from within" they explain, "We'll be fair to working class people." Alas, the system usually changes them.

Griffith does not incite anyone to defy court orders, but he strongly implies that trade union rights and jobs (not to mention a host of other things) will never be defended by obeying them. Neither will capitalism be overthrown by decree in parliament duly implemented in the courts, but through a titanic fight against the police and judges on every issue. The courts exist to protect a ruling class against those who threaten them. Until that is understood, at least by those who claim to be socialists, then every working class struggle can be punctured as soon as a judge shouts "Stop! It's illegal!"

A WORKERS' PLAN FOR THE SHIPYARDS

The scandalous treatment of the Tyneside shipbuilders at the Newcastle Swan Hunter Yards by the labour leaders and capitalist press is typical of the blackmailing tactics the Government has used against workers for the last four years. All the outfitters, painters, plumbers, joiners and construction workers are demanding parity with the boilermakers, and because they refused to call off their overtime ban and accept no-strike clauses they were refused work on the £115 million Polish order for seven ships. BRYLEY HEAVEN, examines the deeper malaise afflicting the British and world shipbuilding industry which has driven the Labour Government to transfer the orders to other yards.

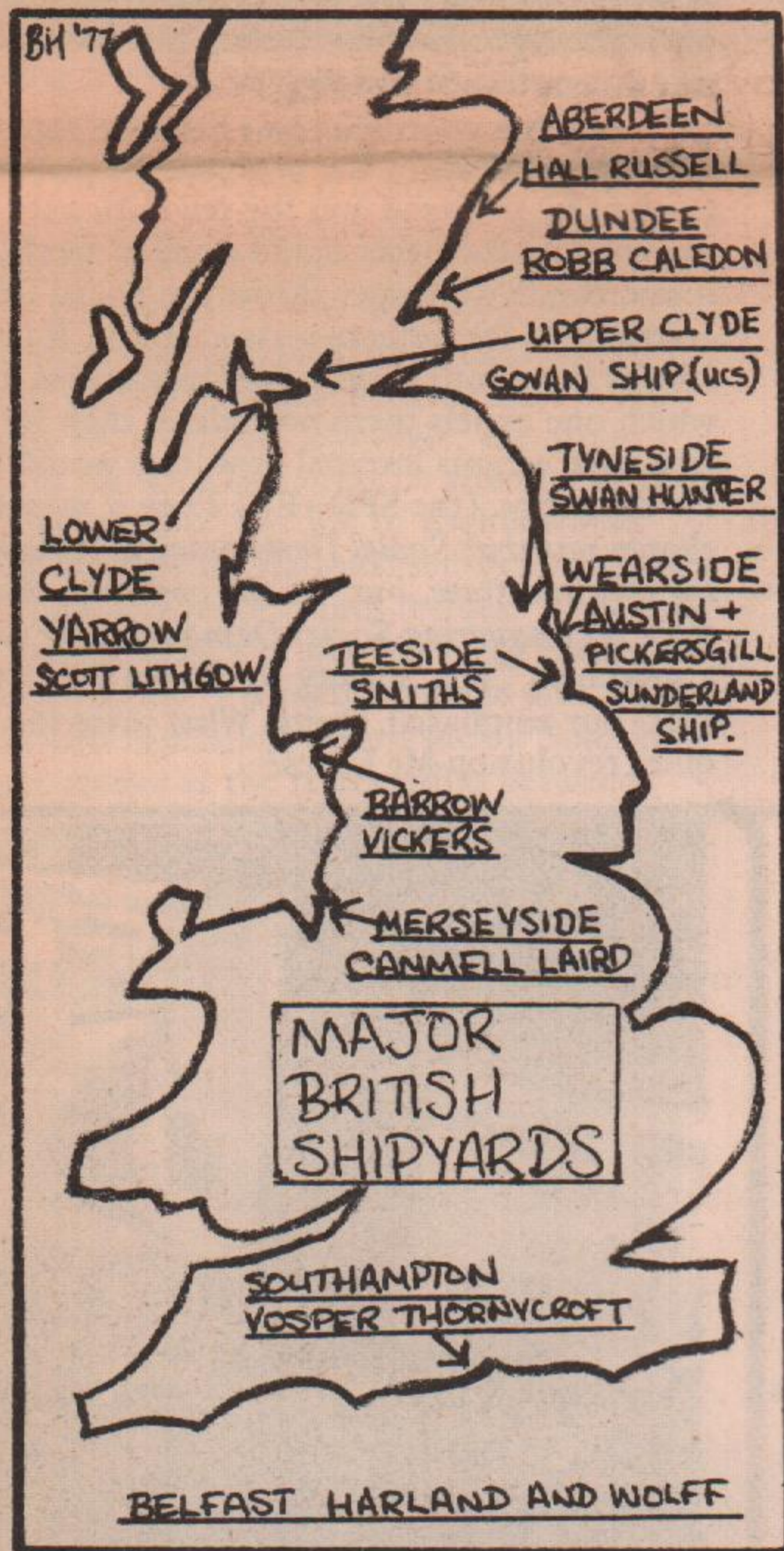
WHEN LABOUR belatedly nationalised the pits after the second World War, most of us in the Labour Movement, including perhaps a majority of miners themselves, held out genuine hope for a new order of things. At best, the miners would receive the full fruit of their labour and manage the pits themselves. At least, the individual grasping of the coalowners would give way to a "national interest" which could include provisions of community welfare sufficient to reward the hardship and struggle that had helped to secure the prize of nationalisation. We were to be disappointed.

A full generation later in 1977 Labour nationalised the shipbuilding and aerospace industries. But this was no action replay. In contrast to the bitterness of the inter-war years, the shipyard bosses departed from the stage of history (or more likely joined the board of British Shipbuilders) with hardly a whimper, gathering up the generous compensation to launch in more profitable waters.

collapse

Attitudes had changed in our camp too. Bitter experience had made cynics even of shipyard workers themselves. The first months in the life of British Shipbuilders have more than justified their fears and confirmed our warnings of the time:

"The international trade recession, and the collapse of the tanker market in particular, has created 50% worldwide shipbuilding over-



capacity. . . such that by the end of next year (i.e Dec '77) there will be little *genuine* work at all."

"Shipyard nationalisation has been transformed into another instrument of restructuring and rationalisation this can only mean union-bashing productivity drives imposed in the name of competitiveness leading to as many redundancies as are *politically possible*"

"A really tough 'no lame ducks' posture. . . is probably out because the 90,000 or so jobs directly at stake are in high unemployment areas, many of them in doubly sensitive Scotland."

(Chartist August 1976 p3).

The article went on to warn of the dubious role of James Airlie, the Communist Party convenor from Govan Shipbuilders. Today he is christened by the Daily Record as "the red white and blue" shop steward for accepting diverted orders from the struck yards at Swan Hunter.

We labour this point not to lay spurious claim to some static concept of consistency, or to illustrate powers of clairvoyance, but to show how clearly was the writing on the wall. It is this which makes the response of the union leaders such a scandal. To put it bluntly they have neither the plan nor the will to carry out their minimum responsibility: the defence of their members' jobs, pay and conditions. Let us examine some of the formal points of programme, many of them culled from the famous "alternative economic strategy", which are often put forward as an answer:—

flexible

"Buy British" Policy. Forcing British shipping lines to place orders in British yards. This one is a favourite with insular reformists. A variant crops up in nearly every general programme as import controls. Internationalist considerations apart, it misunderstands the nature of the crisis. While the total world demand for ships tumbles, the *proportion* snapped up by Japan, one of the low cost and capacity — flexible producers, has tended to increase. If British shipping lines, who in any case have fewer orders to place, have "patriotism" forced upon them this must have two tendencies:—

- British yards are confirmed in their high cost, surplus capacity status thus reducing their ability to re-enter competition in a global scramble.
- British shipping lines have to bear the imposed costs of ordering in the home market, spreading a little of the "British disease" to another world-competitive industry.

Redirection Of Capital. This one is often linked to protectionism as a call for banning the export of capital or even the recall of foreign investments. Again the crisis is misunderstood. Correctly diagnosing that British shipyards are "uncompetitive" because they are undercapitalised, our reformists argue that increasing the *availability* of capital for domestic investment will do the trick and provide jobs into



Shipyard workers on the Clyde vote during the UCS struggle

the bargain. They are wrong.

British yards are no longer viewed by the capitalist class as a source of profit. For this very reason they had to be incorporated into the state's capital-supportive structure. If capitalists could have been induced to invest in this way, they would have taken advantage of the virtual abolition of company taxation, the enormous regional incentives etc. In any case a recent NEDO study (Economist 26/11/77 p 87) suggests that the effect of capital exports is broadly neutral in its *continuing* effect on the balance of payments and, of course, generates incomes repatriated to Britain. Furthermore in itself, new investment tends to reduce manning levels.

State Subsidy. This one is a bit more realistic. So much so that it is already being forced on the Labour government to prevent further mass unemployment. The level of subsidy on the recent Polish order received wide publicity, reaching 50% despite its high import content. A policy of "orders at any price" buys time at the expense of squeezing the diminishing profit making base of private manufacturing though its demand on the state purse. Its entrenches the industries structural problems in the long term, like wallpapering a damp wall subsidies *solve* precisely nothing.

identity

Planning Agreements. This one is often wrapped up with phoney worker participation which, Bullock or no Bullock, has advanced little on the early schemes to put a worker on the board. Sure enough, British Shipbuilders is every bit as undemocratic as its nationalised predecessors.

Planning agreements, suggesting an identity of interest between workers and management mocked by the struggle to preserve living standards in the face of the 10% norm, have understandably been viewed as a dead letter

from all sides. In principle, the stewards can draw up a superb plan. They did just that at Lucas Aerospace two years ago. It is gathering dust on the shelf. It is *agreement* that forms the stumbling block, compulsory or voluntary, as with wage restraint.

We could go on. The starting point for a Workers' plan for the shipyards is the building of a really powerful national stewards committee embracing the supply and related industries. The starting point for resistance to the management's onslaught, as yet at its first and tentative stages, is a programme which commits every yard to the defence of jobs through worksharing to reduce the working week and the defence of wages by fighting for escalatory clauses reviewed each month by the national stewards committee themselves.

warship

Such a programme does not resolve the crisis in the industry, it *prevents its resolution* at the expense of the workforce. It provides the bedrock for and the springboard to a fighting unity between yards, the forging of international links and the formulation of a trade union plan of useful production embracing the warship yards (Yarrows, Vickers, Vosper Thornycroft), the reequipment of the fishing industry and adequate North Sea Oil safety, for example.

Under capitalism, British Shipyards are destined to be swamped by their relative disadvantages in an international recession. This prospect the government resists. But we have attempted to show that a "national solution, (designed to gloss over the class nature of the capitalist state), in which the shipbuilding industry, with excess capacity and undercapitalisation, burdens the very economy to which the reformists look to sustain it, begs the question of socialist production which, ironically, they so often casually reduce to a question of nationalisation, or state capitalism.

AIRLIE SCABS ON SHIPYARD WORKERS

IN THE HEAT of the Labour Government's blackmail of Tyneside Shipworkers over the Polish order for 24 ships, Merseyside, Wearside and Teeside shipyards joined Tyneside in the blacking the order. Not so Govan. There, Communist Party convenor James Airlie recommended rejection of solidarity with the Tyneside workers and acceptance of the ship-order transferred from Swan Hunter's.

It seems the Stalinist leaders in Poland had no difficulty in supporting the "no-strike" conditions the Labour Government were demanding from any yard that accepts the deal. These same "Communist" leaders have had plenty of experience of strike-breaking. In 1971 they tried to crush shipyard workers at Gdansk and Szczecin who launched a national strike wave against government food price rises. Attempts to suppress the strike

failed.

Obviously, Airlie was only apeing his Polish co-thinkers when he recommended the Govan shipworkers scab on Tyneside. "Our position is clear. All the ships must and will be built in Britain," said Airlie in defence of his acceptance of the transferred ships. Flying in the face of any understanding of the global character of the crisis in shipbuilding industry and the need for international workers unity to be developed as the only solution, Airlie comments "if it is a case of losing the whole order to the Japanese, we are for the ships being built in British yards." With these words Airlie both rejects any semblance of internationalism and stabs the Swan Hunter workers in the back. It goes without saying that the "Morning Star" made no criticism of Airlie.

Labour Students back P.L.O.

LABOUR STUDENTS HAVE made an emphatic break with the pro-Israeli conspiracy of confusion which dominates the British Labour movement. Delegates to the annual conference of the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) held in Lancaster at Christmas, affirmed support for the national rights of the Palestinians, called for recognition of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and voted down by 89 to 66 a call to endorse the present Israeli state. The NOLS

has grown considerably in recent years, and is now taken more seriously in the party and movement as a whole. A ramshackle coalition of Tribunites retained overall control by a hair's breadth. Their common political outlook does not extend far beyond contempt for the Militant Group. It is best summed up by the standing ovation given to veteran reformist cynic Ian Mikardo. An attempt to renege on the 'No Platform for Fascists' position, however, was thrown out by conference.

WORKERS' CONTROL — POWER OR INTEGRATION?

by Frank Lee

THE NOTIONS of workers control' and 'worker participation' are almost as old as the Labour movement itself. Within the Labour movement the *idea* of workers control — like the *idea* of socialism — enjoys an almost universal approbation. However, like socialism, workers control would appear to have a number of differing interpretations. One such interpretation was quite cogently voiced by Mr. Jack Jones retiring head of the Transport and General Workers Union, on the occasion of the recent Dimpleby memorial lecture (BBC-TV).

Jones's particular exposition of workers control, worker participation etc. undoubtedly represents the worldview and long-term strategy of the labour and trade union bureaucracy. Before examining Jones's piece various formulations, it is worth examining the economic background which has given rise to them.

REVOLUTIONIZE

As far back as 1848 Marx and Engels writing in the Communist Manifesto pointed out that capitalism would always tend to revolutionise the forces and instruments of production. It would do this precisely in order to increase the social productivity of labour and the rate of (relative) surplus value. Capitalism would necessarily tend to streamline and rationalise the productive process. And this streamlining and rationalisation would include the work force. For with the increasing (and now colossal) outlays in investment, capitalism needed to keep the 'variables' — in this instance, Labour and labour costs — as constant as possible.

Hence arose the idea of a programmed, pliant, *integrated* workforce. Pioneering work in this field was carried out by W.F. Taylor in his work 'Principles of Scientific Management' and the general trend of social rationalisation, that is, the streamlining of the organisation of production, following economic/technological rationalisation was brilliantly described by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci in his short essay 'Americanism and Fordism.'

In recent years this ongoing trend of rationalisation has, if anything, accelerated. The counterpart of this rationalisation in the sphere of production has been the only too evident coalescence of state-big business and the labour bureaucracy. This process representing the rationalisation of the organisation of production. Businessmen, senior civil servants and TUC top brass don't regard themselves as opponents, but rather as partners in pursuit of the 'national interest'.

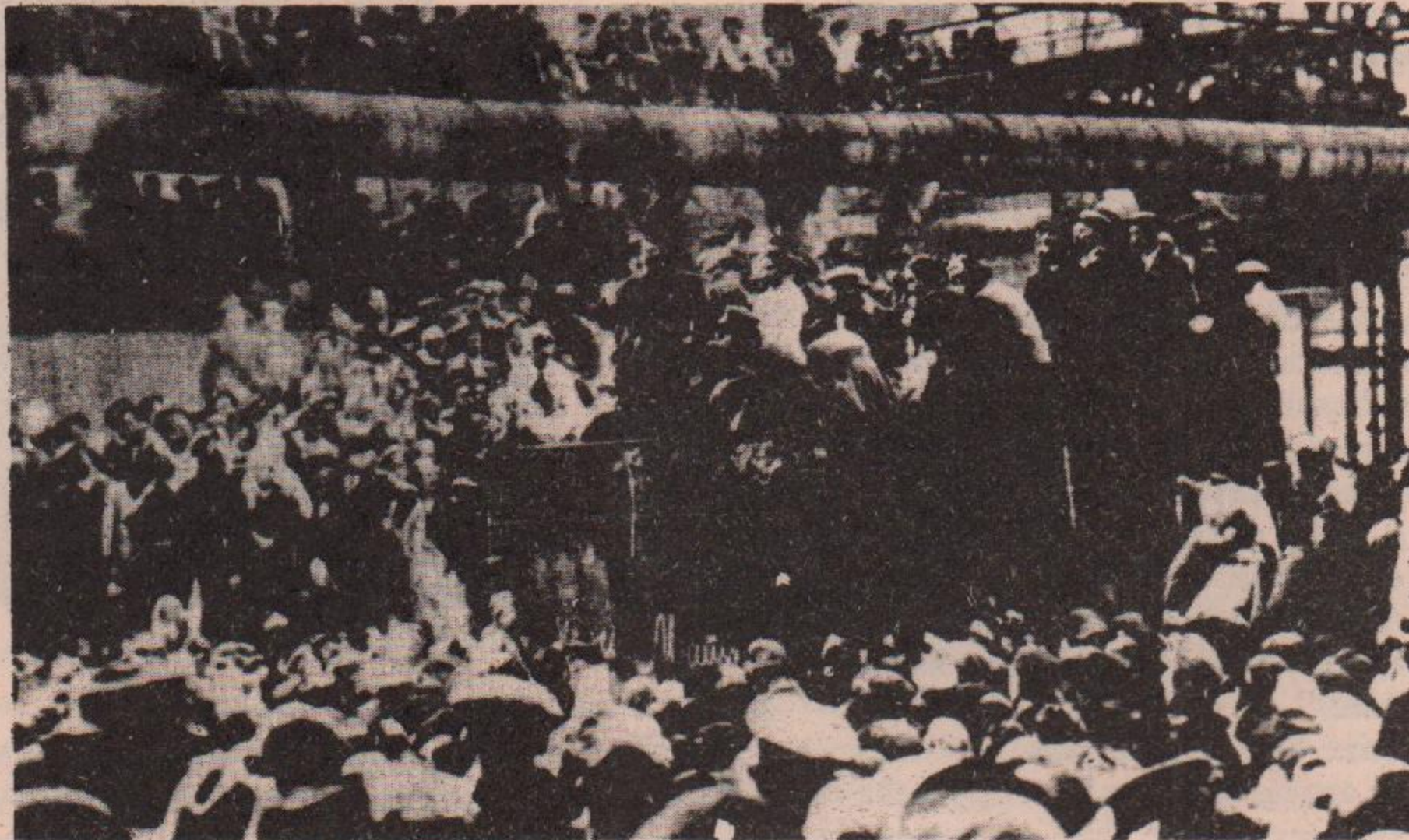
In conditions of recession and intensifying competition for the existing mass of surplus value, national capitals will be in cut-throat competition with each other. In this situation national labour movements will be required to line up behind their respective bourgeoisies in order to defend the 'national interest'. Which is to say the interest of their own bourgeoisie.

PRESIDING

Which brings us back to Mr. Jones, workers control, and the worldview of the bureaucracy. This worldview is based upon a gradualist and organic view of change. This evolutionist notion of social change is of course all pervasive in the British labour movement, (and one might add in British society in general).

In presiding over this inexorable transformation (as they see it), the leaders of the labour movement, Jones, Scanlon, Basnett et al. now see their most important function as 'having a say in government'. This 'having a say in government' is supposed to represent some deep-going social transmutation — a sort of quiet revolution — now occurring in society. The scope and influence of the bureaucracy has undoubtedly been extended — and for them we are (supposedly) on the threshold of socialism!

Workers control is seen as a component part of this process. But precisely what do Jones and his ilk mean when they talk of workers control, participation etc.? Perhaps the following enunciation might provide an insight: "... I was a member of the Bullock Committee which looked into industrial democracy. Our report suggested ways of extending a worker's influence over his working life and for raising and improving efficiency in industry. ..." and



Workers in a Petrograd factory listen to a soldier speaker. The Russian Revolution provided many examples of workers control

again:

"... The way to release those energies to provide greater satisfaction in the workplace and to assist in raising the level of productivity is not by recrimination but by giving them representation on the boards of large enterprises." (Quoted *The Guardian*).

There's the rub: when all the bogus platitudes about industrial democracy, worker participation are stripped away, we are left with the time-honoured bureaucratic concoction — class collaboration. What other interpretations can we give to statements like "... and to assist in raising the level of productivity. ..." *Workers Control in this context is a complete sham and means nothing more than the attempt to integrate the workers movement into the running of capitalism.*

At the present time workers control of the type advocated by Jones and company is very much in line with the basic requirements of British capitalism: firstly, because it would involve the social rationalisation (i.e. integration) of the labour force: secondly, this integration itself would lend credence to the view that British labour has a stake in the health of British capital. 'Our' industry has to be more efficient, competitive et cetera if 'we' are to compete with Japanese and German industry. It is precisely in this spirit of 'corporate enterprise' that the bourgeoisie will attempt to enlist the labour movement in the cut-throat struggle of national capital against national capital.

DEMONSTRATE

Nothing could better demonstrate the hide-bound provincialism of the trade union bureaucracy than this concept of workers control. The palpably absurd notion of workers on the board and 'a say in government' presaging a brighter socialist tomorrow was given full vent by Jones in a particularly maudlin passage from his TV talk: "... This is the great challenge to labour to build a better life to rise above the degradation of dirty streets and concrete jungles, boring factories and mass unemployment and achieve a more humane society, a challenge to fashion a future of social justice and brotherhood in peace. The old and the young, the black and the white, we all have a part to play in this — let us play our part. ..."

This sort of tear-jerking rhetoric is usually reserved for May-days; all the time-honoured social-democratic clichés are there, "humane society" "social justice" and so forth. But if we leave aside the nauseating sentimentality, what remains is an essence of pure class collaboration worthy of the Economic League.

This view of workers oppressed and oppressors all working together for a better tomorrow a joint venture by industry and unions into a brave new world etc. etc. was acridly criticised by the writer George Orwell:

"... how can classes whose interests are fundamentally opposed co-operate in any meaningful way. It is rather like expecting the mouse to cooperate with the cat. If the cat does suggest cooperation and the mouse is foolish enough to agree, the mouse will soon find itself disappearing down the cat's throat." (*The Road to Wigan Pier* — George Orwell).

In any event it is utter nonsense to talk of workers control, or anybody else's control

for that matter, with regard to capitalism. *The objective laws of capital accumulation are beyond anyone's control.* Capitalism moves according to its own logic and laws of motion, and no amount of 'workers control' will alter this fundamental fact. In the system of generalised commodity production that is capitalism, any talk of workers control is ultimately meaningless — precisely because the means of production dominate the producer; capital dominates labour and the overall irrationality of the system will ultimately defy any attempts to control it. Clearly therefore it is not in the overall and long-term interests of the working class to subordinate itself to capital — this subordination being the logical implication of Jones's concept of workers control.

But for socialists and workers seeking to win control of the means of production there is another more instructive and valuable type of workers' control. It is the kind of control exercised by Russian workers through their factory committees in the prelude to the October revolution. It is the experiences of German and Italian workers in their short-lived but revolutionary seizure of factories and workplaces in 1918 to 1920. More recently forms of workers control were seen in Portugal in the aftermath of the 1974 revolution, where 'factory commissions' took control of shipyards, factories, offices, and land — exposing business secrets, and profits, and in many cases forcing the nationalisation of their industry.

All these instances of workers control have been temporary and transitory. In class society it is impossible for workers control to be anything other than a short prelude to the conquest of state power and a planned economy or alternatively a harbinger of defeat and reaction for the entire workers movement.

CLASS COLLABORATION

It is quite possible that Jones and co. do not see themselves in a class collaborationist role at all. From their point of view the situation appears to be one of the extension of trade union power. The Trade Union movement has now has 'a say in government' and later perhaps may have a say in industry; the commanding heights of the economy are in sight, and in due course will presumably be surmounted. When that time comes we will at last be in a position to effectively implement "our cherished social ideals". That, in all probability, is how Jones and co. see the process.

However what the bureaucracy thinks it is doing, and what it is actually doing are quite different. What is in fact occurring is the process of integration of the bureaucratic

apparatus into the state structure (the coalescence mentioned earlier.) Inasmuch as the bureaucracy is increasingly carrying out a policy of class collaboration its *objective* role is to effect this integration. Increasingly the bureaucracy is becoming the instrument of the ruling class in disciplining the workers. More and more does the bourgeois look to the bureaucracy to carry out the objective requirement of reducing the living standards of the working class in order that its profit levels might rise. And the bureaucracy has complied with a quite breathtaking alacrity.

For the past three years it has been instrumental in putting into effect the wage-cutting policies of the Labour Government and has presided over the steady erosion of working class living standards. And this fact hasn't been lost on the bourgeoisie either, as Jack Jones pointed out:

"... The average industrialist agrees with that (good industrial relations — FL) and is often the strongest advocate of the closed shop. ..." Little wonder when the objective role of the leadership of the trade union movement has been to carry out the policy requirements of big business.

INTEGRATION

This insidious process of the integration of the workers movement into the state apparatus is what lurks behind all the claptrap about workers control, industrial democracy and so on. This is the real meaning of having 'a say in government'. In fact rather than the labour movement having a say in government a contrary process is taking place; the bourgeoisie is having a say in the labour movement. Almost 100 years ago that brilliant ideologue of the bourgeoisie, Max Weber, put forward this integrationist strategy:

"... If the contradictions between the material interests of the professional politicians on the one hand and the revolutionary ideology on the other could develop freely, if one would no longer throw the Social Democrats out of the veteran's associations, if one admits them into church administrations, from which one expels them nowadays, then for the first time serious internal problems would arise for the party. (the SPD—FL) Then it would be shown not that Social Democracy is conquering city and state, but, on the contrary, that state is conquering Social Democracy. (From a speech to "The Society for Social Politics" 1907 our emphasis). Quite. What price the quiet revolution Mr Jones?



A PICKET ORGANIZED by the United Troops Out Movement and supporting groups marched down Fleet St. on the 19th December to protest against the British army's closure of the Belfast nationalist paper Republican News. The republican paper, which supports the call for British withdrawal and a united Irish Republic, was closed by an army raid on the headquarters of the Sinn Fein party. The pickets who included members of the Labour Party handed in the following letter to the offices of the major national papers. Trade Unions, Trades Councils and CLPs are urged to give their support to

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The Communist Party and Ireland

BILL OF RIGHTS — ANOTHER 'BRITISH' SOLUTION

by PETER CHALK

THE REPORT published on November 23rd by the Northern Ireland Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights looking into the possibility of a 'Bill of Rights' for the six counties was described as 'a sell-out' by the Communist Party, who have won widespread support for this policy within the labour movement.

A sell-out, not because the report stated that 'it is terrorism which is the greatest enemy of human rights in Northern Ireland at present' and that 'respect for the police and the other security forces was an essential ingredient of a stable society', but because the report recommended the legislation for the UK as a whole and the CP see this as a possible 'delaying tactic'!

THE BILL

As allegations of army brutality and RUC torture are growing by the day the idea of such a Bill protecting detainees and suspects comes more and more weight. Therefore it is timely to have a look at exactly what this policy entails. The CP hope that a Bill of Rights would:

- Guarantee the freedom of political thought and activity for all citizens in Northern Ireland.
- Guarantee the end of repressive laws, which breach common law, and contravene international human rights legislation.
- Guarantee the outlawing of discrimination against any citizen for reason of belief, religion, politics, sex, race or colour.
- Guarantee the establishment of law-enforcing agencies acceptable to the overwhelming majority of the citizens.

(Brennan, *Northern Ireland: a programme for action*, 1975).

The CP argues that 'the achievement of these democratic demands will help end Unionist domination, break down sectarianism and bigotry and assist the process of uniting the working class.' (*Comment*, 16.4.77).

ATTRACTIVE

Such a policy demand is doubly attractive. Firstly, because it appeals to the democratic traditions that have been fought for and won by the labour movement in Britain. And secondly, no class conscious worker would oppose the unity of the working class in its struggle for socialism. However, the prime concern for socialism must be whether or not the enactment of this Bill of Rights would aid the struggle for national self-determination in Ireland, as the CP claims it does.

A central aspect of the Bill is the ending of repressive laws. A laudable enough aim, but can British capitalism afford such a 'solution'? A mere glance at the relationship between

Britain and Northern Ireland shows the Utopianism of such a demand within the context of continued British rule.

SUPPRESSION

A third of the population of the six counties have never accepted the partition of Ireland and will never recognise the existence of the Union. Because of this, the possibility of a stable, democratic society doesn't exist. Under these conditions 'security' can only be guaranteed by ensuring the continued support of the other two-thirds of the population for the suppression of the minority. The entire state apparatus is designed for this purpose — it cannot be otherwise.

Yet the CP imagine that all this can be changed if only 'a Bill of Rights' be passed to sweep away the specific system of repression and discrimination foisted on the area 50 years ago' (*Morning Star*, 25/11/77). The impossibility of such a 'policy change' by the British government was vividly demonstrated after the loyalist strike in May last year. Mason, proudly proclaiming the defeat and isolation of the Paisley-led striker's and congratulating



the 'firm stand' of the Trade Unions, proceeded to implement 'a major concession to the first of the two basic demands of the Unionist "strike" leaders — harsher action against the anti-Unionist areas in the name of "security"' (*Morning Star*, 13/5/77).

The central point is that if national revolt is stirring, the government, if it is to ensure 'stability' (i.e. the status quo), has no choice but to put it down using every means (and more) at its disposal. The CP, itself condemning that revolt as 'sectarian' and divisive, is really only saying that the state should be less brutal in its repression of the Republican movement.

'FREEDOM'

Another aspect of the Bill is the guarantee of 'freedom for political thought and activity'. This 'right' actually exists already in the North! Despite the recent seizure of 'Republican News' and harassment of the Sinn Fein offices in the Falls Road, there is no law preventing their 'freedom'. If the British army and RUC already flagrantly disregard their own laws who is to enforce this 'right'? The Bill does consider this possibility and so 'guarantees' the establishment of 'acceptable law-enforcing agencies' — community based forces. However, because the vast majority of loyalists are armed and are hardly prepared to tolerate armed republicans patrolling the nationalist areas, the CP end up at the beginning:

'And when the violence does come, the British labour movement must be prepared to use every ounce of its strength to force the army command to use its military power in defence of democracy.' (*Morning Star*, 24/10/74).

By opposing the defence of the nationalist community by the Republican movement and accepting the presence of British troops, the Bill of Rights position makes nonsense of such statements as;

'The Communist Party has always been opposed to the presence of British troops in Northern Ireland, because we recognise that they are used as an instrument of imperialist policies.' (*Brennan, op. cit.*)

MEANINGLESS

Similarly, the demand for the 'outlawing of discrimination' is an empty plea. In the Connolly Association draft Bill of Rights it boils down to the extension of the Race Relations Act to Northern Ireland but inserting 'religious belief' after the word 'race'. Anyway, gerrymandering has finished, housing and other social services are non-discriminatory and the Fair Employment Act prevents discrimination at work. In legal terms then, this part of the Bill is virtually meaningless, and can only be understood within the wider economic and



Effects of a British Army rubber bullet

social demands of 'non-discriminatory investment, economic aid etc. . . ' — an aspect of CP policy which will be taken up elsewhere.

It is obvious that the Bill of Rights demand is utterly Utopian even within the limited framework of capitalist law and the CP recognise this by admitting, 'in any case, the Bill should be seen in context of the political battle for democracy, and improved social conditions in Northern Ireland.' (*Comment*, 16/4/77, original emphasis). But how does the Bill fit into current CP policy and what effect will it have on the struggle for self-determination?

STORMONT

The CP clearly see the Bill as a central part of their strategy to 'create the conditions for an immediate end to direct rule and the establishment of a devolved parliament in Northern Ireland elected under the Proportional Representation system and subject to the conditions of a Bill of Rights.' (*Morning Star*, 6/16/77). Without the last condition, such a 'devolved parliament' is nothing more than a return to Stormont. The wheel has turned full circle. Progress now depends on a return to the 1968-69 struggle for civil rights, under the Stormont regime, 'guaranteed' by Westminster!

Unfortunately for the CP, the nationalist areas of the North have gone a long way beyond this: since 1969 they have ejected the RUC from their ghettos in West Belfast and Derry, brought down the hated institution of British imperialism in Ireland—Stormont, and continued an armed struggle against the ultimate defenders of 'law and order' — the British army. This is a *real* victory for the international working class — that a section of it in a relatively advanced capitalist country has clearly come out against the state machine. The CP and its allies do *not* recognise this and, in calling for legislative changes from Westminster, is actually asking the movement for self-determination to forget the lessons of the past decade.



the campaign to re-open Republican News.

WE WISH TO make the strongest possible protest against the British Government's attempt to close down Republican News through early-hour raids on Thursday 15th December. That morning, the homes of the editor, distributor and business manager were raided. The editor, Sean Caughey, and SDLP member Gary Kennealy, owner of the press where Republican News is printed, were among the 15 people arrested. In raids on the press and on Sinn Fein centres, printing presses, duplicators,

Army Closes 'Republican News'

typewriters, a telex machine and files were removed, along with all copies of the current issue of Republican News and printing plates for the Christmas issue.

Republican News is the weekly paper of the Republicans in the north of Ireland, selling 15000 copies a week (equivalent to a sale of 1 million in Britain) which are read throughout the nationalist areas and increasingly abroad.

The attempted closure of Republican News and the simultaneous arrests of prominent political activists (including the chairperson of Sinn Fein in Belfast, a legal political organization) was a blatant attempt to stifle legitimate political discussion on the future of Ireland.

The Irish Times (17th Dec.) notes, 'The authorities in Northern Ireland. . . hope that the paper can be closed down. . . Mr. Mason appears to take exception to the existence of a fairly well-produced Provisional Republican weekly newspaper'.

That there was no other motive for the arrests than to harass

political activists was shown clearly by the fact that all were released without charge two days later.

We note with concern that Commander James Neville of Scotland Yard was involved in the raids. Neville in his capacity of head of 'C' Division which includes the Anti-Terrorist Squad is an expert in dawn raids, having practised on the thousands of innocent Irish people who have been detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Fleet Street is the heartland of the so-called British 'free press'. Many journalists expressed their abhorrence of the recent actions of the South African authorities in suppressing the black newspaper, 'The World'. Will these same journalists now make their protests heard about the suppression by their own state forces of a legitimate Irish newspaper? Or will the usual dual standards prevail?

The British press and public should be under no illusion that the 'Irish problem' can be made to disappear through a wholesale

clampdown on freedom of discussion. The problem is much more deeply rooted: in the British presence in the north of Ireland which, instead of bringing well-being to the people there, has inflicted on them - and in particular on the Catholic population - discrimination, very high unemployment, appalling housing and so on. No amount of repression can suppress the rebellion engendered by these conditions.

We demand the return of the newspapers, plates and all equipment seized from Republican News and Sinn Fein centres, and an end to the use of police and army powers to prevent open political discussion on the future of Ireland.

From: All those on the December 19th protest (including members of the United Troops Out Movement, Women and Ireland Group, Prisoners Aid Committee, Sinn Fein (London), Socialist Workers' Party, International Marxist Group, Socialist Charter).

U.S. Miners Strike — To end decade of decline

RESPECTING THEIR time-honoured policy of "No Contract, No Work", 175,000 members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMW) walked out as their three-year contract came to an end on December 5th. The conflict that now begins will be no ordinary strike. It is agreed on all sides that it will be a long struggle — if only because the employers have shamefully been allowed to accumulate a stockpile sufficient to last about three months through the winter.

The main issue at stake is not so much wages as the desire of the Bituminous Coal Operators' Association (BCOA) to break the re-awakened militancy of the coal miners — members of the oldest industrial union in the US, and probably the most militant. Without being melodramatic, the very future existence of the union is being put on the line, and the result of the strike will have a tremendous effect in determining whether American labour can reverse nearly 40 years of retreat and decay.

The oil crisis of the early 70's sharply reversed the long-term decline of the industry. Alongside the ageing labour force of the 50's and 60's emerged a new breed of young men (NB. even one or two women have penetrated the industry), often Vietnam veterans, with a new spirit of militancy and determination. The expansion of coal production and profits meant that the union could potentially go on to the offensive without fearing pit closures. Changing times have polarised the UMW ranks — not exclusively on an age basis.

reform coalition

Until 1972 the UMW was run by a reactionary pro-company gangster called Tony Boyle. After one tragic mine disaster too many, a reform coalition called the Miners For Democracy (MFD) emerged. In 1969 their candidate Jock Yablonski got 36% of the vote for president in a rigged election. Three weeks later he and his family were shot dead — on Boyle's instructions. The MFD turned to the government's Labour Department to get a new election held, which eventually transpired in 1972. Their candidate won — the present incumbent Arnold Miller, a "Black lung" disease activist from West Virginia.

The crucial weakness of the MFD was that its programme was restricted to the "single issue" of union democracy — with this largely achieved, it fell apart with nothing to replace it. Certainly, officers' salaries were cut, miners achieved the right to vote on contract ratification, and to elect officials who had previously been appointed. From 1973-76, 120 miners were organised and UMW membership leapt 50% (now 277,000). However, Miller has proved to be a weak and inept leader from any point of view. The right wing and the bosses detest his failure to curb rank-and-file militancy, while he has failed to base himself on that militancy and destroy the influence of the pro-Boyle group.

In fact, the Boyle forces regrouped and

handsomely won the 1973 elections for the union's International Executive Board. Their 1977 presidential candidate, a nasty piece of work called Lee Roy Patterson, had the endorsement of 16 out of 21 IEB members and 18 out of 21 district presidents. Far from mobilising support behind him, Miller retreated into paranoia and dithering. After a major strike in 1974 a new contract was negotiated with important gains in wages, health benefits and safety provisions. The coal industry's profitability meant the miners could go top of the US wages league. Yet many employers retain a nineteenth-century attitude to unions and consistently refused to implement the contract. Since there was no local right to strike, only a cumbersome grievance procedure, the membership responded with a whole series of 'wildcat' strikes — 1,139 in 1975 alone!

growth

Worse still, the UMW increasingly failed to keep up with the growth of mining in Western states such as Wyoming — massive new projects usually with environmentally-disastrous strip-mining and fresh unorganised labour: highly profitable of course. Thus, the proportion of coal mined under UMW contract has slumped from 70 to 54% in recent years. Most organised miners remain in the traditional Appalachian coalfields, from Kentucky to Pennsylvania while only 30% of western miners are in the UMW. In 1976, already some 20% of US coal was mined in the West. Under Jimmy Carter's energy plan, coal production is projected to double by 1985 — this will of course be largely in the West.

All things considered, Miller's repeat victory in the June 1977 presidential elections — with 40% of the vote to Patterson's 32% — was something of an achievement. Patterson campaigned on a straightforward "business unionism" basis — openly supported by the right-wing leadership of the steelworkers' union (USWA) under Lloyd McBride. Arguably, the scales were tipped by the third candidate Harry Patrick who got 27% and must have siphoned off many "protest" votes from Patterson. A former Miller aide, Patrick stood for continuity the MFD reform tradition, but also appealed to the radical younger elements on the basis of demanding the local right to strike, greater health and safety protection and organising the West. His election would no doubt have represented a limited step forward — though to what extent is questionable.

Meanwhile the BCOA employed by an ex-Boyle functionary called Joseph Brenna, clearly decided the time to tame the miners' militancy and ensure maximum profitability in the future expansion had come. On July 1st last they imposed savage cuts in health benefits on the feeble excuse of erosion of funds by the wildcats (21.8 million tons of coal lost in the first eight months of 1977). This provoked a wildcat of 10 weeks duration, centred in traditionally militant West Virginia.

by MARTIN COOK

This was eventually called off with nothing gained, but the miners' solidarity intact. It is no secret that the BCOA's aim was (a) to use restoration of the cuts as a bargaining counter against the local right to strike (b) to exhaust the miners' accumulated combativity in preparation for the major clash over the new contract.

Miller's response was firstly to make militant noises and then back down completely, trying to force the men back to work — further eroding his own credibility. Leaders of District 17 in West Virginia called for him to resign, and held a big march in Washington DC to demand action on the health cuts. On August 24th, near Cabin Creek, West Virginia things got to the point where shots were exchanged between 40 flying pickets and a group of 100 Miller supporters sent in to break the wildcat! (Miller blamed troubles on "paid agitators" promoting their own ideologies).

problems

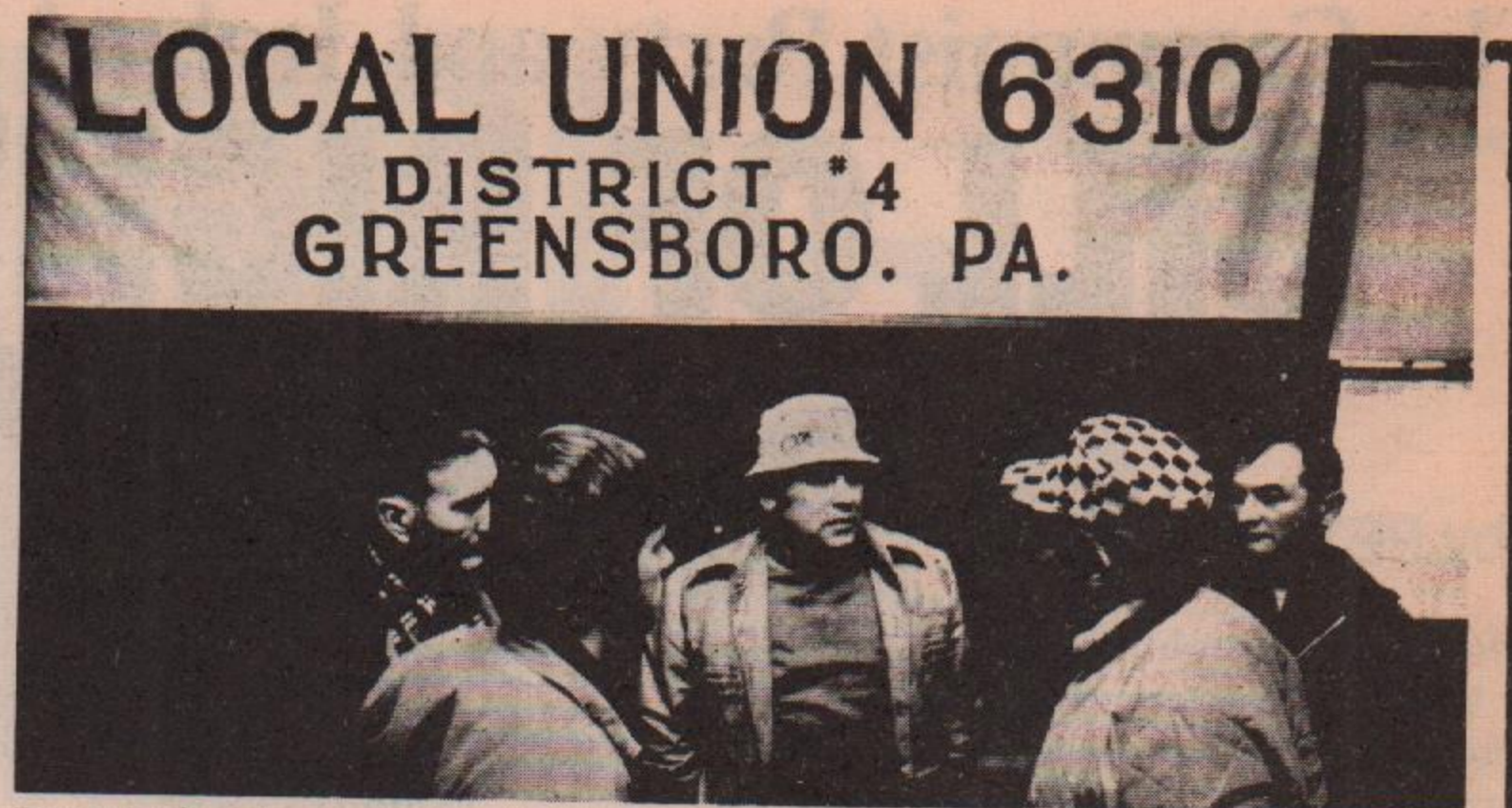
The problems confronting employers who rely on brute force rather than compromise are tremendous. A good example is the strike for union recognition — now in its 17th month — at the Blue Diamond Coal Co's mine at Stearns in Eastern Kentucky. For several months this strike was punctuated by sharp gun battles — making Grunwick look like a vicar's tea party. One of the main issues has been safety — after two deaths and many serious injuries in the last five years. The National Labour Relations Board, as is common, was as ineffectual as its British equivalent ACAS in securing recognition — despite a big pro-UMW vote in a ballot. The local sheriff arrested company goons for carrying illegal weapons, but the local judge freed them and police promptly arrested pickets for obstructing instead — the judge gave them six months. In October, over 100 miners and their wives were arrested and brutally beaten in a mass picket. Meanwhile only a third of coal in the area is mined under union contract (compared with 96% in West Virginia).

The lesson is clear — even small cowboy employers cannot be brought to heel locally and require all-out backing by transport workers and steel workers (Steel consumes much of the production). This will become even more crucial this winter as coal from scab mines is used to break the strike. Wildcatters showed the way this summer — hijacking coal trains and burning down rail bridges. Despite heroic and inspiring traditions of sectional militancy, American labour has always suffered from insularity, craft chauvinism and provincialism — the basis for the Lee Roy Pattersons of this world to gain support. West Virginia, for instance, is a hotbed of social and cultural

about resigning. Notorious right-wing hero Colonel Jaime Neves of the Amadora commandos has also been rumoured to be considering resignation. It has been the low-key role played by Eanes which has created the discontent among the right-wing military chiefs. Eanes has, of course, not been averse to compromise with these personnel.

The working class have not been passive in the face of recent events. In the face of inflation and unemployment, the suspension of labour contracts and collective agreements, loss of a series of welfare benefits, and other attacks on the remaining gains of the revolution, the workers movement has waged a rising defensive struggle to defend its hard-won rights.

In November massive demonstrations took place in Lisbon, Porto and Setubal in response to the appeal of the CGTP and supported by the PCP, Movement of the Socialist Left, the Popular Democratic Union, Workers' Fraternity, the Proletarian Revolutionary Party and the International Communist League. The political breadth of the forces involved — in particular, the participation of Cardoso's left reform-



Pennsylvania union members hold their first meeting after start of strike



Arnold Miller

conservatism — it recently witnessed riots against "godless" school textbooks teaching Darwin's theory of evolution! While one of Miller's slate appealed for votes on the grounds of being a "whiteman".

No one needs to give the American miners lessons on how to run a militant strike. Their problem, rather, is to break away from the narrow traditions of sectional struggle to forge new alliances with the many thousands of miners in unorganised pits (especially in the West) as well as their brothers and sisters in related industries nation-wide whose support is essential to defeat the union-busting provocations of the BCOA. (The employers want a total no-strike clause, 52 week/7-days operation of mines, penalties to wildcatters and a ban on union safety committees closing unsafe mines). Yet Miller has reportedly concluded separate agreements with the Western operators, hamstringing the strike's effectiveness. A victorious miners' strike would open the way for a broad fightback by American unions after a decade of declining living standards and conditions.

PORTUGAL: Continued from Page 1

In fact, prior to the vote of confidence Soares had refused to enter any agreement with the Communist Party deputies or the four deputies who support the "Workers' Fraternity" led by former Agriculture Minister and PS member Lopes Cardoso.

The intractability of the economic situation and its social consequences has led to a political crisis throughout the main political parties and institutions. Within the leadership of the "Social Democratic Party", formerly the Popular Democrats, who won 24% of the vote in the Assembly elections two trends have clearly emerged. One led by Francisco Sa Carneiro, is set on a confrontation course not only with Soares but also President Ramalho Eanes. The other wing sought a pact with the Government under the patronage of the President and the Group of Nine officers. Such a pact would have relied on a secret understanding with the Communist Party and the CGTP (trade union federation) on the agrarian reform law and on other issues.



Soares and ministers after vote of confidence defeat.

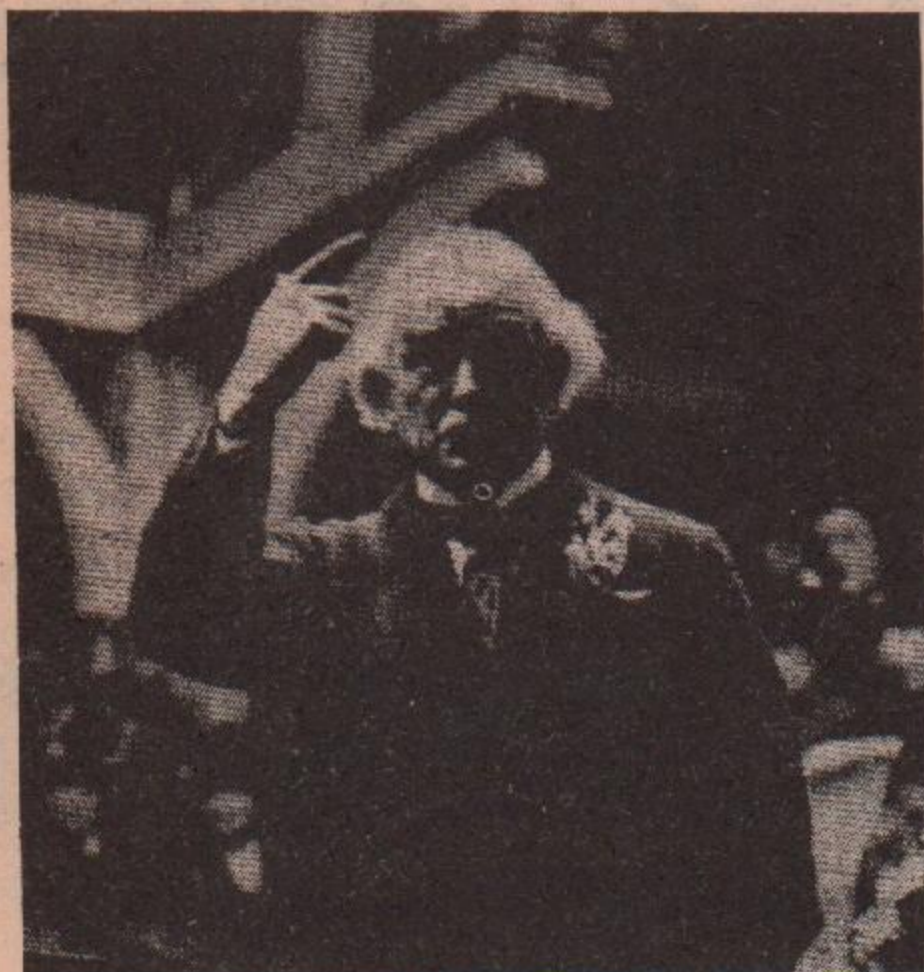
Sa Carneiro emerged the victor after having offered his resignation since he had a majority on the Party but a minority in its political committee. The leadership was reconstructed on the lines Carneiro required.

Regroupment has been taking place too in the military. Vice-chief of staff of the armed forces, Loureiro dos Santos, resigned complaining of a lack of power. Colonel Almendra commander of the Tancos paratroops asked for reassignment to the reserves; while Eanes's 'eminence gris' right-wing Colonel Firmino Miguel, minister of Defence has, for the third time in six months, made noises

ist Workers' Fraternity indicates the continuing strength of the workers movement and its ability to attract new forces as it moves forward. Around the CGTP (formerly the InterSyndical) a new level of trade union unity has occurred which has facilitated the development of a left opposition to the PCP.

The right too, have been taking to the streets. A demonstration of support for Northern company commander Pires Veloso on December 19th brought 20,000 people including armed thugs who attacked Communist Party and left-wing offices and bookshops. November 25th saw a series of right-wing demonstrations to celebrate the second anniversary of their triumph. Openly fascist currents have come out into the open on these demonstrations.

As we go to press, Soares has been asked to form another government, but it is clear that without massive funding to stabilise the situation, an increasing polarisation will take place and power will once again begin to slip into the streets. Will the workers' movement be ready to face the challenge this will bring?



Lloyd George in Parliament

by Liz Muir

ONE OF THE commonest beliefs today is that the welfare state was created by the Labour government in the post-second world war period; that this was a victory for the working class represented in Parliament by the Labour Party; and that the new welfare state, along with nationalisation of the larger industries, laid the essential foundations for a future socialist Britain. It is when we examine these beliefs and the reality behind them, that we see them for the myths they are.

First, we must distinguish legislation which laid the foundations of the modern welfare state from legislation which could termed 'social reform'. There was much of the latter during the 19th Century, e.g. the Factory Acts, but none of these could be said to have anything to do with the welfare state. They merely ameliorated existing conditions.

DIFFERENT

But the six measures introduced by the Liberal Government of 1906 - including the Education (Provision of Meals) Act of 1906, the Old Age Pension Act of 1908, the Labour Exchange Act of 1909 and culminating in the National Insurance Act of 1911 - were qualitatively different from any preceding social legislation. They were based upon an entirely new principle: that there should be a transfer of income through the medium of the state from the pocket of the taxpayer to the pockets of certain designated individuals.

The money was thus not for a service for all, but was for certain classes of people who were to receive these benefits as a right and according to their needs. It was a clear intention of the legislators that the recipients were not to be made to suffer because they received this relief; these acts were seen as quite distinct from the old and punitive Poor Law.

These acts created a very significant break with the past and were the real foundations of the welfare state. The significant political point is that they were enacted by successive Liberal Governments whose main priorities were to defend the empire and to retain for British capital its supreme position in the world.

DEFENCE

For these imperialists the measures were firstly a defence against the working class and socialist agitators, and secondly a means of improving the efficiency of British capitalism in the face of the growing menace from imperial Germany. In fact, the policies, particularly the social insurance scheme, were borrowed directly from the German schemes which Bismarck faced with similar problems, had introduced in the 1880's. Lloyd George Chancellor of the Exchequer, visited Germany in 1908 specifically to examine them; he was followed shortly afterwards by TUC leaders. Bismarck had made no secret of

ORIGINS OF THE WELFARE STATE

WE HAVE seen systematic cut-backs and deterioration in welfare services over the last few years: hospitals closing down; thousands of teachers unemployed; no expansion of much needed community services such as day nurseries.

As socialists we oppose these measures which adversely affect the daily lives of millions. But welfare services, even as they exist today, do provide some kind of a safety net for all members of the family - a guaranteed minimal level of income when out of work, schooling and subsidised health services for instance. Of course, we indirectly help to pay for them through insurance contributions and taxes but the system of welfare services that surrounds our daily lives support and control us probably more than we realise. The way the different schemes of social security, social services, health and education services are administered impose and reinforce certain patterns of behaviour, expectations and aspirations and condemn and discourage others.

These services are founded on the bedrock of bourgeois values. Paradoxically, whilst welfare services provide some form of collective care, relieving individuals from the responsibility of providing basic services them-

the purposes of his social legislation; "Anybody who has before him the prospect of a pension, be it ever so small, in old age or in infirmity, is much happier and more content with his lot, much more tractable and easy to manage than he whose future is absolutely uncertain."

What then distinguished these policies from those of other parties? How did the New Liberalism differ from the old?

The New Liberalism or 'New Philanthropy' had its origins in the economic circumstances of the 1880's. Unemployment was at least ten percent of the unionised population (and most workers were not unionised). Social distress and agitation at the appalling conditions of life of the working class led to a turbulent militancy that could no longer be ignored by the propertied classes. The Trafalgar Square Riot of 1886 was the most significant of many, and absolutely stunned the well-to-do of London.

BEGAN

The demonstration of the unemployed began with John Burns of Battersea rallying the people with the cry that to hang the House of Commons the landlords and the railway directors would be a "waste of good rope". It ended with the systematic breaking of the windows of all the clubs in St. James Street and general plunder and looting throughout Mayfair and Piccadilly.

This blatant and deliberate attack on private property caused such a furore amongst the wealthy classes that they began for the first time to see poverty as a political and economic problem, and not merely one of individual viciousness or laziness. It became clear that they could no longer rely on unorganized humanitarian

lives, the concept of individualism runs through many of the means tested schemes and is used as a divisive tool. Thus, despite high unemployment, the unemployed are still labeled as 'scroungers', 'living off the state'; families crippled by poor housing, lack of money, and struggling for financial and emotional security are still labeled 'problem' families.

This article is the first in a series which examines the way in which the welfare state developed, and the way in which control is exerted through the state over our daily lives. Two central themes to be looked at will be how and why poverty is seen as deviant; and how welfare services are based on the principle of maintaining and fostering a woman's role as wife and mother in the family, insuring the continued subordination of women and children within the modern family unit.

The provision of welfare services by the state is often thought to be synonymous with socialism - what is frequently ignored is that it depends on who controls the services, and how and why they are developed and maintained. Here we examine first of all how the welfare state first grew up to ameliorate the worst excesses of modern capitalism.



Sidney Webb

In turn, of course, these same schemes gave strength to the state and to its ability to control the working class on behalf of the capitalist class.

Until 1889, however, pressure for welfare legislation came mostly from groups outside the Westminster. For the bourgeois politicians there was little profit in social reform. It was the Boer War that made social reform a respectable political question. The fact that the greatest power on earth had to spend 3 years and £250 million to defeat a handful of unorganised farmers forced politicians to consider "the condition of the people" as a vital question of national efficiency.

The workers volunteering for military service were physically debilitated and unfit - in Manchester 3 out of 5 were turned away. Apparent symptoms of 'national decline' and 'racial decay' were terrifying - especially with the nearby menace of an armed, organised and expansionist Imperial Germany.

A new party for national efficiency failed to emerge notwithstanding the leadership of Liberal Lord, Lord Rosebery: "An Empire such as ours requires as its first condition an Imperial Race - a race vigorous and industrious and intrepid".

SUPPORT

Campaigning for welfare legislation he received substantial support from Sidney and Beatrice Webb. It was no less a "socialist" than Sidney Webb who linked with the idea of national efficiency the ideal of the 'national minimum', a basic competence below which society ought not to permit any of its members to fall: "The basis of Imperial strength must be racial strength", he claimed. He campaigned for "A systematic and all embracing code, prescribing for every manual worker employed a minimum of education, sanitation, leisure and wages as the inviolable starting point of industrial competition".

The party for national efficiency was stillborn, but the Liberals on a similar platform, were able to win the 1906 election. The Tories failed to adopt any programme of social reform and were thus defeated. Harold Spender, the Liberal MP and close colleague of Lloyd George, summed up the new Liberalism "It is not enough for the social thinker in this country to meet the socialist with a negative. The English progressive will be wise if, in this at any rate, he takes a leaf from the book of Bismarck who dealt the heaviest blow against German socialism not by his laws of oppression but by that great system of state insurance which now safeguards the German workman at almost every point in his industrial career".

We see then that far from the welfare state being the invention of a socialist Labour Party or a victory of the working class, it was the direct outcome of the needs of capitalism at the turn of the century.



School medical examination, early 1900's.

charities such as the Salvation Army to relieve the problem.

The real size and extent of the 'problem' brought home to the public with some force as social reformers began to compile statistics on the 'outcasts of London'. The picture of misery and deprivation they painted made the capitalists fearful for the safety of their system. Surveys such as Charles Booth's 'Life and Labour of the People in London' which placed 35% of the population of stepney and Poplar below the poverty line, made social reformers discard old ways of thinking in terms of individual paupers. Their researches led inevitably to schemes for the relief of the masses which could not be operated by individuals or by any of the existing charities, but only by the state.

At this point it is necessary to mention a further and even more important contemporary development - that is the emergence of the concept of the 'state' whose function was to mediate between the varying competitive economic forces at work in what was then the high period of free trade. This 'neutral' mediator, the state, was thus the natural focus for the operation of the new schemes.

Legal 'Dragons' Threaten Labour

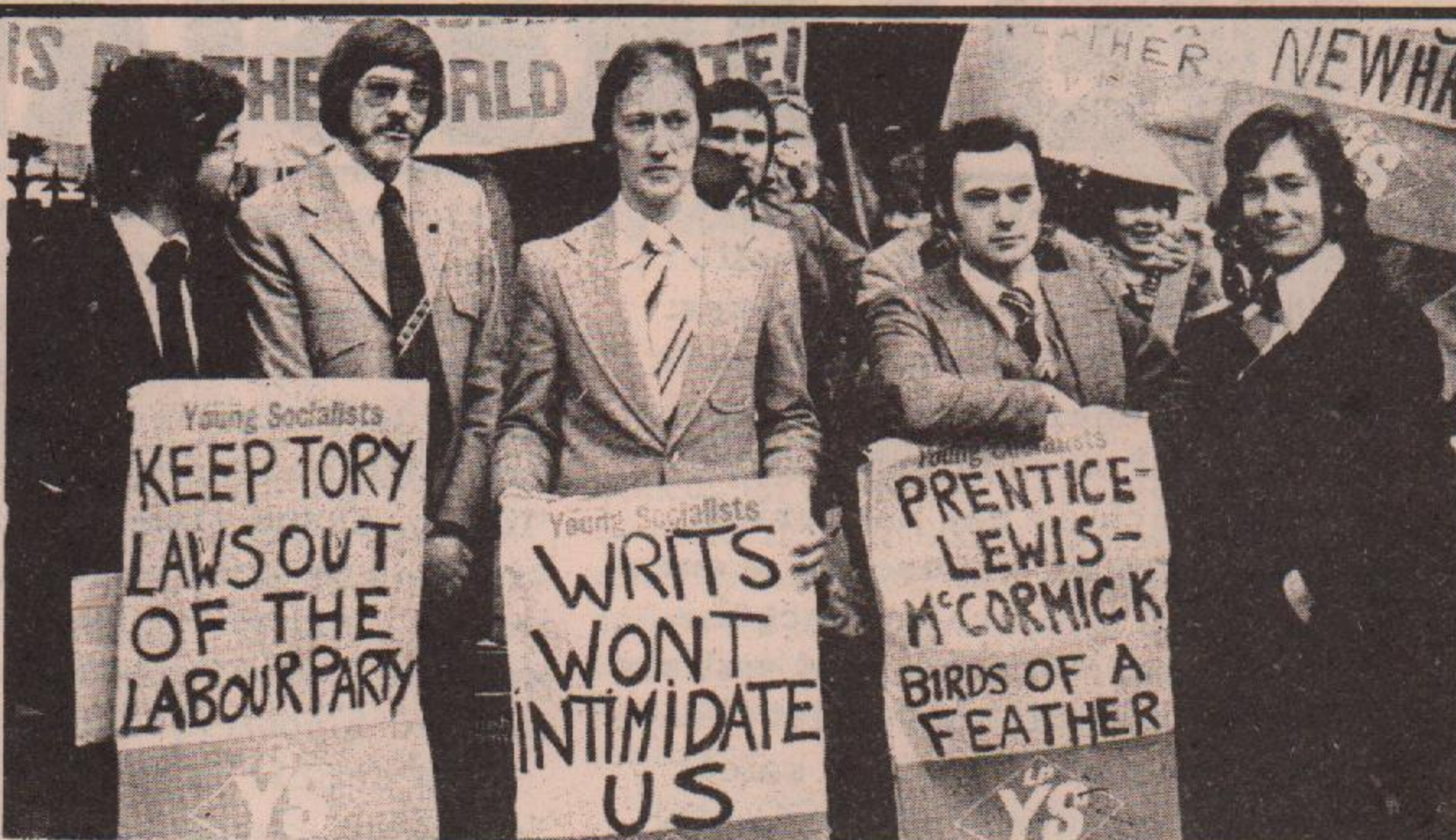
ROUND SEVEN of the 'legal' campaign against Labour Party democracy will begin early in 1978. The destructive activities of the right-wing 'Campaign For Representative Democracy (CRD) in the Newham North-East Labour Party and nationally took another turn just before the festive season.

by
MARK DOUGLAS

The November *Chartist* reported on the threat of jail terms against socialist members of Newham Labour Party in their fight against the Prentice-Tory faction. A local right-winger, Patrick Milson, back by Oxford trouble shooters-Julian Lewis and Paul McCormick, has issued writs against Party Officers arising from an ordinary September meeting. The court case found against the right-wing (for once!) and they had to cough up a cool £10,000 in costs.

Following this abuse of Party procedures, the National Executive of the Labour Party had to step in. Newham north-east CLP is now being run courtesy of Transport House and the regional offices. But this was by no means the end of it. McCormick, member of Oxford City Labour Party then wrote a 'without prejudice' letter to the National Executive. He wrote: '... If the suspension is not lifted we will move over to the offensive. Instead of taking legal action on the most gross abuses and irregularities we will take action against all abuses and irregularities in Newham North-East. Also I will personally investigate abuses and irregularities in various other constituencies. . . In other words the litigation will increase tenfold. . .' (*Labour Weekly* December 16th.)

In addition McCormick stated that the lost case of November would be going to appeal in January adding - 'Indeed, all our cases will be going to the Appeal Court and then the House of Lords. . . Do you really wish to waste at least £10,000 per case and up to £20,000 or £30,000 if it goes to appeal? . . . Be ready to-raise hundreds of thousands of



Newham NE Labour Party Lobby

of pounds, not just tens of thousands.' All in all it was a pretty vindictive letter to the Labour leaders.

Things have been hotting up ever since. In mid-December the news was that the CRD had another six local Labour Parties. . . down 'for the treatment': Tottenham; Ilford, North (where MP, Millie Miller has just died); Liverpool, Edge Hill (MP: Sir Arthur Irvine was given the boot); Rochester and Chatham and Coventry, South-west (MP: Labour-Left Audrey Wise).

Letters to the CLP Secretaries and various legal brass have been sent by Lewis's Solicitors. No doubt in each Party there are a few individuals who have contacted CRD to see if they can attack the Socialist-wing locally.

farcical

But the really farcical development concerns Lewis and McCormick themselves. According to *Labour Weekly* of December 16th the National Executive, having deplored the use of civil law in the Labour Movement have, up to now, taken *absolutely no action* against the right-wing wreckers; or as Norman Atkinson has described them - '... these mysterious litigants. . . out to reduce British politics to court room roulette.'

Labour Weekly went on: 'It was only on legal advice that the NEC. decided not to suspend them while the inquiry is carried out. The threat of expulsion is a clear option for

the Labour NEC - but in the meantime they will do. . . nothing! Transport House has already 'written off' £17,000 in legal costs - the January appeal will cost either side another £10,000 and the cross-appeal by the Labour Party against the September writs case, also up for January, will run into thousands.

All in all its quite a mess!

The Labour leaders are also prepared to use the courts in 'cross-appeals', but the possibility of political action against the Tory entrists is barred, they say, by legal norms!

Labour Party Treasurer, Norman Atkinson (involved personally in any Tottenham developments) has said he is not prepared to see Labour supporters money being eaten up in legal fees, at least that is, until Transport House has found out who the financial backers of the right-wing campaign are and have been exposed.

The CRD could well be called the 'Campaign to Repress Democracy' except that the Labour leaders play this game themselves.

Labour pretends that it maintains political independence for its movement except when challenged. Now is the time to affirm this principle. Those who say: "We will sow the dragon's teeth. From each one will grow an armed warrior - but one who carries injunctions and wears a wig" (McCormick) cannot be played with.

The 'Law' has never and will never defend Labour's independence.

JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS it was revealed that fines totalling £1400 have been imposed on London members of the Union of Post Office Workers (UPW) for "actions in breach of rule 19". John Taylor, a London District Organiser was fined £500 by the UPW disciplinary committee and his assistant Derek Walsh, £400.

Two members of the Cricklewood sorting office were also fined £50 each. These penalties - coming only a week after the House of Lords had backed Grunwick boss, George Ward against ACAS - are basically a punishment for the UPW London District Committee who told local sorters and deliverers not to cross Grunwick picket lines or handle mail for the strike-hit film processing plant last August. In other words, for refusing to scab on the Grunwick workers who have been on strike now for 17 months.

defiance

For a few brief weeks over the summer George Ward's tinpot anti-union dictatorship was almost brought to its knees. The thanks postal workers blacking mail received was to be suspended, threatened and harassed by their own union leaders. But this was not enough for Jackson and his assistant Stagg. In defiance of their union conference policy which is to support the Grunwick strike and call on the TUC to organise solidarity action, they have disciplined the officers of the London Region who sanctioned the solidarity action.

Jackson and co. clearly want no repetition of the only form of action which can effectively secure victory for the Grunwick workers. All the officials fined were given three weeks for appeal.

New Attack On Housing Rights

THE QUESTION of housing is one that generates excitement at the most docile of Labour Party meetings. The responses of the Party and Government to the 'housing problem' also tell us something of their abilities to answer the general political problems of the day.

In December we were, once again, reminded of the strength of the Government and the political weakness of the Labour Party's voice of opposition. December saw the publication of Labour's response to the Government's Housing Green Paper (published last June) and the first arrests of squatters to be made under the Criminal Law Act (part 2 of which is popularly known as the Criminal Trespass Law).

On paper both the Government and the Party agree that the housing problem is no longer one of absolute shortage of dwellings. What we are faced with is "1.8 million households in England and Wales. . . living in circumstances which are just not acceptable by contemporary standards." Moreover, present strategy is not going to eliminate the problem. According to the Green Paper 720,000 households will still be unsatisfactorily housed in 1986. The Labour Party estimates that new building and improvements needs to proceed at some 730,000 units a year over a ten year period to meet basic housing needs. (The number achieved in 1977 was about 350,000). The elimination of the housing problem can only be achieved, say the Government and Party, by substantial investment. As far as the Government is concerned such investment will not take place in the foreseeable future. Housing investment fell by 16% between 1974/75 (the 'peak' year) and 1977/78. Public sector housing starts fell by 30% from 1976 to 1977. Looking to the future the prospects are no better. In the Green Paper discussion on the proposed Housing Investment Programmes the Government has indicated that the whole of housing capital expenditure will be subject to nationally-determined cash limits and that when estimates are submitted for housing expenditure for

1978/79 "it would normally be unrealistic for any authority to present any proposals which would require a substantial addition to its 1977/78 level of spending". The Government has dependable allies in the Tory-run councils up and down the country if it is looking for 'realistic' proposals!

The Government and Greater London Council, on the other hand, recognise the political questions raised by the so-called housing problem very well. Squatting, as a response to the failure of councils and the market to provide homes at a rent people can afford and in places where they want to live, is only a problem insofar as it challenges the existing social property relations. The new legal attacks on squatters are part of the defence of the status quo. The Tory GLC recognises this and is using its recent 'amnesty' with squatters to dissipate this embryonic challenge. Notting Hill squatters have been offered alternative housing, as promised by the GLC, but in Slough and Watford! If these 'alternative' homes are not accepted the Tories have made it clear that they will use the Criminal Law Act to gain evictions.

baldly

The Government has said that massive public investment cannot be part of its counter-inflation strategy. The Party in its reply baldly asserts that "the crucial step in expanding housing investment is to reverse the cuts and expand housing public expenditure as a whole." Labour has failed to ask some basic questions, however, let alone answer them. Why, for example, is the Government cutting public spending? What are the options? What has been the role of private investors in meeting housing need? For this reason Labour's opposition to its Government is politically weak. The confused gut-reaction to our anti-socialist Government is evidenced by the pious faith held in the ability of the private property investor to contribute to a socially responsible housing programme. The Party has, at bottom,

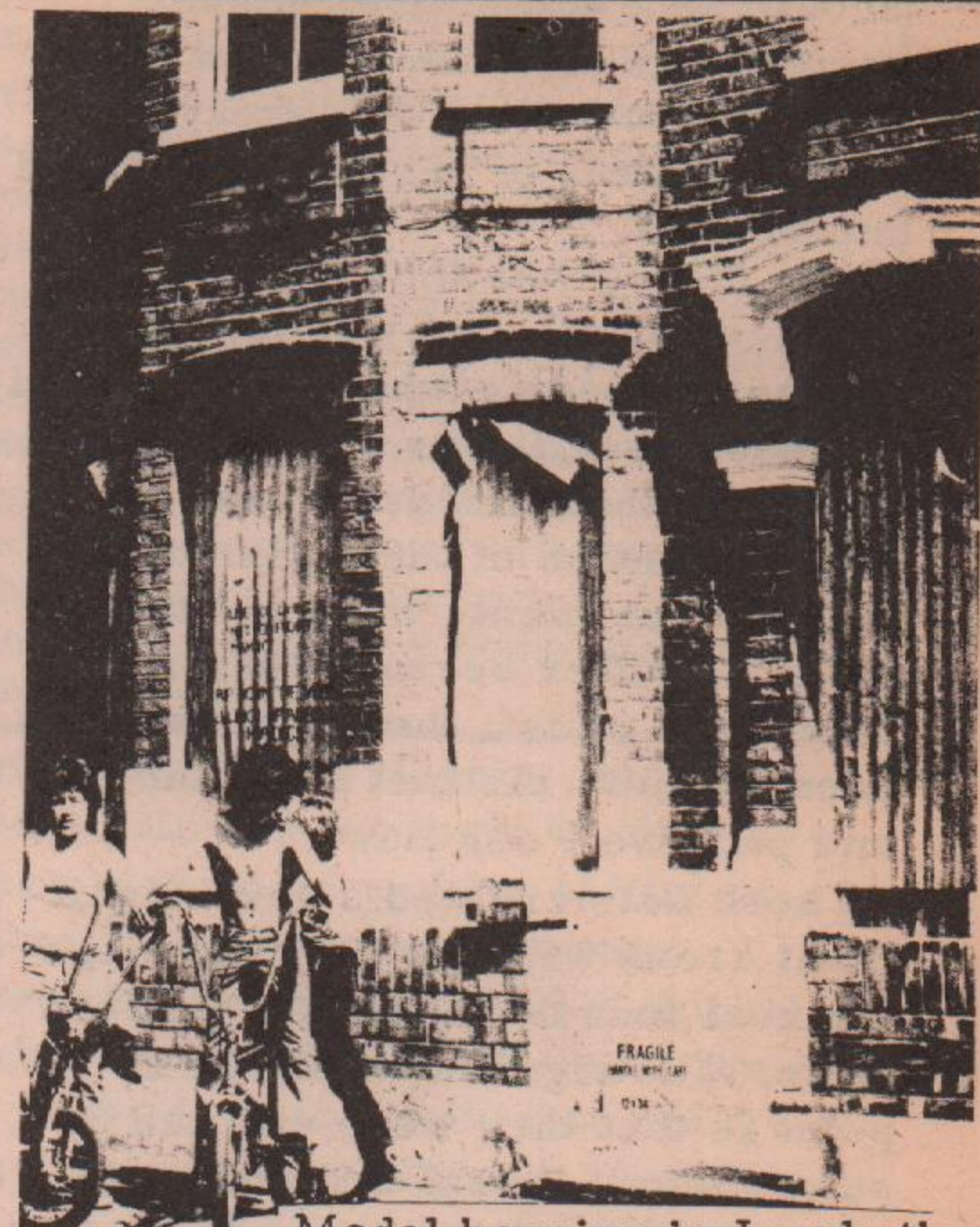


Trespass's Law first victim

offered only a tinkering economic solution to the problem and have denied the political aspect. In briefly considering the experience of London we can see some of the more profound aspects of the housing problem.

The problem as stated, is one of disrepair not absolute shortage. Many of the homes in need of renovation are in inner London, on land of high economic rent. From the point of view of the capitalist there is nothing to be made from repairing these homes since they will probably be let to people of low incomes, quite unable to meet the economic rent. Given the opportunity the capitalist will demolish the homes and build hotels or offices. Any housing that they provide in inner London will be of the luxury, penthouse type. The onus, then, is on the councils to build and renovate in this congested and costly area. In times of cash limits the amount of work that they can undertake is limited. When Councils from inner London try to build on land in the outer area they are thwarted by Tory Councils aiming to save their citizens from what they imagine still as the 'Great Unwashed'.

The low-cost housing that is developed in the outer areas is often miles from suitable jobs,



Model housing in Lambeth which then introduce the problem of transport costs. Tory Council estates are kept well away from the parts where anyone with a choice would want to live and are usually appended to industrial estates. What this points to is a political solution, a question of control and power. This would have to include the nationalisation of the land, financiers and builders. In this context Labour's response to the Green Paper is seen as meaningless.

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