

# Workers' fight

5p

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"WE put you in. Now you get them out!"

That was the chant of the building workers who lobbied the Labour Party Conference in support of UCATT's resolution demanding the release of the Shrewsbury pickets.

And the resolution was carried.

Now, two weeks after the Conference, Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson are still in jail serving their three year and two sentences respectively; and the Labour right wing is doing its best to stop Conference 'from having its way.

Education Minister Reg Prentice, who just before Labour's conference declared that its decisions should be ignored, is now fighting for that "principle" to be put into practice.

## MOTIVATED

Speaking in Sunderland on December 7th he delivered the following foul-mouthed diatribe: "The Labour Party conference set a bad example last week. The debates on Clay Cross and the Shrewsbury pickets were deplorable. Nearly all the speakers - fortunately not quite all - totally ignored the importance of upholding the rule of law. Some delegates tried to raise law breakers to the status of working class heroes. The speakers from the platform made no attempt to refute these views."

This last reference was probably to the NEC report given by POEU General Secretary Bryan Stanley, in which he stated that there were strong grounds to believe that the Shrewsbury trials were politically motivated.

Prentice went on - "The fact is that working class people - especially the poorest and weakest members of our society - are particularly vulnerable to a situation where law-breaking is on the increase. When I meet old age pensioners in my constituency who are afraid to open doors at night in case they are mugged for the contents of their handbags, I get angry with Left wing intellectuals who defend law-breaking on the basis of out dated class war theories."

## RELEASE

Who does this arrogant swine think he is? He dares to compare trade union militants with criminals who mug pensioners! He ought to get into the Tory 'Law & Order' ranks where he belongs!

Unfortunately, he's not the only one. It has now been revealed that as long ago as last May the Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, admitted in correspondence with the Labour Party's Research Department that "I have the power to recommend the exercise of the Royal Prerogative of mercy to set aside a conviction or to remit a part of a sentence..."

But he went on to say that he was adamant that he would not use his powers to release the pickets or quash the other sentences. And commentators (evidently forgetting that only last week he went back on his word to send the Price sisters and Feeney and Kelly, who shared their hunger strike, back to Ireland, have said

## AFTER THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

# THE RIGHT SCHEMES THE LEFT DREAMS...

## and the Pickets stay in jail

that Jenkins cannot now go back on his word.

But the question of Jenkins as an individual is irrelevant. It is a question for the Labour Government as a whole.

But the question of Jenkins as an individual is irrelevant. It is a question for the Labour Government as a whole.

Jenkins himself, meanwhile, is being backed up by Prentice and also, it seems, by an organised right wing grouping.

These people, always the first to foam at the mouth with anti-left scaremongering and red-baiting, are conspiring to set up a right wing wrecking crew, with the support of as many as a hundred MPs.

This newly emerging right wing grouping - probably to

Labour Party it would put up a fight, and resign its cabinet and ministry posts so long as these right wing policies are the order of the day.

But not only are the Tribunites tied to policies they say they don't support; their own policies are actually a diversion and irrelevance to the working class in most respects.

Most glaring is the question of the Common Market, the Great Cause for sounding forth - while pickets rot in jail and the Social Con-trick cuts workers' living standards.

But in or out of the EEC, the pressures of international capitalism would hit at workers. In or out, the only answer would be to fight to stop the bosses loading the weight of the capitalist crisis onto the working class. In or

**THIS ENGLAND:-** Mr. Ron Doel, of Marlhill Close, Townhill Park, Southampton, pushed his way to the front of barriers holding the crowd back, to ask the Queen to secure the release of the "Shrewsbury Two", two building workers imprisoned for picketing building sites during the construction workers' strike last year.

"The Queen asked if they were local men, and after I'd answered she said 'I see' and seemed sympathetic", said Mr. Doel. (Southern Evening News, 7.12.74)



Foul-mouthed Prentice

be called the 'Manifesto' group - claims that it is being formed to counter-balance the Tribune group. The chief difference, however, is that the stinking of this group - such as ignoring conference decisions on the Shrewsbury Two - are being carried out, and those of the Tribune group are not.

If Tribune really did represent the "left" in the

out, the European working class are our allies. In or out, the fight goes on.

The anti-EEC lobby (the Communist Party and the Tribune left, trailed by those allegedly revolutionary groups - the IS, WRP and IMG - who haven't had the ideological backbone to stand against the stream and maintain the position they all originally shared with WORKERS FIGHT) - this anti-Common Market lobby is the biggest piece of political conmanship in recent working class history.

## CRUSADE

The same people who lead the Great Crusade - Jones, Foot & Co - virtually abandon the direct working class struggle or, as Government ministers, fight to hold down wages. Just as they remain in a Government that's keeping Warren and Tomlinson in jail for their second Christmas running.

The TUC, looking to these people for the favour of the pickets' release, has done nothing but damp down what action we might have had to force a release. Now trade unionists are once more pressing and lobbying the TUC to do more than apply its super-soft screws of "if a satisfactory answer is not obtained ... we will take whatever steps are necessary."

And Labour Party members must press that Conference's decision is carried out.

## HOSPITAL WORKERS SLANDERED

# LIES, DAMN LIES, AND STATISTICS

by TOM RAMSEY

HOSPITAL workers are bitterly angry about the disgusting attack on them in a recent document by the Department of Health and Social Security, "Health and Personal Social Services Statistics". Since 1972, the figures show that there has been a 30,000 increase in the number of people waiting for hospital treatment. And, according to the DHSS, this is the direct result of the ancillary workers' industrial action.

## Waiting

But the figures do not explain why there are anyway over half a million people waiting for a hospital bed at any time.

Thus the dirty lie has been broadcast around that the deterioration of the National Health Service is all due to the 'greedy' workers in the hospitals, who take home less than £30 a week including overtime!

But what about the greedy consultants who take

home thirty or forty thousand pounds, and really are threatening to wreck the Health Service?

## Repel

What about the Tory cutback of millions of pounds from NHS money? What about the cutback in new buildings and equipment, and in clinics and outside services?

And then, what about the fact that whole wards, even brand new ones, have to be closed down for lack of staff because of the low pay, long hours and bad conditions that repel workers from NHS. Each time the ancillary workers and the low paid young nurses have tried to change this situation, they've been treated as the enemies to be fought, they've been witch-hunted and smeared as the cause of patients' misery -

and all the time Governments plan further cuts, more 'economies' both petty and major, to whittle away at the Health Services.

Even the figures themselves give the lie to the nonsense about ancillary workers lengthening the queue. In 1971 the ancillary workers took action, which got them off their knees and scared hell out of the bosses, and the number of patients waiting in the queue fell between 1971 and 1972 by 15,000!

## Blame

But as the queue gets longer, a direct result of recent cuts, this report and its conclusions will be used again and again to lay the blame at the door of militant low paid hospital workers as they try to fight for better wages. That fight has in fact already started in many areas (see back page) and no doubt this report will come in very handy for the DHSS.

Its lies must be nailed now!



# FIRST THE COLONELS THEN THE KING

ON December 9th, the New Statesman announced that it was necessary to "purge Greece of Fascism and to restore the democracy the King destroyed." An accurate comment on the present situation? Certainly! It's just that this is from the New Statesman of December 9th 1944...

Thirty years later the Greek people by a referendum have rejected the monarchy which in various ways has been foisted on them since 1832.

The British press has made great play of the fact that the previous referendum, conducted by the Papadopoulos terror regime (which also rejected the monarchy) was rigged. What they didn't mention was that this particular dynastic family only held their position because of a referendum, carried out in 1946, which was rigged by the British army in collusion with the fascist territorial bands which the British revived. (As a delegation reported to Parliament in the Spring of 1946 to universal unconcern "the Government in Greece today is 90% Fascist and will be 100% Fascist tomorrow".)

## Uppity

The principal role that the royal family played in Greece — and it was for this that the Bavarian Prince Otho was installed in 1832 — was as a conductor of the dominant imperialist influence. From time to time some uppity monarch has forgotten who his masters were, and decided to embark on an 'independent' course, as indeed Otho himself did during the Crimean war. The result? He was deposed, and the foreign powers installed a new monarch.

Internally, the court had long been the organising centre of the most reactionary traditional elements in Greek politics. With the abdication from the scene of Britain in 1947 (due to financial embarrassment, and not to any change of heart by the then Labour Government), the US became the dominant influence.

The US was prepared to work through the Court. But, recognising that after all those years as agent for British and French influence it couldn't entirely be relied on as an exclusively American puppet, the US decided to cultivate a caucus within the state apparatus — particularly the army. And thus two extreme right wing factions were created: one traditionally monarchist, the other republican reactionary.

## Meddling

Both these levers were applied to bring about, in April 1967, the fall of the bourgeois democratic Papandreu regime. After a running battle with Premier George Papandreu over who should run the army, the King concocted through the agency of the Minister of Defence (Garoufalias) a frame-up called the ASPIDA affair. According to the set-up the Premier's son, Andreas Papandreu, also a minister, was supposed to be fostering a "Nasserite clique" within the armed forces with which to overthrow the state power! Papandreu was forced to resign as Premier.

Even before this there had been plenty of examples of the King's interference in political life. But now he was to

consummate all his meddling and intrigue by bribing some 45 MPs from various parties — mainly Papandreu's own — to set up one of a number of pathetic, powerless governments between 1965 and 1967.

In 1967, with time running out on him and Papandreu's popularity growing, Constantine decided on a coup. He flew to the US to confer with the State Department and, apparently, got their support. From the middle of April '67 onwards the royal family was at the centre of a plot of the most Byzantine complexity aimed at ousting its own puppet government before there could be elections which would certainly return Papandreu's Centre Union Party to power.

## Frederika

Only days before the King's coup (resting mainly on the Air Force and Navy) was due to take place, the Colonels' coup upstaged it. In the days after April 21st '67 the King and his mother negotiated fiercely with the colonels. The leading figure in this was Frederika, the Queen Mother (a one-time leader on the women's section of the Hitler Youth and still a convinced Nazi). In fact it is recorded that when in a fit of pique right after the colonels' coup the King told Papadopoulos that he would not co-operate, she snapped "Halt's Maul" (German for "shut your gob") and proceeded to bargain herself.

The Greek people have not been fed on the stupid lies and William Hickey idiocies that the British press has served up about the Greek monarchy. All this is well known to them. They know that the King is as much the architect of the extreme right wing terror they suffered for seven years as were the colonels.

For Karamanlis, the rejection of the monarchy means that the divisions within the ruling class and within the state

apparatus are overcome. This was the first election he's presided over that haven't been rigged!

The USA is now firmly felt as the single decisive external factor in Greek political life, and this situation replaces that of an American faction competing with the leftovers of a traditional European affiliation. This greatly increases the possibility of Karamanlis being able to revamp the state machine and stabilise it at the top.

Of course, the success or failure of these attempts depends entirely on the capacity of the Greek working class to assert itself against all the reactionary cliques.

## JACK PRICE



Redundant Royalty — Constantine, wife & ex-Queen Frederika

## "Sustaining lawful authority in the face of subversion..."

THE Government's decision, announced last week by Roy Mason, to cut military expenditure by £4,700,000 over the next ten years, is not in the least a measure of any new social priorities of the Labour cabinet. Rather, it is a measure of the sharpness of the crisis in which British capitalism finds itself.

Moreover, as general international 'detente' has meant a decreasing attention to supposed 'foreign enemies', the sharpening of the class struggle brings more attention to what the military minds of the day term 'subversion'.

As Monday Club MP Patrick Wall put it in a letter to The Times, "In future the army will have two main tasks, its contribution to NATO in its traditional role, and perhaps more important ... its work in sustaining lawful authority in the face of subversion leading possibly to urban guerilla warfare."

Not surprisingly, then, seeing as the Labour Party and the Tory Party largely see eye to eye on these matters, this has been the pattern of the cuts. Britain's East of Suez commitments are almost entirely axed, while the NATO contribution remains virtually untouched; at the same time military operations within Britain are being stepped up.

## The steelworks that's open for school trips ... but closed to MPs!

"Public ownership" is a term which ruling class commentators and representatives like to use instead of nationalisation. It sounds so much more open and democratic — as if we actually all share the ownership of nationalised industries.

British Steel Corporation chief, Monty Finnieston, for instance is very fond of that term. But how public the units of his Corporation are is another matter. Last week he refused three Welsh Nationalist (Plaid Cymru) MPs, Mr. Gwynfor Evans (Carmarthen), Mr. Dafydd Thomas (Merioneth) and Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarvon) permission to visit the East Moors steel plant in Cardiff.

Finniston welcomes school trips to the works, but closes them to the elected representatives of thousands of people.

What's worrying him is that the MPs might give support to the threats of an occupation and work-in at East Moors. This has been under consideration for some time now, particularly as East Moors' main customer, GKN, is only a few yards away across the road. GKN are a bit nervous that the action might catch on.

If the MPs tour the works, says Finnieston, that would be bringing politics into industry. No doubt that is being consistent; after all, so little does Finnieston want politics to interfere with what he has got worked out that a few weeks ago he calmly announced, without any agreement with the Government (at least, one hopes not...) that if BSC kept on making profits for a few more years consistently, it would be denationalised — or, as Finnieston would put it, "taken out of public ownership" ... A sad fate for Finnieston's personal empire!

## THREAT OF EVICTION FOR MERIDEN CO-OP

POLICE and bailiffs could be called in to drive workers off the Triumph motor cycle plant at Meriden, Coventry. This threat came with the announcement of the annual report of Manganese Bronze, a holding company owning the motor cycle company Norton Villiers Triumph, by its chairman Denis Poore.

The Meriden plant was occupied nearly 18 months ago after NVT stated that motor cycle production would cease at Meriden, with the redundancy of 1750 workers. The workers, though now a good deal reduced, have occupied the plant ever since, and recently gained the approval of Mr. Anthony Wedgewood Benn for a grant of £5 million to set up a co-operative.

But the grant had one catch built into it. It would not be forthcoming if the Triumph workers at Small Heath, Birmingham, were opposed to it. And it was a foregone conclusion that they would be. There is a history of friction between the two plants and the Meriden workers have frequently put their case for retaining production there by contrasting their performance favourably with that of the Small Heath workers. It is not a figment of the Small Heath men's imagination that production of the Bonville at Meriden would constitute competition with them.

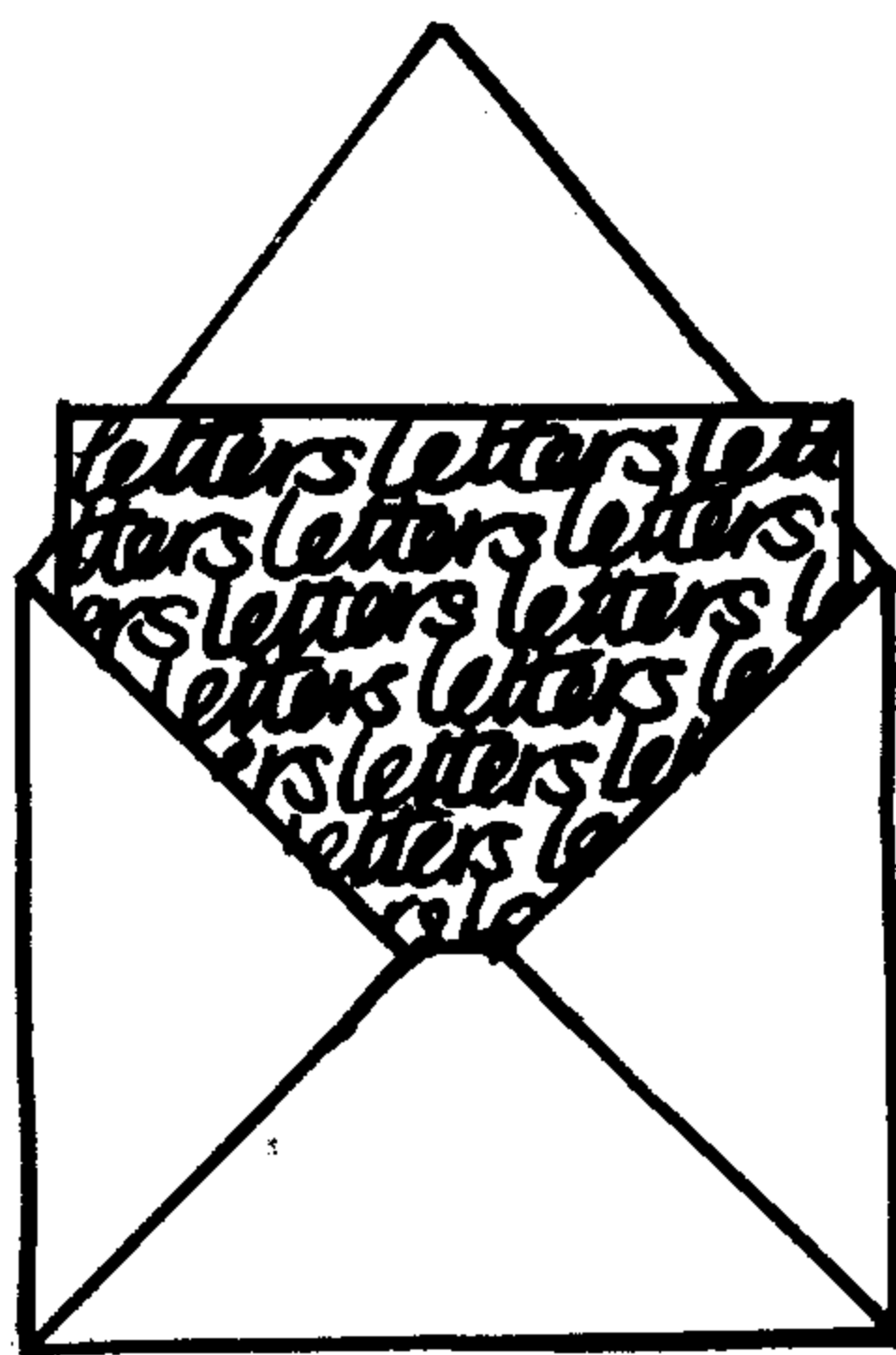
At the same time Poore has been playing both ends against the middle. On the one hand he has tried to get hefty government compensation for Meriden to add to the millions he got from the Tories, while at the same time increasing the feelings of insecurity at Birmingham's works by telling them that some of them will be made redundant unless there is a substantial government grant for the company as well as a release of machinery by the Meriden sitters-in.

At Meriden they are convinced that they cannot release the machinery unless the co-operative gets going. At Small Heath they are convinced that their livelihoods are being threatened by this refusal and by potential competition.

The situation reveals the powerlessness of Government — even one where the Minister responsible, Benn, is reputed as being "very enthusiastic" about the co-operative idea.

As it stands, Poore can still win. If he does, it will in no small way be the result of a rather high handed attitude by the Meriden men towards the workers at Small Heath.

And what will the "all powerful" cabinet minister Benn do if the local coppers and bailiffs are called in? Who will appear to be in charge then?



## ILLUSIONS SHATTERED IN IS.

THE FEW illusions I may have had about the IS group were smartly dissipated on the 30th November at the Second Rank and File

'Conference.

The chairman was a pains to point out that this conference would be the most democratic we had ever attended. If the IS comrades there really had never been to such a 'democratic' conference, then all I can say is that IS's other conferences must be even worse! Certainly this one bore out all the charges levelled at IS of being a heavily bureaucratised organisation.

## Sifting

The Chairman and his henchmen proceeded from the word go to ensure that the alternative resolution to their did not get a fair hearing. There was a stream of IS speakers, and only one or two non-IS delegates were allowed to speak. I could clearly see the Chairman sifting through the speaker slips to pick out the IS people. All we then ended up with was a rally on how bad everybody thought unemployment and wage restraint were, and hardly a

mention of a strategy for fighting against them.

In the light of this, I can only feel disgusted at the IS comrades who applauded the boasts about how wonderfully democratic the conference was.

## Backwardness

But worse was to come in the form of the IS attitude to the Working Women's Charter. The chairman and Co. had a field day on this one. Firstly the chairman said that we could not even debate the question of the Working Women's Charter because the main alternative resolution, which contained a resolve to support the demands of the Charter, had been defeated. In his ignorance (or perhaps deliberate blindness) he had failed to notice that the defeated resolution also contained most of the points in the IS main resolution — so according to such a ruling, all those points should have been discarded as well!

The delegates, however, thought otherwise, and under some pressure the debate was allowed. I thought then that the conference might after all end up on a sensible note. But I was wrong again — I had reckoned without the IS backwardness on the women's question.

It would seem that IS are quite prepared to mention women's equality, but are not prepared to fight for it in any way. The resolution to adopt the Working Women's Charter was defeated on the recommendation of the Organising Committee, and nothing concrete was put in its place.

The IS attitude toward women was best summed up in the chairman's (who else...) final words when he said "and so we end the second Rank & File conference with the women having the last word like the buggers usually do". Perhaps it would have been just as fitting if he had said — long live male chauvinism in IS. John Bryant, Birmingham.

## ANTI-FASCIST DEMO

IN ITS ISSUE no.79, the Red Weekly (paper of the International Marxist Group) has a report of a counter-demonstration against the British Movement in Liverpool. What is not mentioned is that the IMG were completely absent from that demonstration.

Divisions had occurred in the Anti-Fascist forces prior to the demonstration. The position of the Revolutionary Marxist Current, Workers Fight and the Jewish Socialist Group was that the fascists must be opposed, and if possible denied a platform on whatever issue, or wherever they organise. The majority of the Anti-Fascist Committee disagreed and a split occurred. However, on the day of the demonstration, co-operation was organised between the two groups of Anti-Fascists.

At the Pier Head the

fascists tried to speak from the Trades Council platform. They were stopped from doing so by the anti-fascist forces, and two RMC comrades were arrested.

During the whole course of the demonstration the IMG had four people selling (papers) in one place in the centre of town, with the other IMG comrades in a pub close by.

This lack of action by Liverpool IMG is both inexcusable and politically incorrect, and has brought the IMG into disrepute among the left in Liverpool. Considering the way the IMG nationally prides itself on its anti-fascist activism, we would hope that some action would be forthcoming in relation to its Liverpool branch.

Fraternally, Revolutionary Marxist Current (Liverpool).

(The above is a copy of a letter also sent to the Red Weekly for publication, and which the comrades of the RMC have asked us to print.)

# Oh, what a pretty picture of Long Kesh

WITH Jenkins' new law, internment without trial has now been extended to Irish people in this country. They can be served with an exclusion order under the Act and shipped over to Northern Ireland; and once they land there, driven straight to Long Kesh camp in accordance with the laws in force there. Internment, like much else once confined to the Six Counties, is thus now a "domestic problem" for us too.

However, this aspect has not so far been the subject of even uncritical comment in the press. And it's unlikely that it was such a realisation that produced a report, rare in the bourgeois press, on conditions in Long Kesh.

It was the Sunday Times that sent Chris Ryder on an

the cookhouse, accommodation consisting of separate dining halls, study halls and sleeping accommodation — and all this benevolence contrasted with the vicious discipline imposed by the men themselves, with torture, murder even, and "when the huts are locked the place becomes a virtual terrorist university." The Army, says Ryder, is called in "if the prisoners prove difficult".

You can almost hear the "escorts" talking. So let's hear some other voices talking back!

## 'Improved'

**Food and parcels:** Fran Brodie wrote "The prisoners' food is swamped in grease and completely uneatable. The internees' wives

sink. As the toilets are also contained within the washroom complex, the odour of excrement and Palmolive soap make an extremely unpleasant smell. Blocked drains mean that the washroom is under several inches of soapy water and we have to stand on duckboards to keep our feet dry."

## Strategic buckets

Back in the "sleeping accommodation" — i.e. living space — "Plastic buckets and containers are strategically placed under the leaking holes and beds are repositioned to avoid the rain... This makes the hut look extremely untidy, but it is necessary." In any case, "the constant stripping of the huts by the (Army) raiding parties have left them just a bundle of tatty corrugated scrap iron. ... If only there was a sound-proof room, or some place with a door to lock behind you to escape from it all for a few minutes. Even the toilet door

cigarette lighter, another had tram lines burnt on his back with the bars of an electric fire and another received severe body and head bruising when he was beaten with a wet, knotted towel. One man was murdered as he slept and another hanged himself."

The men who are said to have been tortured were not identified, nor is there any indication whether they were in republican or Loyalist cages. Nor has the case of the man "murdered as he slept" ever been mentioned before — and it certainly would have been publicised if it had occurred in an IRA cage. However, Ryder leaves us to think it might have.

What we do know is that one Republican prisoner was virtually murdered by medical negligence: gravely ill with jaundice, he was given aspirins and pain killers; he died a few hours after being rushed to hospital, though he had been in an obviously deteriorating condition for two days. Another man, Hugh Coney, was shot dead at point blank range by the Army a

# 'Why we spoke up for the IRA'

By Nick Mullen

THE Prevention of Terrorism Act is off to a flying start. Already, on some counts, it is turning out to be even more repressive than some people anticipated. Exclusion orders have been used to stretch indefinitely the time police had for holding and questioning people: after the seven days allowed for in the Act, exclusion orders were served, enabling the police to keep their prisoners for at least another 48 hours.

Exclusion orders, moreover, like internment, are operative for an unlimited time: no-one knows when he may be allowed to return.

Already, too, forces on the Right are clearly seeing the Act as a curtailment of freedom of speech. Monday Club leader John Biggs Davison has launched a vicious attack on NICK MULLEN, a member of the Executive of Middlesex Polytechnic Students Union, for a motion he moved at the NUS conference, and for his remarks to the press afterwards. Biggs Davison wants the Director of Public Prosecutions to take action against Mullen under the new Act.

Mullen is of course being picked out and victimised. The resolution and his explanation of it (it called on the NUS to affirm its solidarity with the Irish republican struggle and defend the right of the IRA to fight back against the British Army and to strike at military targets in this country if necessary) was the joint responsibility of the majority of the Middlesex Poly delegation, which included also Bas Hardy and Danny Reilly of Workers Fight, and Frank Murphy of Peoples Democracy.

After the threats to Mullen under the Act, BAS HARDY talked to him about the incident.

What did you think of the press reaction to your comments at the press conference?

I think it is indicative of the attitude of the capitalist press that they should take more notice of what I say than of what is going on in Northern Ireland. I expected a hostile reception, but the anti-student sentiments I found particularly deplorable.

Do you think the Government will prosecute you for what you said?

I think that the Government would prefer a private court action of some sort because a prosecution by the Government at this stage may prematurely expose the repressive nature of the recent measures.

What has been the response of the left at College?

Some leading members of left groups at the College, such as the Communist Party and the IS group, have taken what can only be described as a sectarian attitude, though ordinary members of these groups have supported me, as has the revolutionary left as a whole.

What was the importance of the Middlesex stand at NUS?

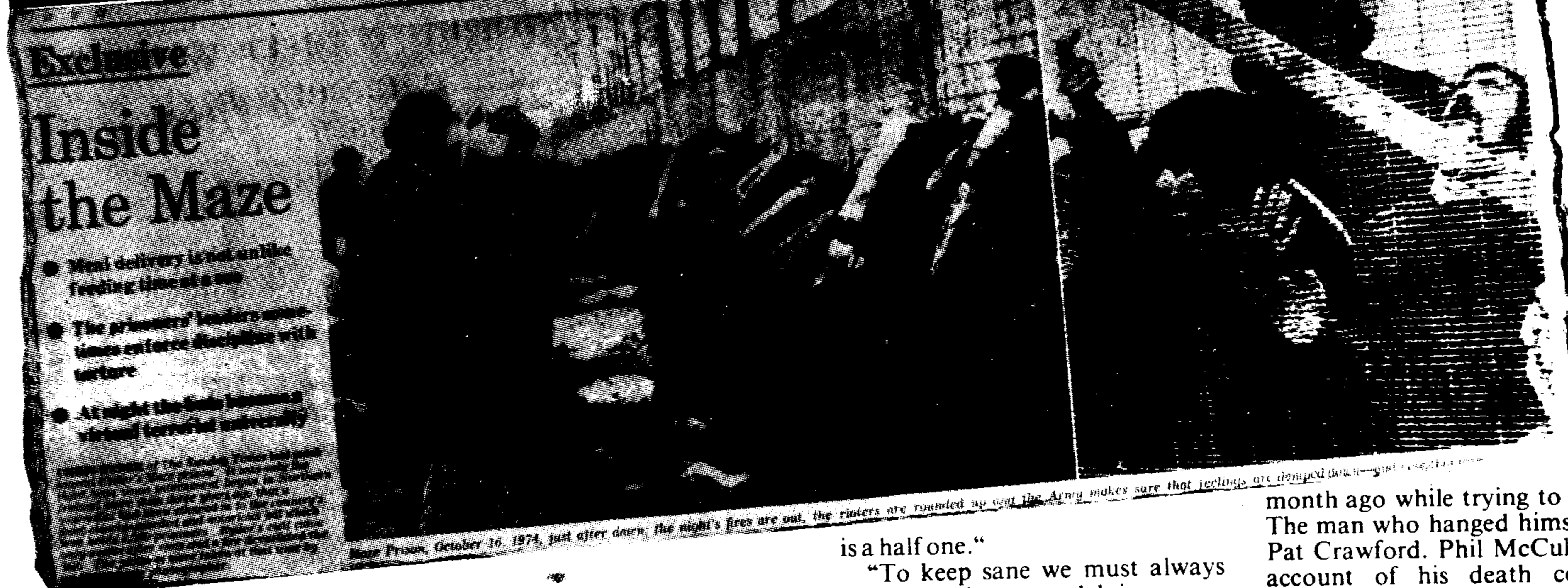
I feel it is important that some group took a principled stand against the legislation and in support of the republicans, despite the hubalaboo. Though press reports have been distortive and hostile, I think the point that some people are still with the republican cause, and against the Jenkins laws, has been made.

How have the students at Middlesex responded in general?

Firstly, my fellow Executive members buckled under and stabbed me in the back, and on their initiative, other groups of students are coming into opposition to my statements and the activities of our delegation at NUS.

However, my own branch (Enfield) has severely censured the rest of the Executive for attempting to present the motion at NUS conference as being contrary to union policy. We are going to have a full debate on Northern Ireland at my branch and at an EGM of the Union, which I welcome. But, given the reactionary backlash, I would not be surprised to see our union changing its policy on the republican movement.

## A Sunday Times "Exclusive" — See no evil - hear no evil - write no evil...



"Exclusive" visit to the camp. Exclusive it might have been in the bourgeois press. But many, many accounts have been given of Long Kesh — by visitors, by internees and by released men — in other papers.

Workers Fight itself in March this year published an exclusive eye witness account by Fran Brodie, who visited Long Kesh with a delegation of trade unionists. And we have republished accounts from Republican News of the aftermath of the burning of the camp in October. At greater length, a recent Peoples Democracy pamphlet, "Behind the Wire" contains a long "prison journal" by Phil McCullough, who at the time of writing had been locked up in Long Kesh since internment started on August 9th 1971.

## Same place?

Anyone comparing these accounts with the description by Chris Ryder in the Sunday Times will be forgiven for wondering if they all describe the same place — or whether Ryder spent his visit in blinkers.

On a whole range of aspects of camp life — visits, food parcels, study, facilities, army raids and above all violence — Ryder relates the views of the "escorts" who drove him around in a mini-bus, rather than of the internees that he glimpsed at a distance "behind the chain link fences" or "through the open doors of some huts". He shows remarkably little inclination to question what he is told, to see and hear for himself, or to get the other side of the story.

## All comforts

The picture he presents is of a benevolent establishment providing all the comforts possible under the circumstances — frequent visits and food parcels, wholesome food which would be even better if the ungrateful prisoners themselves hadn't burnt

(who are usually on Social Security) spend about £4 to £5 per week on food which they can send in to the men. But the British troops and the RUC, who are running the place, have a habit of 'improving' what comes in: they add salt to the sugar, break the eggs, steal cigarettes."

During the recent semi-hunger strike in which the prisoners refused camp food as inedible, the camp authorities stopped these food parcels coming in altogether, thus turning the protest into a full scale hunger strike which lasted several weeks.

## Dustbin

Phil McCullough — "...as usual during grub call, there is no clamour. ... fifteen or sixteen guys go round anyway and queue before the aluminium containers (for) a hash the establishment call stew." (And which Ryder refers to appetisingly as "stews, casseroles and curries") "It is again dumped into the dustbin and men filter away uttering threats regarding the tyrant Commandant Truesdale. Even the cook's parenthood comes into question for the millionth time..."

**Visits:** For the first few years visitors, women with young children, had to wait outside in the mud and rain for one or two hours before being let in. Now there's a hut for them to wait in. They and the prisoners are subjected to lengthy and degrading searches. And after all that, McCullough writes, "the miserable 30 minutes passes very quickly" in the tiny box. No conjugal visits, and the men themselves are too inhibited by religious prejudices to demand them.

**Accommodation:** Ryder — "a block with showers, hand basins, toilets and mirrors and a study hall". McCullough — "...hopping and dodging the puddles right up to the washroom 50 yards away. The place as expected is crammed tight with bodies queuing for a

is a half one."

"To keep sane we must always keep pottering around doing something... To attempt any serious study is impossible because neither the facilities nor the privacy are available." There are the guys that just take to their beds, "existing day to day with the aid of sleeping drugs which are freely administered by the Camp Doctor."

And here's McCullough's picture of the after-lights out "terrorist university": "All hell breaks loose and the whole hut is soon awake once more, armed to the teeth with both offensive and defensive weaponry. The unfortunate mouse is soon cornered and beaten to death. Debate rages over whether it was a rat or just a large mouse..."

But the accommodation even as it was in McCullough's version was positively palatial compared with what some of the men are living in now, since they burned down the camp in desperation. Many are living and sleeping under makeshift structures no more than three feet high. Sunday Times reporter Chris Ryder apparently wasn't shown these on his little tour; nor had he briefed himself sufficiently to ask to see them, although the blurb at the top says "Ryder's visit came only weeks after riots and a fire devastated the jail."

**Violence:** It is here that Ryder's account is at its most one-sided and dishonest. He writes: "The leaders ensure that discipline is enforced when necessary. One man had his nipples burnt with a



Accommodation at Long Kesh today

# Why the Troops Out Movement must fight repressive laws

THE BRITISH Government's new "anti-terrorist" legislation has created a new situation for the left in this country.

Laws which effectively outlaw any solidarity work with the Irish republican struggle are obviously aimed at the Irish community immediately, as well as the pro-republican left — particularly the clauses relating to deportation and arrest on 'suspicion' — and such laws can undoubtedly be used against the English working class, too, in the years ahead.

The police state of 'Ulster' is spilling over into Britain. In this situation, the work of the Troops Out Movement (T.O.M.) assumes a particular importance as the main focus of opposition in the labour movement to Britain's presence in Ireland. The question for T.O.M., therefore, is how it should relate to the new legislation in building such a movement.

## Illusions

WORKERS FIGHT, has argued consistently that the T.O.M. represented a retreat from a position of solidarity with the republicans. T.O.M.'s retreat was in fact justified in terms of illusions that it could become a mass movement simply by making propaganda for its two demands — troops out of Ireland, and self determination for the Irish people.

**J.W. Harding (ASTMS), who proposed the major part of the resolution for fighting the Jenkins law which was adopted by the Rank & File Conference in Birmingham, argues that the Troops Out Movement must also take up a fight against these repressive laws.**

We argued, however, that T.O.M. could not develop consistently in the working class unless it made clear a position of support for those actually fighting to drive the British army from Ireland.

Those people in T.O.M. who opposed this, now take their position a stage further by refusing to address themselves, as T.O.M., to the problem of how to oppose the laws — that is, show concrete solidarity — and take a stand on the question as part of clarifying the Irish question in the working class here. They want instead to separate T.O.M. from the legislation and merely continue to make propaganda and pressurise the various Labour MPs who support the line of withdrawing the troops (some of whom voted for the laws).

There are several arguments used against the T.O.M. taking part in such a campaign. There is the argument that T.O.M. just has not got the resources, physical or financial, and that they would cease to be a troops out movement and become a civil rights movement; or that T.O.M. would become merely a fig-leaf for a squabbling and ineffective British left if it were to allow itself to be diverted from its present limited programme.

## Rejection

Much of this is linked to an explicit rejection of a solidarity position, with which the argument about practical difficulties dovetails very well.

But if you ask the difficult question — how will T.O.M. relate



Andrew Hornung speaking for WORKERS FIGHT at the last T.O.M. demo

now to the working class movement?; how will it build this mass movement to which it aspires?; what does T.O.M. mean when it talks about self determination if it refuses to take any position with regard to the people fighting for self determination and to laws which outlaw that fight? — if you ask these questions, you will get few clear answers from the T.O.M. leaders.

It all boils down to a subordination by T.O.M. of a struggle for clarity in those sections of the labour movement it can reach, to the business of pressurising of Labour MPs, and of propaganda activity that has no strategy with which to develop roots.

## Danger

We would suggest that those elements in T.O.M. who are able to say one minute that the situation has changed and the next that everything must stay the same, and that a campaign on civil rights is something for the left (whose very failings on the Irish issue gave rise to T.O.M.) are in reality attempting to justify their own failure to clarify the question of the Irish republican movement and its right to struggle.

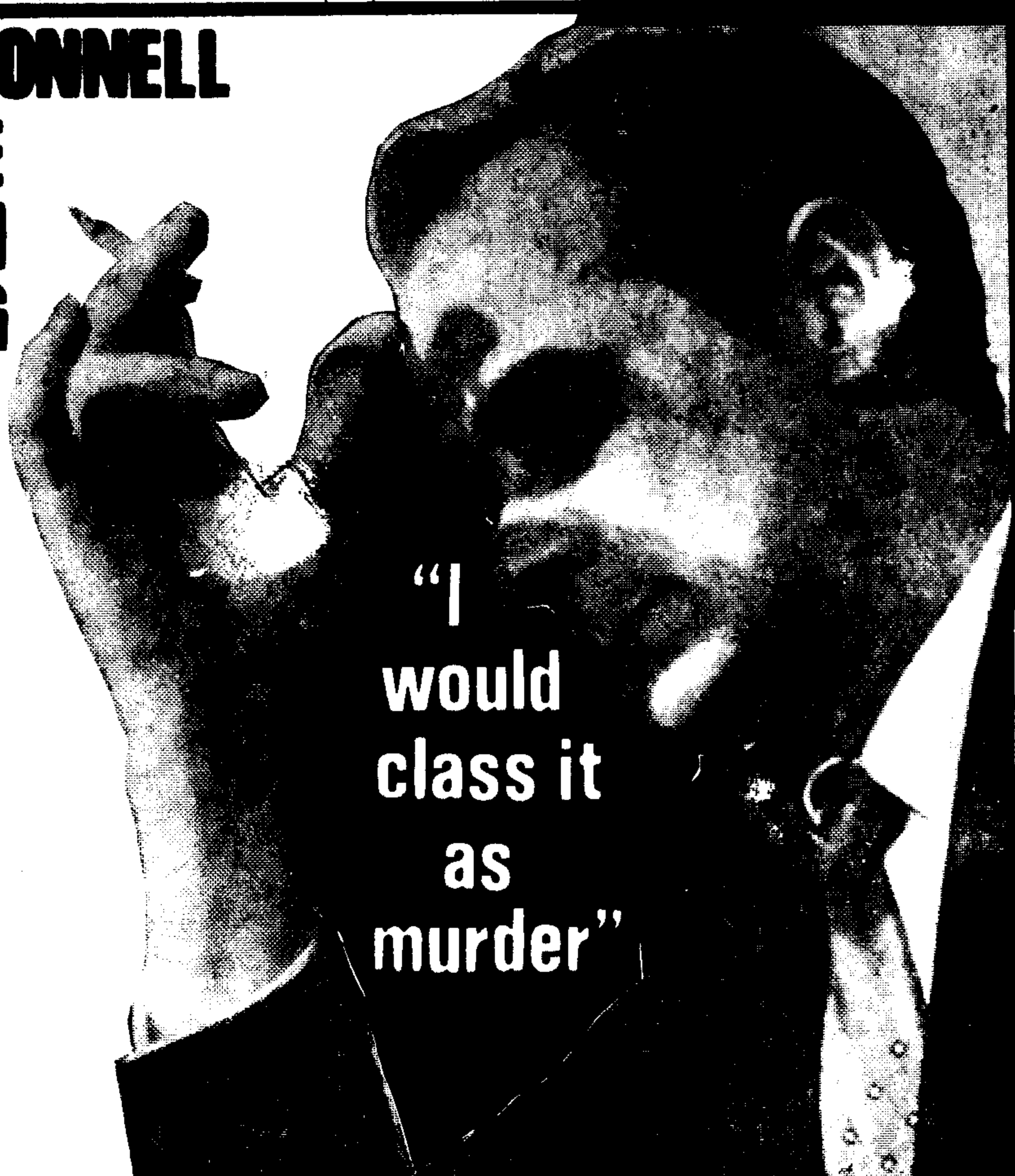
In a situation where the Irish in

Britain are reduced to the status of second class citizens, where T.O.M. itself stands in considerable danger of having the laws used against it, where insofar as elements in the working class become clear on Ireland they come up against a law designed to beat them down as part of the Government's strategy to crush the entire Catholic resistance in Northern Ireland, the T.O.M. should be discussing how best it can act against this, not myopically deciding to ignore it all.

It should be discussing how best to work with the Rank and File Movement, which is now committed to supporting T.O.M. It should be discussing how best to prepare for its labour movement conference in April in relation to this, how to agitate for the withdrawal of troops and against the Act in the trade union movement so as to win support for that conference.

Revolutionaries in T.O.M. should play a full part in making this conference a success, arguing the case for practical solidarity — opposition to the laws — and the logic of this in relation to the call for troops out of Ireland and self determination for the Irish people.

## DAVID O'CONNELL ON THE BIRMINGHAM BOMBING



"YOU WILL appreciate that, in view of the developments from Birmingham, it is difficult for us to establish direct contact with our men on the ground. It is common procedure for any guerilla movement to 'go to ground' once the enemy advances on any massive scale.

To date, we have not established whether any unit of the IRA was involved. All that we have firmly established is that none of the six who have been charged with the bombings was a member of any branch of the Republican Movement.

## WARNING

"We stated that it is not, and never has been, the policy of the IRA to bomb targets without adequate warning to ensure the safety of civilians. If it turns out, as the result of our investigations, that we find there was a violation of operational policy, then the leadership would enact the standard procedure of courts of enquiry and court martial — but I make that point clearly understanding that at this point in time we cannot honestly state that it was, or was not, an operation carried out by any unit of the IRA."

Mr. O'Connell stated that attacks in Britain were not ordered from Dublin but communication between the command structures in both countries was not the easiest thing in such circumstances. He continued:

"If we find out, as a result of our inquiries, that there is a definite conclusion, we shall state so, irrespective of how unpalatable the truth may be."

He claimed that, in the past, his organisation had shown that, in all instances where doubt arose as to responsibility, it had admitted it, once the truth was discovered.

## MORALITY

Asked about his personal, as distinct from ideological, view of civilian bombings, he replied that his personal view mattered very little.

"When I act in this capacity, such as the interview with Mary Holland of ITN, I act as a spokesman for the movement. I fully support the decision of the leadership to reject outright the bombing of civilians. I do so on the basis that, where it has been done in previous wars, such as in the last

WE reproduce below the bulk of an interview with DAVID O'CONNELL, leading spokesman of the Provisional Republican movement, which was published in the Sunday Press of 8th December. (The passages omitted refer to anti-IRA laws in the Irish 'Republic' and to the mechanics of a possible truce.)

war, it has not achieved the desired result."

It was history, he said, that the British Government had acted on the advice of "Bomber Harris" to begin its saturation bombing of Dresden, to weaken the will of the German civilian population, but this was not achieved.

"The efficacy, apart altogether from the morality — and one is not saying that the morality must be ignored, it cannot — but dealing just with the efficacy of bombing civilians, it has been shown that it is not of great worth.

"To bomb civilians, just because they are civilians, I would class as murder. The bombing of civilians, for bombing's sake, cannot be condoned. The bombing of innocent civilians is not justified in our view."

What are classified as "guilty" civilians?

"Any establishment, the British establishment, consists of people. There are police, judiciary, there are civil servants. In our view the politician who orders the mass execution of thirteen people in

Derry, for example, is as guilty as the paras who pulled the triggers." Yet, he added, politicians were classed as "civilians".

Questioned on the M6 Motorway coach bombing, Mr. O'Connell said the coach was carrying military personnel, and Provisional IRA Intelligence had indicated that it was exclusively for their use. It only transpired later that there were three civilians on it, who, "tragically", died in it.

## MOMENTUM

Asked if there had been any major loss of support, or defections from the IRA, following the Birmingham explosions, Mr. O'Connell said that the bombings had been utilised to whip up hysteria against them. One saw it in the reaction of the British press, and with rare exceptions, the way in which the Irish press had followed suit.

"Dublin politicians excelled themselves in playing their part in the British propaganda war" he said. The Social and Democratic Labour Party, he said, had added

to the momentum by accusing the IRA of involvement in the explosions at the Abercorn and in McGurk's bar, in Belfast. The IRA repudiated this outright, and Mr. O'Connell issued a challenge to any SDLP man to make such a charge, under his own name rather than under the party banner.

## EMOTION

"We are not panicked by such developments. As I said, we stated publicly that our investigations were under way. We do not react to emotion or hysteria." He stated that they had checked the reactions of their own volunteers and supporters since, and had satisfied themselves beyond doubt that morale was not hurt.

"We are completely satisfied that none of our units is involved in the shooting of innocent Protestants. We do not support such actions in the least." And he declared that they would continue to stamp out as much of this violence as they possibly could.

THE I.R.A. would continue to fight, he said, as long as the British maintained their present attitude; and bombing, as a form of military action, would also continue to be part of its tactics, against military and economic targets. The IRA was going to maintain the policy of "taking the war to the mainland of Britain".

British legislation, bringing back hanging as the death penalty, he said, would not affect their actions in the least.

## NOT FEASIBLE

The IRA could call a truce at any time, if the British agreed to a bilateral, properly administered truce, containing guarantees for the Irish people.

"It is understandable that the British see the solution now in the form of crushing the IRA. In the weeks and months to come, they will realise that that solution is not feasible. Already the British Army authorities in the North have accepted that they cannot defeat the IRA. We would hope that the British people will ask if there is any other solution, and we believe that there is.

"There is the straightforward solution of the British Government accepting that its days in Ireland are over, that it has fought its last colonial war, and that the honourable thing to do is to change its policy towards Ireland.

## INTENT

"We look for a change that embodies the declaration of intent that the British Government will withdraw its forces from Ireland. We look for a general amnesty for all political prisoners. And we look for the facility whereby all the people of Ireland, as a whole, can have the freedom to choose their representatives, which will determine the institutions of government in Ireland that will have the consent of the majority of all our people. ...

"If the British Government decided to explore avenues by which the war can be ended, it will not find the Republican leadership wanting."

WE have received a long letter from leading IMG (International Marxist Group) comrade, Lawrie White. Its basic point is that our editorial on the Birmingham bombings was a capitulation to the anti-IRA hysteria because it condemned the bombings and said it was 'probable' that Irish republicans were responsible.

The issues raised, of the difference between the IMG's approach and our own, are very important. Theirs of hiding behind general ideas about 'the right of the Irish people to struggle', avoiding sharp answers to the concrete questions and dismissing the idea that it might be the work of republicans; or ours — denouncing and condemning the bombings, accepting the probable involvement of Irish republicans, and then going on to explain why in our opinion the cause of the republicans remained a just cause.

Lack of space dictated a choice between O'Connell's important statement which we reprint above and a debate with the IMG. Comrade White's letter, with a reply, will appear in the next issue. O'Connell's attitude as to possible and probable responsibility is of course as relevant to this dispute as his condemnation of the Birmingham bombings is to be welcomed generally.

# BREAKING OUT OF THE HOTHOUSE

IS THE downgrading of housework a symptom of the downgrading of the people who do it — women? Or are women downgraded by being made to do housework which, in whatever circumstances, is bound to be a more or less trivial concern?

Until very recently, the various movements for women's equality and liberation have unanimously and consistently taken the second view. Even when the rebels were delicately polished ladies of leisure free from any drudgery, they saw the vital necessity for breaking out of the confines of the home.

## A little hothouse for women

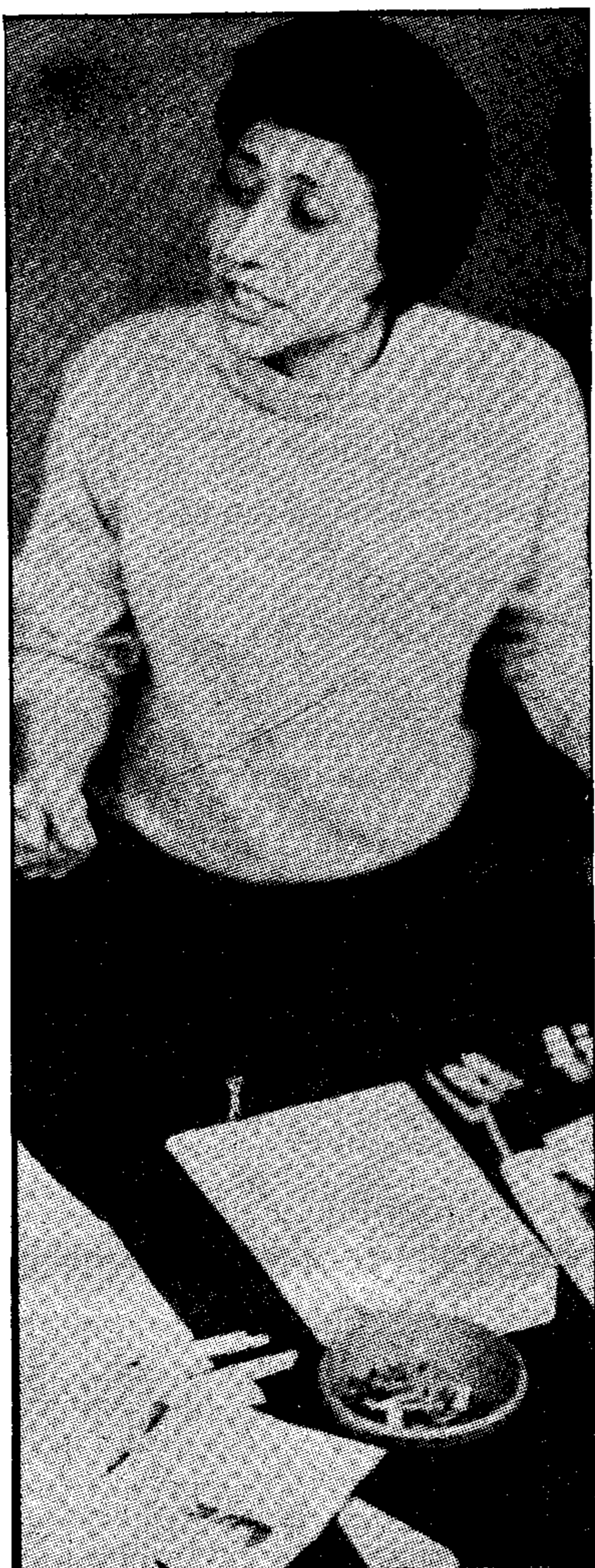
When Kate Millet, summing up Ruskin's patronising division of the sexes into complementary opposites, described this male chauvinist view as "reserving the entire scope of human endeavour for the one, and a little hothouse for the other" she was articulating an essential and longstanding cornerstone of the women's struggle. This is the drive to get out of the home, to fight to achieve the necessary education and skills to be able to play an equal part in the world "of human endeavour".

Although the main early aim of this drive was essentially an elitist and professional one, socialists support it. But we go further. We say that the most important and far-reaching change in today's world will not come about because of the efforts of this or that brilliant individual, but will be the result of the collective struggle of the working class.

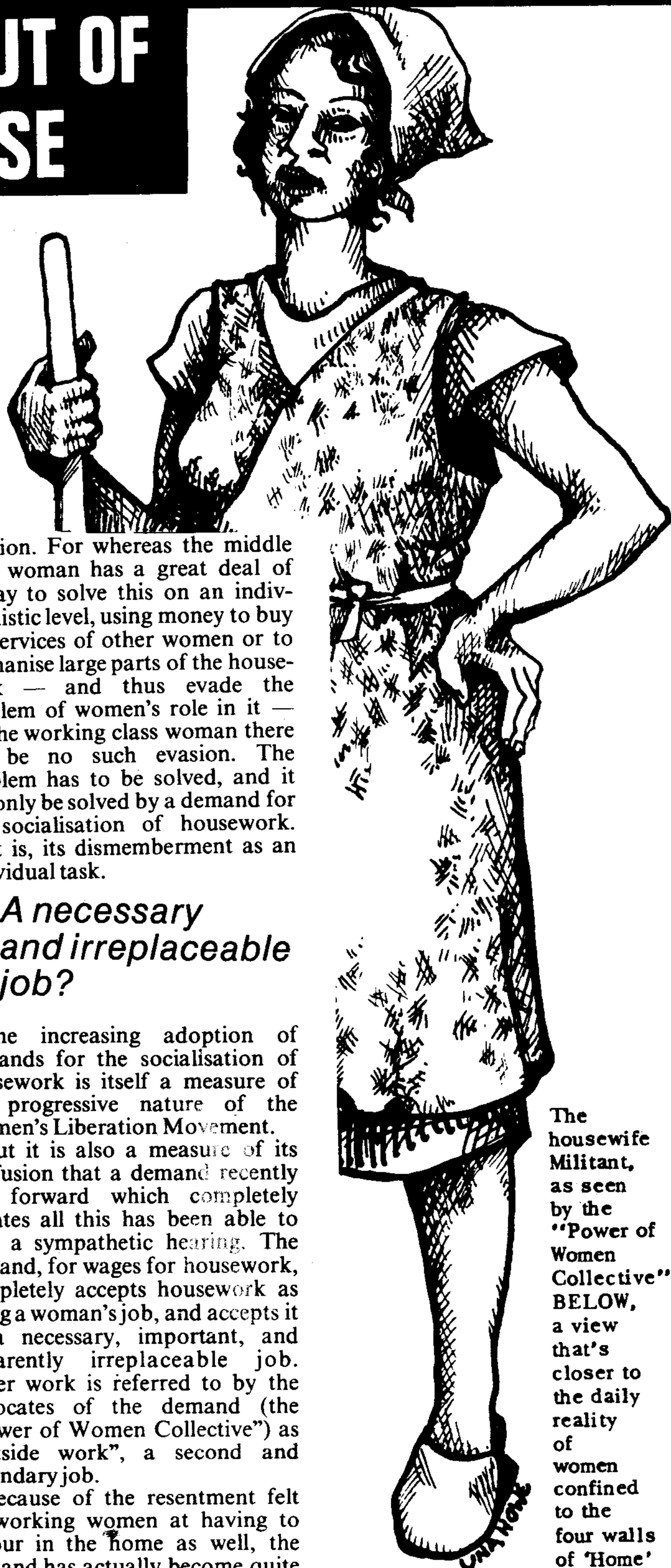
## Money can evade the real problem

Given this, any group of people isolated in small work units is virtually cut off from the major endeavour of the progressive part of humanity today. The tragedy of women, each an isolated individual chained to an individual household unit, is therefore above all to be cut off from playing a full part in this human endeavour.

The demand to do away with housework, and to abolish women's role in doing it, is therefore of major importance. And here, too, the working class approach is central to a real



Selma James - author of a disastrous demand for women



solution. For whereas the middle class woman has a great deal of leeway to solve this on an individualistic level, using money to buy the services of other women or to mechanise large parts of the housework — and thus evade the problem of women's role in it — for the working class woman there can be no such evasion. The problem has to be solved, and it can only be solved by a demand for the socialisation of housework. That is, its dismemberment as an individual task.

## A necessary and irreplaceable job?

The increasing adoption of demands for the socialisation of housework is itself a measure of the progressive nature of the Women's Liberation Movement.

But it is also a measure of its confusion that a demand recently put forward which completely negates all this has been able to gain a sympathetic hearing. The demand, for wages for housework, completely accepts housework as being a woman's job, and accepts it as a necessary, important, and apparently irreplaceable job. Other work is referred to by the advocates of the demand (the "Power of Women Collective") as "outside work", a second and secondary job.

Because of the resentment felt by working women at having to labour in the home as well, the demand has actually become quite popular in certain quarters of the Women's movement — despite its obvious contradiction of its most elementary principles.

## Bonuses for better housekeeping...

The whole logic of the demand is in fact reactionary and backward looking. For example, if we are demanding wages for housework, there is a clear implication that we should also demand that girls in school should be taught subjects that will make them more skilled in their coming job, perhaps able to earn higher wages, or bonus for 'better housekeeping': instead of mathematics, child psychology; instead of economics, 'home economics'; instead of science and engineering, home baking, gardening and furniture maintenance.

Doesn't it sound all too familiar. Yes, this is the trap we've been fighting to get out of.

And then, too, in place of the gradual reduction and withering away of housework that's begun to happen (through mechanisation and the taking of many functions outside the home: such as baking and dressmaking) we would be demanding the EXPANSION of housework to be a more full time and fulfilling job — back, then to home baking and jam making, to home bottling instead of buying cans.

## Utopian, middle class idyll

Put like this, of course, the whole scheme becomes easily recognisable for the reactionary, utopian middle class idyll that it is.

The advocates of wages for housework argue that if we place too much emphasis on nurseries and "outside" skills, then we'll soon be surrounded by 24-hour

The housewife Militant, as seen by the "Power of Women Collective". BELOW, a view that's closer to the daily reality of women confined to the four walls of 'Home'

# Wages for housework?

## Two replies to the 'Power of Women' Collective

"concentration camps for our children" and there'll be a terrific pressure to take jobs. Thus, they say, we'll all become "factory fodder".

But if men can be factory fodder, why not women? Better that than exist as paid domestic servants locked away from the world. One can't have things both ways. If we want to take our place in the world, to affect its history, we have to leave the safe confines of our homes and go out into the factories so feared by Selma James and HELP TO TAKE THEM OVER!

## Only two alternatives

In the meantime, life is tough for working women. But really, there are only two alternatives. To fight, and fight urgently, for what we need: facilities and the socialisation of housework and an end to male chauvinism, plus a decent, equal education for women so we won't automatically be palmed off with the worst paid and least satisfying jobs that mean working women do get the worst of both worlds. Or else to let it all defeat us and sink down into another era of reaction.

If we pursue the demand for wages for housework, this is

precisely what will happen. All the demands for the socialisation and reduction of housework will go by the board. So also will the struggle against male chauvinism, as we're told to get back to the kitchen and do the job we're paid to do. Thus we will give up not only the socialisation of housework, but also the fight to share out work in the house that can't be socialised and that, if shared as it should be, will cease to be housework and become a matter of minor self-servicing. (Even work done for kids is taken to ludicrous levels, when, once past their very early years, they should increasingly service themselves: at present the housework ethos leads to the servicing of offspring well into adulthood, often even after they've left home when they bring back laundry and mending for "Mum" to do.)

Well-meaning though the 'Power of Women Collective' may be, and much as their demands appear to help in "saving" women the problems of doing both work and housework, they and their demands must be fought uncompromisingly. If they take any hold, they will destroy everything the women's movement has been fighting for over a century and a half.

RACHEL LEVER

## TURNING THE CLOCK BACK

THE DEMAND for 'Wages for Housework' stands in a kind of 'inverse relation' to historical development: the greater the potential for the emancipation of women through historically created material conditions, the more is this a reactionary slogan, one which opposes these material conditions and turns in upon itself.

The slogan is an endeavour to deaden women's struggle. It would have the effect of wrapping up the consciousness of women and storing it away at home for many years to come.

Why is this? Because to demand wages for housework is to forsake our struggle against male chauvinism and to reconcile ourselves to all the mystifications of 'motherhood', 'Womanhood', the Family and the ideology which flows from this that 'a woman's place is in the home'; to reconcile ourselves to our oppression!

The wages for housework demand is totally opposed to the demands of the Women's Liberation Movement.

It is by its very nature opposed to free 24-hour state nurseries, to publicly owned restaurants, equal pay, equal educational opportunities, free contraception and abortion on demand etc. In short, it is completely opposed to the liberation of women!

The liberation of women has to be placed on a real basis, and the demands of the Women's Liberation movement must flow from reality and the potential of that reality, and not from bright ideas dreamed up in someone's head. The strength of our demands is that they are not abstracted from time or from historical development, the state of the class struggle, and material conditions for the emancipation of the working class. For it is largely on the basis of such emancipation that the possibility exists (though not without a struggle) for women to throw off the yoke of thousands of years of oppression.

Writers like Selma James bewail the driving of women from hearth

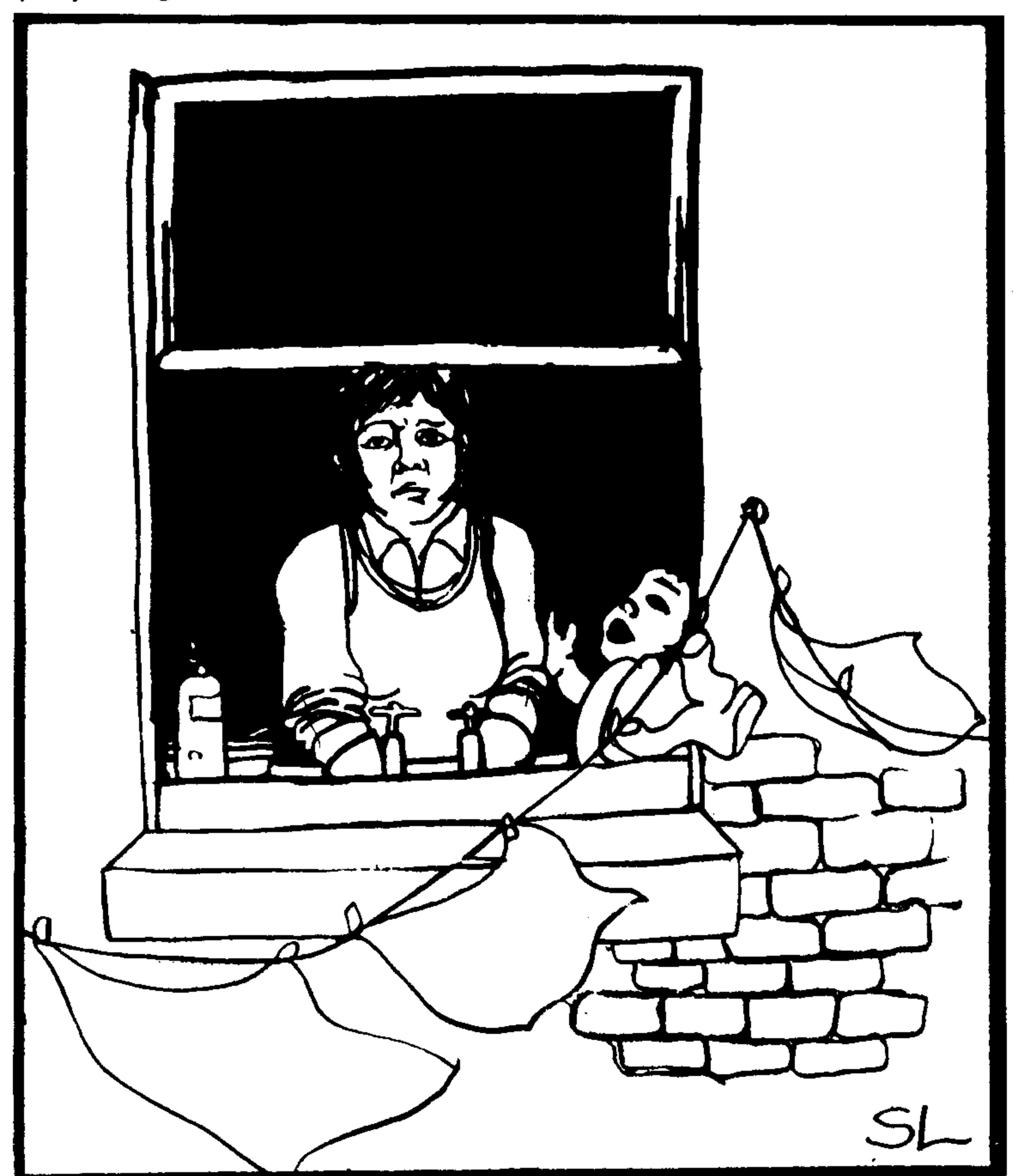
for housework.

Let our demands be forward looking — forward to the socialisation of housework, placing the burden of a thousand years where it belongs — with society.

If the demand for wages for housework was realised, it would wipe out our struggle for emancipation completely and destroy the Women's Liberation movement. This demand can do no other than deaden the women's struggle, reconciling women to their oppression and the role which has been forced on women.

Wages for cleaning the house ... and the 'muck of ages' goes untouched!

FRAN BRODIE



# Rank and File Movement must defend Intex strikers

THE 150 shiftworkers at INTEX (ICI), Ashton-u-Lyne, are still battling it out with their management after 5 weeks on strike; and they are also having to cope with their Union, which has employed thugs to guard its HQ against these members — paying them £9 a day and free beer for their pains.

They are fighting for the reinstatement of fellow worker and militant, Dave Hallsworth. But Bro. Hallsworth wasn't only sacked from his job. He has also been arbitrarily and with no chance to defend himself, expelled from the arch-reactionary and racist outfit that passes for a union of Dyers

and Bleachers.

In protest at Bro. Hallsworth's expulsion, a delegation of strikers occupied the Dyers and Bleachers H.Q. in Bradford, Yorkshire.

In a pathetically vicious move, several of the strikers (most of whom are of Asian origin) were locked inside one of the rooms by Union officials, who kept them in for over 23 hours without food, water or toilet facilities. They only got out when a member of the Executive, Claude Lavender, released them.

Since then, Bro. Lavender has been removed from the Executive and expelled from the Union!

With this move, it looks like the Union has bitten off more

than it can chew. Claude Lavender is Works Convenor at Shaw Carpets in Bradford, and well respected among the members in the Yorkshire area. And as a result of his expulsion a mass meeting of 3,000 members of the union in the area is due to take place on Saturday 14 in Barnsley. And the Intex men will be putting their case then, in what may be a major breakthrough in their 5-week strike.

Also, a march is being planned through Bradford to the Union's H.Q., and there is talk of support from Bradford busmen for it — possibly with industrial action.

Support has also come from local hospital workers, with nurses and ancillary staff from

Ashton General Hospital active on the picket line at Intex; and a meeting called by the Manchester Hospital Worker group was addressed by Bro. Shabir Ahmed, secretary of the Strike Committee, and another committee member, Bob Ryder.

On Sunday 15th December the strikers are meeting the ICI Joint Shop Stewards Committee, and there are hopes on national action. And dockers on Merseyside and in Manchester are preparing to black all ICI goods.

But there is another important development in this strike that trade unionists must relate to. Both the management and the Union have clearly indicated that they want to see the workers split on racial lines.

And there is evidence too that the fascist National Front has been active in the wings.

Spies have watched the picket line, and attempts have been made to intimidate strikers (quite apart from the ugly business at the Union HQ). Within the last week, one striker was attacked, beaten up and knifed.

Manchester area trade unionists should respond immediately to these attacks, suspected to be the work of the NF. A meeting has already been called for 17th December at the Milton Hall by the T&G (Chemical) branch at Littleborough, to discuss ways of mobilising support and organising defence of the strikers.

Jack Sutton, Secretary of the NUPE Shop Stewards Cttee, Manchester Royal Infirmary, has called for an area conference of delegates to the Rank & File Conference, to give a lead in this action; and of course, to lay the groundwork also for activity on other issues like the Shrewsbury Two and the ancillary workers' struggle.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

# Bakers stalled by Union and CAS

STAN GRETTON, telling his Bakers Union members to go back to work, said the strike hadn't been a victory, but they should "live to fight another day". Militant bakers, however, are fervently hoping that GRETTON doesn't.

He had just settled for £11.50 less than the claim for £40 basic wage, and £1.50 less than the members voted to reject a month before. And that was after a strike lasting less than a week.

Only bread bakers had been called out officially. Cake bakers in the north west coming out to support the claim were refused strike pay and told to go back. Yet despite this deliberate pulling of punches, by the time of the settling at the Conciliation and Arbitration Service (CAS), various independent bakery employers all over the country were already buckling and agreeing to pay up far larger sums than were agreed by the employers' Federation — which embraces the vast baking chains (themselves just subsidiaries of huge groups of companies running anything from transport, hotels, motorway services etc to mining and ranching overseas). These baking chains make millions of pounds of profit every year.

## C.A.S.

Yet Gretton and the Executive majority came out of the CAS arbitration, having accepted all of another two days holiday a year, saying they had "reached the end of the road".

Well, the CAS is of course the brainchild of Tribune's very own Michael Foot. And what had apparently happened at the CAS was a lot of arm-twisting, in which word is said to have come from Foot forbidding the employers to pay out any more to the underpaid and vastly overworked bakery workers on pain of withdrawal of bread subsidies! (At the very least, as the Financial Times reported, there would be no more subsidy handouts to the employers.)

It was stressed to the Bakers Union Executive that if this happened people would eat less bread, and jobs would be lost.

Open mouthed and struck dumb — too dumb to respond by demanding a cut in hours if that happened — the Executive majority, led by Gretton, knuckled under, and came out to announce to the membership that, from employers who made nearly £100 million out of them in the last year, not another penny could be had.

The CAS certainly performed a valuable service to somebody. It might have been the employers. And it might have been the Government. But it certainly wasn't the 33,000 bakery workers!

R.V.

# NUPE Growing move to reject Con-trick

AREA conference after area conference of NUPE hospital ancillary workers have decisively rejected the employers' latest pay offer.

And many areas, such as part of London and 3 out of the 5 North West area committees, are also rejecting the NUPE National Executive's line of 'let us settle on the same terms as the local government workers settled'. Or in other words, let us sell you out like we sold them out!

A lead from the militant Manchester area demanded a recall conference to decide on further action if the negotiations break down, and for any offer to be put to a ballot of the membership. To back this up, some of the main Manchester hospitals — the Royal Infirmary, Eye Hospital and St. Mary's — staged a co-ordinated 3 hour sit-in of the catering, portering, domestic and laundry departments, on December 11th.

No meals were prepared for the staff, though the patients were fed.

These 500 workers have showed their determination, giving a lead to others and a warning to NUPE boss Alan Fisher. If he tries to sell out the ancillary workers as he sold out the Local Government workers, the reaction will be immediate.

It is important that this challenge to the Social Contract is supported at every level by trade unionists, with industrial action if necessary.

The stark alternative is: either back the ancillary workers and help to break the social contract, or let them go down to defeat and an almost certain wage cut, like the bread workers, and watch the NHS decline steadily towards collapse — while the bosses lord it over YOU.

JACK SUTTON

# MIDDLESBROUGH Teachers stage 'push the leaders' strike

A GROUP of teachers representing the majority of staff at Bertram Ramsey School in Middlesbrough are so sick of their union officials' lack of fight that they voted to hold a half day strike on December 11th to push their 'leaders' into action.

In a statement explaining the reasons for the strike, the teachers — members of at least 4 unions — said that their action was aimed "first and foremost at the leadership of the unions". The statement goes on: "The teachers feel that the unions have not been sufficiently active in pushing for the early publication of the Houghton committee report on teachers' pay."

"They feel in particular that the unions have accepted far too easily the derisory interim payment of £100, and would wish their leaders to push for an

amount in line with the demand of the Scottish teachers" — a £300 interim payment.

It adds: "Taking into account the long standing weakness and lack of unity among teachers' associations in England and Wales, the group feel the time has come to demonstrate the unity which exists at staffroom level in order to push their leaders into closer co-operation, and into a more determined attitude towards management."

Needless to say, the NUT and other unions' leaders refused to give any official backing, but hopefully this spark of militancy will spread to other schools. Staffroom unity and determination — and the courage to criticise the union bureaucracies — will be vital to even maintain living standards and defend conditions, let alone improve them.



# UNION COPS OUT BUT WOMEN FIGHT ON

THE 86 women T&GWU members at the Elta Plastics factory in Eaglescliffe (County Cleveland) have had a lot of trouble with the management: they have been refused full threshold payments due to them, girls under 21 are not paid the full rate, a sickness scheme is being applied "very unfairly indeed", the firm won't even talk about reducing differentials between men and

women, and the managing director says there's no chance of any wage rises until next April, if then.

The women held a series of one hour protest stoppages in November, and a one day strike on November 27th (all unofficial).

And at last the management has replied — with 21 redundancy notices.

T&GWU District Organiser

Frank Ramsay says that the union has been trying to "iron out" the problems, but not once has the union supported the Elta workers. The most that the officials have done is to get the management to agree to let the Conciliation and Arbitration Service to look at the grievances. Big deal! (Big cop-out...)

The women went on strike again, in protest at the sackings

(dressed up in the polite frills of "redundancy") and asked their union executive to make it official. They might just manage a little verbal support, to judge by what's passed so far for union backing.

A better plan will be to get support from other factories, and from the local trades council, for a real fight.

A.T.

## SOCIALIST TEACHERS CONFERENCE

# FIGHT WILL BE AT GRASS ROOTS LEVEL

SOCIALIST teachers around the paper RANK & FILE held a National Committee meeting in Manchester on Saturday Dec.7th. Though it was smaller than the previous one, the debate was probably on a higher level. Noticeable too was the tension in the 'controlling' IS delegates in the matter of toeing their 'party line'.

This was nowhere clearer than in the debate on the

Working Women's Charter. Celia Deacon from Hackney IS, who had the previous week spoken against the Rank & File papers conference supporting the Charter, introduced an amendment to the main resolution at the NC on the Charter, to delete all reference to it and substitute a list of demands relating solely to teachers.

In itself, this list of demands is inadequate for any section of workers, and in some instances quite absurd. For example, there is a demand for time off for abortion — without saying anything about the need for abortion to be available on demand! There is a demand for creche facilities at union meetings, but no mention about union meetings in school time. All in all there is little or no perspective on the relationship between women and trade unions.

When Ms. Deacon's scheme was put to the vote it was carried — but only narrowly, considering the usual preponderance of IS delegates.

## FASCISM

Nevertheless, local groups must press for immediate implementation of what are now Rank & File's aims: elected Women's sub-committees at national and local union level to campaign for the demands that were accepted, the production within the next few months of a national Rank & File pamphlet on equal pay and equal opportunity for women.

On other issues, too, the fight will be at grass roots level to act on Rank & File's

policies and put them into effect.

On fascism, it is now national R & F policy to fight to remove from the schools any proven member of a fascist organisation, such a fight to include strike action where possible. In addition, of course, to fight for expulsion from the NUT of any proven fascist.

Then, there is the fight to reduce the domination of head teachers on NUT committees; this must be made an issue in the forthcoming annual elections in union branches. The debate on teachers' contracts in fact recognised this as one of the key demands towards gaining some measure of democracy in schools.

## CONTACT

The demand for maximum class contact time for all teachers will be a cornerstone of any such fight. The demand is for 15 hours class contact time and 15 hours' preparation time per week, together with the demand for parity for primary school teachers who at present get virtually no free time at all.

An issue not raised, but which is now part of Rank & File policy as a result of the Conference the previous weekend, is the issue of support for the Troops Out Movement. If nothing else, work can be carried out at NUT branch level to co-operate with TOM ON THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMY RECRUITMENT IN SCHOOLS.

A teacher from Scotland brought the meeting up to date over the Scottish demand for £15 a week flat rate increase — a demand which has resulted in thousands of Scottish teachers mounting both official and unofficial strike campaigns. But the feeling in Scotland is one of disappointment bordering on anger at the slowness of solidarity action in England and Wales.

Dave Picton (R&F Wandsworth) moved that Rank & File organise for national strike action on January 9th to lobby the Burnham Committee when it meets to discuss the Houghton proposals, should these fall short of the demand of £15 a week exclusive of current thresholds and backdated to May 24th.

Get YOUR school firmly committed to £15 a week, in principle — this term — and organise an action committee that is prepared for the fight next term.

Ian Hollingworth

WORKERS FIGHT is taking a two-week break for the Christmas holiday. Our next issue will be published for January 4th 1975. We wish a happy New Year to all our readers.

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