

Workers' fight

5p

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ON Saturday February 1st, socialists are marching to commemorate the slaughter in Derry 3 years ago of thirteen unarmed civilian demonstrators by the British Army.

REMEMBER BLOODY SUNDAY

TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND

Inside: The civil war time bomb - the dangers in the situation Rees has set up (p.4) - Portlaoise hunger strike - How Jimmy Moyne died (p.4) - Fighting the Jenkins Act (p.5)

Don't carry the can!

5 DAYS' WORK OR



SINCE NOVEMBER, according to official figures, 67,000 workers have joined the dole queue. One press estimate indicates that permanent redundancies - redundancies for which money is paid out under the Redundancy Payments Act - will run at 20,000 throughout 1975.

The total official figure now stands at 742,000. If the figures were calculated on the same basis as they are in the U.S.A., the real jobless total would be nearer one million.

The brunt of the 'job slaughter', up to now, has been born by the building industry and the car and car components industries.

That fact in itself shows up the lies of the bosses' propaganda blaming unemployment on 'high wages' and strikes. Building workers have just accepted an agreement giving 17% per year pay rise until 1976 - that is, with 20% or more yearly price rises, a wage cut in real terms. Labour and trade union leaders were delighted at this victory for the 'social contract'. But a government survey recently published says that unemployment and bankruptcies in the industry will get worse.

In the car industry, Chrysler is worse hit than Vauxhall, Fords, or British Leyland. Why? Because they have not had so many strikes, and so stocks are higher. So much for the idea that strikes are the cause of

unemployment...

Vauxhall Ellesmere Port workers have resolved, at a mass meeting last week, to oppose redundancies, occupying the works if necessary. If this decision is taken seriously and acted on, it could be a real start for the fight back that car workers urgently need to mount.

But promises to be militant in the future do not speak as loud as actions now. And Vauxhall workers have made their position much weaker by accepting three day working.

This means undermining shop floor organisation, for example, stewards "agreeing to transfer of union cards for the time being", which could lead to moving workers round from job to job. When the lay off pay agreement runs out in two weeks' time, the 6,000 workers risk a 50% wage cut.

Lay-off

At Chryslers, Ryton, Stoke, and Linwood, lay off pay agreements are already running out. 5000 Linwood workers have been on a three day week since 6th January, 4000 Coventry workers since the 13th. On 27th January they were put on a two day week. On top of this Chrysler have plans to sack one in ten of the white collar staff.

Under guaranteed week agreements, Chrysler workers have got 60 or 70% of normal pay for the time they are laid off. When the

5 DAYS' PAY

agreements run out, workers will stand to lose £10 to £20 each week.

The same situation will face other workers on short time, who number over 100,000. Since the middle of January, 78,000 GKN workers have been out on short time. Wilmot Breeden have been working short time since the end of November. 3500 Lucas workers have been on a four day week since mid-January. 2000 North Staffordshire pottery workers, 2000 Kidderminster carpet workers, and numerous smaller groups, are also on short time.



Imperial Typewriters are scheduled to close.

Being 'co-operative' does not help at all. All it does is play into the hands of bosses who want a safe ride through the capitalist recession at workers' expense. It plays into the hands of bosses who try to split worker from worker, like those at Dawson International knitwear, who offered a ballot on two options: 700 sackings and a four day week, or 350 sackings and a three day week.

Homeless

There is no good reason why anyone should be unemployed. The case of the building industry shows that very clearly. There are tens of thousands completely homeless, and millions living in slums. Yet some 200,000 building workers are unemployed. Why? Because the MacAlpines and Wimpeys cannot make sufficient profit out of employing them.

The workers at Pochines Manchester Poly site have given an example, at a local level, of how to fight back. Workers have to take over the sites and the factories. Not to form "workers' cooperatives" like Triumph Meriden, and to end up enforcing speed-up and job-cutting ourselves, under the pressure of capitalist competition - but to take control, where we can, without taking responsibility for running capitalism, and to extend that control as far as possible, to strike as hard as possible against capitalist power.

That's the only way to solve the crisis of capitalism - smash capitalism.

Crow

Employers crow gleefully over the example of workers in a small hosiery factory refusing a threshold pay rise in response to claims that the company would otherwise go bust. It is difficult to imagine a more short sighted policy. It is an open invitation to bosses to black-mail workers into more wage cuts and more speed ups. And those wage cuts

and those speed ups will not soften the crisis of capitalism, or spirit it away, or slake its thirst for exploitation. The crisis hits just as hard - in fact, harder - in lower-paid Spain or France than it does in better-paid West Germany or the USA.

The only realistic policy is: a guaranteed average week's wage for all, short time or no short time, without any loopholes; and a concerted trade union campaign for a 30 hour week. Cut hours - share the work - no loss of pay.

Propping up bankrupt capitalists through the 'Lever bank', the 'National Enterprise Board', or suchlike schemes, only drags out the suffering at the taxpayers' expense. Worse still, it will lead to the state intervening to impose speed up with the excuse that workers must give something to save their jobs.

Speed-up

Big business journals are quite openly saying that the advantage they see in Benn's workers' cooperative schemes is as pioneers of speed-up.

Workers in these cooperatives will be forced to abandon 'restrictive (protective) practices' on the grounds that "now you're working for yourself".

The Tribune MPs, after Dennis Healey's talk of "millions on the dole", want the Labour Government to transform the 'Social Contract' into a 'Socialist Contract', including "planning agreements between giant private companies, the government, and trade unions". In other words, let's get together to help capitalism out.

No! Instead of state subsidies to industry, we should call for nationalisation without compensation, and fight to gain and extend workers' control. Instead of placing our hopes in talks between Benn and Ryder and big business, we should demand to know all the relevant background facts about any proposed closures or sackings. Rank and file workers' action is what we must start from, not pious hopes of agreements in Whitehall.

Martin Stevens



IN ONE year alone recently, 12,000 people applied as homeless to councils in the Greater London area. This represents over 40 per working day, and the actual number of homeless is far higher, as most of these people were applying on behalf of families.

Three years later, only 2,000 of these were rehoused. The rest were forced back into bad conditions — living with parents or relatives, squatting in unfit houses, or paying huge rents to private landlords.

Many thousands of people not included in the homeless statistics aren't counted because, somehow, they put up with the atrocious and unsuitable 'housing' they have managed to get hold of. Of course, homelessness and bad living conditions go together. A GLC press release of October 1974 stated that one million people in London were either homeless or living in slum conditions. And the 1971 census revealed that

*over one million Londoners were living at a density of one person per room and over, and 362,000 were chronically overcrowded at one and a half persons per room and over;

*1,405,000 were living in households without exclusive use of an inside toilet;

*1,077,000 were living in households without exclusive use of a bath;

*762,000 were living in households without exclusive use of a hot water supply.

Homeless people face these conditions, and to make matters worse must put up with the grinding weight of council bureaucracy too.

To be rehoused by the GLC or a local council, you have to go

Tower Hamlets housey - housey

LAST WEEK Tower Hamlets Council in the east end of London tossed 746 names into a drum — names of young couples — and picked out fifty.

The prize? Not money, not a holiday ... but a council house. The council was admitting with unusual frankness that these days, the housing list is more like bingo than a rational social service.

The current housing waiting list in Tower Hamlets is 7,000, but not everyone was even able to qualify for the housey-housey housing: one of each couple has to be under thirty, and one has to have lived in the borough of Tower Hamlets for over two years and been on its waiting list for over a year (or on the Greater London Council's list for over five years).

The justification for this procedure was given as "the need to keep young people in the area".

Whatever the reason, the result is a splitting and weakening of the pressure on the council to improve its housing facilities. Now the prospective tenants are divided into those who can go in for the "draw" and those who can't. Resentment is already being bred among those who are not eligible but whose situation is worse than that of the young couples.

Outside York Hall as the draw was taking place were about 20 demonstrators from the "Faceless Homeless" group, which demanded that homes should go to those most in need.

But with the news about the Tower Hamlets raffle in the press, admissions came from other councils, like Hackney, who stated that for the past three years home allocation had been a matter of sheer chance.

Opting out of the responsibility for building enough houses, these councils are abandoning any standards for assessing need, and throwing such lotteries in the face of desperate people.

through a humiliating court process to prove that you are technically homeless. They want proof that a person has looked for a home after having been evicted from previous accommodation, and the council will not accept that people have been evicted unless there is a court order for an eviction.

In between eviction and being rehoused, it is a common experience for people to have to spend weeks in bed and breakfast hotels, probably being turned out of the room in the daytime. (One Wandsworth hotel made £17,000 out of the council on bed and breakfast families in a year.)

Another alternative is "Part 3" accommodation, which is specially converted from old decayed buildings (a workhouse, in one case), and of which there is a restricted amount anyway. The rooms in these are like prison cells, and in Wandsworth they come complete with a paternalistic governor (who won't, for example, allow unsupported mothers to sleep with their boyfriends while in "Part 3").

OVERCROWDED

The lack of a right to a home has repercussions throughout the lives of working class people. Obviously, accepting high rents as an alternative to slum conditions cuts wages — and this applies to council housing, too, where the pressure is very strong to take the first place offered.

The fact that these rents are in very many cases quite beyond the means of the tenants is shown by the figures for arrears: in November 1974, GLC rent arrears totalled £2,351,394, and there was a total of 9,402 tenants owing more than ten weeks' arrears.

The effects of this sort of pressure can be appalling. There was, for example, the case of a woman who had left her husband in the north because he beat her, and gone with her 11-year old son to live with her sister in a Battersea council flat. Her sister threatened to throw her out because the place was overcrowded, but the council then refused to rehouse her, as her husband has a council flat in the north. In effect, the council said "either we'll put you in bed & breakfast if your sister evicts you, or you can go back to your husband's council flat". (In fact, it

There's no place like home.. for 1m Londoners

BY HUDSON PACE



is the stock response of councils to refuse to provide housing for women who have left their husband's home, however much they have suffered. And another set of people 'imprisoned' like that are an estimated 10,000 'mental patients' who are unable to leave their institutions for lack of accommodation outside.)

The woman in Battersea became suicidal, and it was only local action by a community group that found her a place to live by putting her in touch with local squatters. But how many more suffer unnoticed?

There are countless other cases where pressure from housing conditions aggravates personality problems that themselves arise from the oppressive relations of capitalist society. Most battered

wives tell of severe housing problems, where the husband's aggression against such an environment turns against his family, and he hits the wife and kids "who won't leave him alone, won't be quiet, don't realise what he puts up with at work," etc. Sexual frustrations and hang-ups arise from parents and children sleeping in one room — and probably a room with paper thin walls at that.

Such is the pressure on councils to cope with the homeless that council building is done entirely with a view to cheapness. This relates to the whole way that housing subsidies are worked out at government level. The Labour government's proposed new building subsidy, set at 66%, is in fact entirely inadequate, and

according to the Chairman of Manchester's Housing Committee in Tribune recently, this "will inevitably lead to large rent increases for tenants in areas of housing need. Labour councils will be faced with the choice of having to put up the rents or stop building houses. It is likely that the Labour government's act will give less money to help local authorities build and improve houses than they were receiving under the Tories."

Councils thus have to look for cheap and quick planning, and tenants end up exchanging leaky roofs and damp in old slums for claustrophobia and isolation in new high rise slums.

The authorities cannot even get away with talk of an expanding population, because in London it's tending to fall — while homelessness is rapidly increasing.

What is happening, in an area like Wandsworth, is that better-off families are moving in and taking up larger units of accommodation, and working class families are being squeezed tighter despite the fall in the population of the borough.

Again, a large part of London's housing stock is reaching the end of its "natural" life — London being largely a Victorian city with few homes built to last more than a hundred years.

Every year, more and more people are forced to live in outdated, outworn houses. And when councils demolish, they usually rebuild at a slightly lower density, and the three or four years between the old coming down and the new going up create a permanent burden of unused land.

SUB-STANDARD

Squatting, though it provides some shelter for the homeless, is of course not the answer. In most cases it means second rate housing. Councils don't purchase old houses for clearance unless they've been classified as "unfit for human habitation", and squatters don't usually have the money to make them much better.

Now, with a huge upsurge in squatting, homeless people are having to be less and less choosy about where they squat. And as more and more families are forced into this, it becomes harder to organise local struggles, as families tend to squat in a sub-standard council house, wait until it's to be pulled down, and then get housed by the Council — rather than take over a privately-owned empty house in better condition, and get faced with a court battle right away.

The evolution of workers' housing under capitalism reveals it to be a system of providing 'kennels' for workers, who must be crammed as close to their work in industry as cheaply as possible. Houses are built at a high density, much of it too close to rail lines, motorways, and goods depots for any comfort. And the general effects of homelessness are to bully people into accepting the crumbling remains of these 100 year old cities.

Labour leader scapegoats squatters

TRYING to divert attention from the chronic housing shortage, Sir Reg Goodwin, Labour leader of Islington, launched an all-out attack on squatters last week.

"More than 500 homes, for about 1,800 people" he claimed "are being held up because of prolonged unofficial squats." The squatters — evidently not to be counted as "people" — were clearly marked out as the latest scapegoats for London's utter failure to house its population adequately.

Squatters move into habitable or near habitable accommodation which is vacant. The question that Goodwin should ask himself is why habitable dwellings stand empty. Shouting about 500 homes will convince no-one when there are ten houses or flats standing empty for each one of the country's 100,000 homeless. Unless ... unless those who know better decide to cover up the facts.

Take Judy Hillman of the Guardian. Last week, following up on Goodwin's outburst, she

reported that "As recently as last Christmas, the London Borough of Islington was faced with the temporary loss of new flats for old people as younger members of the community moved in, provoking an enormous amount of hostility."

Sounds bad, irresponsible, anti-social. But what are the facts?

The facts are that these young homeless people moved into the flats which were, according to the Council, to be converted for pensioners, and moved out the moment they were convinced the council wasn't trying to con them. Not only that, but it was found that the rumours of hostility towards the squatters were unfounded.

All this was reported in the same paper Ms. Hillman writes for, just one week before her article appeared!

Not only is Goodwin's diversion a pretty cheap trick to cover up the miserable failure of housing policies, but implicit in it is the odd idea that somehow

"the homeless" consist only of families — never the single. The use of flats by the squatters is being decried, as if the squatters have no right to decent housing. And as if, were they living elsewhere, they wouldn't be using housing units anyway.

But with between 10,000 and 20,000 of Britain's homeless being below the age of 25, the young single homeless are obviously a very large group. It is also obvious that provision for them urgently needs to be made.

Perhaps Goodwin attacks them because he feels they are jumping the queue when there are more needy families to be housed. If so, it is ironic that in the week he decided to make his nonsensical attack on squatters, Tower Hamlets Council decided to initiate its queue-jumping "housey-housey" lottery, allocating houses on the basis of chance, not need!

The easiest answer to this attack is simply to tour the streets of London and see the thousands of empty properties

— some of them perfectly habitable, many of them far better than the filthy rat-infested holes that some families are forced to pay rent for. Some of these, like a high rise block on the East End's Isle of Dogs, have been vacant for years. And many are vandalised by councils to prevent squatting.

Squatting is bringing this situation to the surface. And that's just what Goodwin doesn't like.

But his attack wasn't just a sweeping condemnation of unauthorised squatting. It carefully picked its target, naming the squats in Elgin Avenue, West London, as "public enemy number one". The reason is obvious: the clearly political stance of the Elgin Avenue squatters is what angered Goodwin.

Socialists in London must make sure that the GLC is not allowed to victimise these squatters and through them try to break the squatters' movement.

JACK PRICE

Trade unionists in the north west are taking moves to prevent the building of a private hospital in Stockport. This is the latest issue in the war of hospital workers against private medicine.

The American Medical International Company, (AMI) which runs 46 private hospitals in the USA as well as others in Switzerland and France, has made approaches to Stockport Corporation for planning permission for a new luxury £5 million private hospital in the town. The brains behind the scheme is Dr. Stanley Balfour-Lynn, managing director of the exclusive Harley Street Clinic in London and Chief Executive of the European Division of AMI. He claims he has the support of over 100 consultants in the Manchester area for the project, and the BMA is also reported to be actively involved.

The involvement of the BMA comes as no surprise. In 1970 a letter was circulated to doctors in the Manchester area signed by one Dr. D.M. Davies (Chairman of the Manchester Regional Committee for Hospital Medical Services), which contained a reprint of a circular from the BMA HQ urging active support for a project to build a dozen or so Harley Street type clinics in various centres around the country. The letter states "My purpose in writing to you is to let you know that we fully support this project, and are prepared to help the Company in any way we can. I have no need to remind you that Association policy is to assist and encourage in every way the development of private practice." This in itself shows how timely was the ancillary workers' and nurses' campaign against private practice; and that, far from triggering off a move by consultants out of the NHS, these leeches were already doing their utmost to create more scope for a two tier medical system: luxury and attention and quick service for those with money, and squalor and long waiting lists for the rest of us.

SCOTCHED

But everything didn't go smoothly for the BMA and its client American company, AMI. Stockport is already the second choice site for the hospital: a plan for a brand new private hospital on a site in Manchester near the Royal Infirmary (no doubt intending to use the RI's facilities in the usual parasitic way) was scotched when the Manchester Labour council twice refused planning permission. Now NUPE's Greater

A recent demonstration outside the lavish new Wellington private hospital



THE HEALTH HUSTLERS

by Jack Sutton

Manchester area committee has called on the building trade unions to black any work on the hospital. NUPE has also written to the N.W. Regional Committee of the TUC, urging support for a campaign to block any private hospital building in the area.

This call should be supported by other unions, both in and out of the NHS. It is vital too that Stockport Trades Council should follow the lead of the Manchester Trades Council in actively campaigning against private medicine.

SHORT SHRIFT

Elsewhere in the north west the BMA has come up against more setbacks, in its attempt to force the Labour Government to back down over its pledge to phase out private practice within the NHS. NUPE ancillary workers at hospitals in Ashton under Lyne and Bolton have decided to refuse services to consultants who are "working to rule", and at Christie Hospital (the world famous cancer treatment centre) NUPE members have said that they intend to ban for all time non-essential private cosmetic surgery.

The BMA have been doing their best to conduct a grotesque public relations exercise, appealing for "trade union solidarity" from other

NHS unions. But they got short shrift from the chairman of the United Manchester Hospitals branch of NUPE, who attacked them for their scabbing tactics during the 1973 ancillary workers strike. He said that any attempt by

the consultants' leaders to smash the NHS in the interests of their own rich pickings will be fought to the bitter end by NUPE.

Such a stand should be taken by trade unionists everywhere. There should be no place for private

medicine either inside or outside the NHS. In the words of an old folk song, "If living were a thing that money could buy — well then the rich would live, and the poor would die."

It's as simple as that!

A SUPERIOR CLASS OF SPONGERS

As the National Health Service declines, the private practice profiteers are rapidly organising their own counter-NHS, with its hospitals, consultants, nurses and auxiliaries.

Supporters of private medical enterprise have been growing in confidence, as both Labour and Tory governments have successively undermined an already tottering NHS.

In response to this mounting attack a group of doctors and medical members of ASTMS have formed the Medical Committee against Private Practice (MCAPP). With the backing of militants from Hammersmith and St. George's hospitals in London, and of leading trade unionists such as Jack Collins (Kent NUM) and Ernie Roberts (AUEW), MCAPP have organised a demonstration against private practice both inside and outside the NHS.

This move is certainly timely. Already the organisations that trade in private medicine such as BUPA and Western Provident, are trying to organise a central liaison of the various fragmented private medical services and hospitals.

As well as centralisation, they plan a big expansion of the present capacity of just under 12,000 beds. In London BUPA hopes to take over two major hotels — the London International and Cunard International — and transform them into convalescent homes with

some surgical or minor operating theatres added. And there is also US financial backing for new hospital building (see above).

But any expansion for the period ahead can only rely on the NHS as a back-up for cases the private practice can't handle yet and, more importantly, for the trained staff and expertise it will need to run these private hospitals.

In a letter sent to trade unionists in the health service, MCAPP state that "fighting this expansion of private practice must be the concern not only of trade unionists directly involved in the building and servicing of private clinics, but of all workers who depend on the NHS for their health care."

It is for this reason that all trade unionists and socialists should mobilise to support the MCAPP in leading the fight, and acting to organise NHS trade unionists, against private practice.

The survival of the NHS evidently cannot be guaranteed by the present government. This government has refused to restore the cuts the Tories made in the NHS budget, and since then inflation has worsened the situation.

Without energetic rank and file action by all workers, the vampires of private practice for profit will suck the NHS dry of what value it still has for the working class.

Hard going for Portugal's Right

THE TEMPERATURE of the political struggle in Portugal rose again last weekend, as left wing demonstrators forced the reactionary Centre Social Democratic Party (CDS) to call off its congress in Oporto before it began.

The CDS is the most right wing of the legal parties to have emerged in Portugal since last April 25th. It is not a fascist party, but is declaredly right wing (hence the presence as a visitor to the abortive congress of Monday Club Tory Geoffrey Ripon). The CDS's main support is among businessmen and small farmers in the more backward north of Portugal. With the fall of Spínola in September it lost its closest governmental ally.

But despite reports in the British press of "Communist mobs" and "left wing extremists", the demonstrators who stopped the congress seemed to represent mass working class feeling about the CDS, which many workers think should be banned. The slogans "no fascist congress" and "death to fascism" which were used at the weekend arise from the fact that the CDS does contain and represent people and interests closely associated with the old fascist regime.

This is not the first time the left has mobilised against the CDS — its offices were ransacked last

November — which testifies to the danger they see in its development and growth.

The events began on Saturday with a march from the main square in Oporto to the congress hall, and eventually 3,000 people surrounded the hall, shouting anti-fascist slogans. Some demonstrators, including the Maoists, started to hurl rocks at the police inside, and attempted to force their way in. Gunfire from the police, and a charge from the National Republican Guards, failed to disperse the demonstrators, who kept the delegates in the hall throughout the night, and it was left to a paratroop regiment from Lisbon to clear the streets and escort the delegates from the city.

17 people were wounded, but 1,000 demonstrators reassembled the following night, again under anti-fascist slogans.

What is particularly interesting is the considerable fraternisation that seems to have taken place between the infantry soldiers and the demonstrators. Reports suggest that the infantry did not raise the 'seige' and held back the more conservative cavalry from doing so. Indeed, there were some reports of shooting between local troops and armed police.

J.W.H.



Pickets outside the Commission for East Caribbean Governments in London. (Photo: Mike Sheridan) Send protest messages to the Dominican Premier and to Reuters Office, Bridgetown, Barbados; and cash for Fund to Free Desmond Trotter, 37 Tollington Park, London N.4

Hands off, hangman!

IT IS NOW a matter of urgency to step up the campaign for the release of Desmond Trotter, who is at present rotting in a prison in an Associated State of the UK, Dominica. Trotter, who suffers from asthmatic bronchitis, is under sentence of death after being framed on a murder charge.

This is to be contested in the Appeal Court on February 7th.

Although Dominica has internal self government, it is under the jurisdiction of the British Foreign Office. A campaign mounted in this country can save Trotter.

Attempts to victimise Desmond Trotter go back to 1972, when workers struck against an attempt to cut the workforce at a plantation owned by the Commonwealth Development Corporation. (60% of Dominica's working population is unemployed; those who do work are mainly employed by the van Geest monopoly, based in the UK.) They prepared for a takeover of the estate, aiming at collectivising production.

The Dominican government proceeded to launch a ferocious witchhunt against 'communists', in particular the Movement for a New Dominica (MND), of which Trotter was a leading member. Trotter was suspended from his job, and at that time experienced continual harassment and repeated arrest.

A year later, in June 1973,

Dominica's largest union came into dispute with the government over a sacking, and this flared up into a general strike. The government again responded with repression, and this time their target was the youth movement known as the 'Dreads' and distinguished by the long 'Rastafarian' hair style they had adopted.

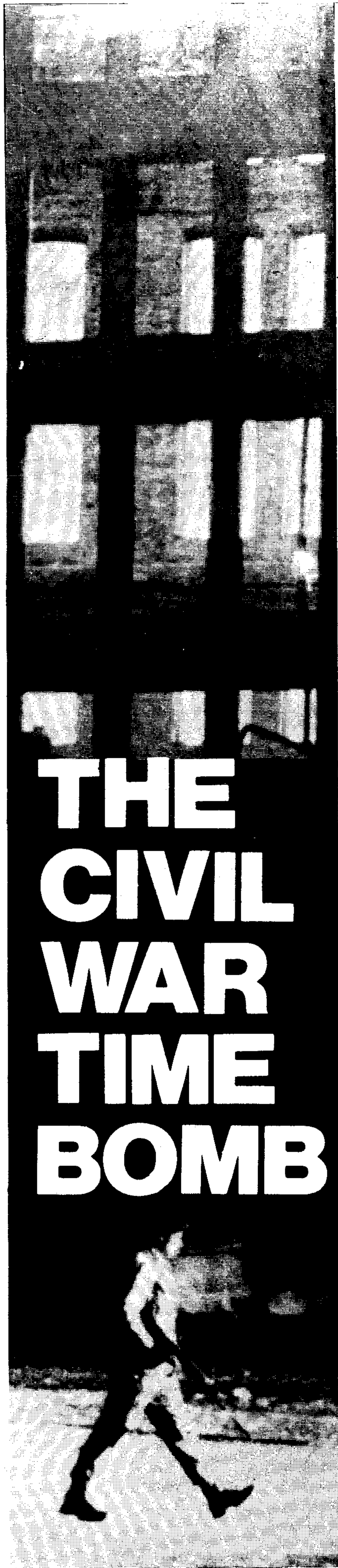
The Government used the death of an American tourist who was shot during the February '74 carnival as an excuse to step up this witchhunt, and finally arrested Trotter and a comrade, Roy Mason and charged them with the killing.

Trotter maintains that he was nowhere near where the tourist was shot. The only 'evidence' against him was given by two people who have since withdrawn it, saying they were forced to give it. This evidence was given at a time when police invaded working class areas, rounding up a mass of people.

The frame up was blatant, and when Trotter was sentenced to hang (Mason was acquitted) there was a popular outcry.

The standards of the Dominican government can be judged from recent legislation they have brought in to eliminate the 'Dreads': this dictatorial law makes it illegal for black people to wear long hair and makes harbouring or collaborating with 'Dreads' illegal. The police can shoot people with long hair on sight and arrest them with no provisions for bail, and can search homes without a warrant. Indeed, anyone can lawfully shoot a long haired black man. Another clause in this law empowers the government to outlaw any other organisations, and this has been used against the MND.

Last weekend a picket was mounted in London at the East Caribbean High Commission, as part of an international campaign for Trotter's release. Letters, telegrams and resolutions should be sent to the Commonwealth Secretary, Joan Lester, asking her to intervene.



THE CIVIL WAR TIME BOMB

The Northern Ireland ceasefire is over. The British government's refusal to make even token gestures towards the much watered down demands of the republicans is mainly responsible for the breakdown.

But the ceasefire and an end to the struggle in northern Ireland never had much chance of permanence anyway. It would have been a stalemate ceasefire, leaving the 6 county state intact — a state erected by British imperialism as a beargarden to keep Protestants and Catholics permanently at each others' throats.

The ceasefire did not lull socialists in Britain into thinking the war is over. Far from it. Civil war on a bloodbath scale that will dwarf everything that has gone before could very well be only a matter of months away.

The elections for the new Convention will probably be held in March. They will in effect lead to a Constituent Assembly with a built-in majority bent on restoring Orange supremacy.

JUSTICE

Thus the biggest time-bomb of all is now ticking away the minutes in northern Ireland.

The ceasefire came after more than 4 years of continual warfare between the British army and the Catholic 40% of the artificial 6 County state created by Britain's partition of Ireland against the will of the vast majority of its population. Despite the justice of the case for a united Ireland, and tremendous heroism of the northern Ireland Catholics and their armed militia, they have had derisory support from the British labour movement. And, despite the outburst of action in response to the Derry Bloody Sunday massacre three years ago, when Dublin workers burned down the British embassy, support from the South has been limited: the rulers in Dublin have collaborated with the British to suppress the republican movement.

Thus the minority's struggle faced insuperable odds. Confined to a military struggle against imperialism in the north, failing to mobilise the working class in the south on a socialist programme — in fact, having no socialist programme or definitive politics — the Provisional leadership finds itself in an impasse.

POWER

The Ulster Workers Council (UWC) strike last May and the collapse of power-sharing shattered the British strategy and reversed the visible gains in normalising the 'province' that had been made between direct rule at the beginning of '72 and the British General Election of February '74. It showed where real power lay in the 'province'.

The result of that strike has been a nerveless drift by the British

government in line with the Protestants' desire to restore their supremacy. Naturally this nervelessness of the Labour Government in face of Orange reaction has been accompanied by savagely accelerated repression against the Catholics.

The most finished and extreme expression of the tendency by the Labour government to capitulate to the drive of the Orange supremacists was their decision, following the UWC strike, to hold elections for a 'Constituent assembly' some time early this year. This assembly will allegedly meet and thrash out a workable constitution for the 'province'.

BALANCE

The problem with this supposed 'honest' thrashing out is that it is a foregone conclusion that there will be a Protestant/Loyalist majority within the Assembly — the boundaries of the 6 Counties were, after all, drawn to ensure such a balance within it. It is extremely probable that Protestant politicians, backed up by the majority of the Protestant workers, will dominate that assembly.

They will demand their democratic rights to rule in the 6 Counties. And Britain will either concede, or insist on power sharing — and if it doesn't get it, dissolve the assembly.

The next move is obvious. The Orange workers (whose proportional strength in the state's industry is very great as a result of decades of sectarian job preferment) learned to use a powerful weapon last May. Last May the strike began haltingly, gaining consciousness of its own strength through British government inaction, and backed by the armed gangs around the UDA which the British Army had allowed to grow up under its wing in 1972 — if, indeed, it did not deliberately foster them.

This time, they would begin with an awareness of strength and a belief that now, too, the British government would capitulate to them. The British government would either do so, or have to use large scale repression against them.

CLASHES

It is true that the Orange population, unlike the Catholics, has no tradition worth mentioning of standing up to the British Army. On the contrary. The force of its capacity to face down a determined British government is unknown, and divisions would almost certainly emerge.

Nevertheless, large scale violent clashes against the British Army would be the least that would happen. Once such clashes started, it would be a short step indeed to a pogrom drive against the Catholic areas. Besieged Catholic ghettos, as in Belfast, would face massive slaughter. Civil war would follow.

The trigger on which the palsied finger of the British Labour government is now slowly

tightening, the trigger that could explode that situation, is the convention.

There are other possibilities: a fragmented Orange representation in the Convention, a differentiation that could lead to accommodation with Catholic politicians willing to abandon the open aspiration to a united Ireland in favour of powersharing inside the 6 Counties. (The idea of working class alliances across the Protestant/Catholic divide is no more than an enticing fantasy.) But far more probable is a determined Orange majority bent on restoring ascendancy.

The results of a civil war if it ran its course would probably be enormous population shifts and a re-drawing of the Irish border. There is no reason, after the last few years, to believe that a much smaller Northern Ireland Protestant state with the Catholic areas (about half the land area on present majority population placement) lopped off, would be unviable. (Some of us believed so in 1969 and felt that the way, then, both to rouse the Catholic masses on a republican perspective and to smash the 6 County state and



make its continued existence impossible, was for areas like Derry to attempt to break away from the 6 County framework.)

Five years of increasing bitterness, three to four years of sharper Protestant self consciousness and mobilisation on every level including military, have led to the situation where an attempt at a Protestant state, carved out more 'clearly' this time, is virtually certain, whatever its economic prospects relative to Britain and or the EEC.

Whether the 26-County government would intervene is really this question: could it avoid intervening? Intervene or not, a drive to conquer Northern Ireland by the 26 County bourgeoisie, with or without British acquiescence, is inconceivable. Probably there would be British government and 26 County co-operation in military action leading to re-partition.

Rather than this, it would be far better for the British Labour government to recognise now that the 6 Counties is a sectarian bearpit; and that any Convention or constituent assembly to work out a new constitution cannot do other than aggravate sectarianism

and probably lead to civil war.

This, in practice, would mean adopting a policy of a united Ireland — inevitably, to satisfy both Protestant and Catholic aspirations, on a federal basis. It would mean that instead of playing games with a convention there would be a firm declaration of intent to adopt, in effect, a version of the Provisional Republican movement's programme.

The alternative is probably sectarian civil war and repartition on the model of the bloody line drawn between India and Pakistan at the time of India's partition in 1947.

The British government has no right in Ireland. It must get out of Ireland. We deny it any justification to interfere in Irish affairs. But it is in Ireland. It, and it alone, is responsible for what happens — now.

Revolutionary socialists in Ireland — including many in the ranks of the Provisional and Official republican movement — will continue the struggle for the only solution — a 32 county workers republic and the unity of Catholic and Protestant workers against imperialism and Irish capitalism and victory over both.

They will continue this struggle whether in conditions of sectarian civil war; an Irish bourgeois/British imperialist deal; or acceptance of defeat and acquiescence by the Provisional leadership in the continued partition of Ireland. In response to a variety of conditions, socialists will have to modify their tactics and immediate priorities — not their objectives.

FATAL

They are entitled to the support of British revolutionaries for those aims. But here and now, is the all too likely event of civil war, our major task, like theirs only more so, will be to support — actively — the Catholic republican side.

Here and now responsibility for the drift towards civil war rests entirely with the British Labour government. Only a break with the dogma of the inviolability of the 6 County state (so long as the artificially constructed majority want it to remain) can avoid that fatal drift. Only a British government declaration of intent to withdraw, endorsement of the just demands of the whole Irish people for a united Ireland, and ending of all support for and collaboration with the forces of Orange supremacism, can hope to avert the drift. Socialists and trade union militants should demand that the Government makes such a declaration now.

And we should prepare active support for the republican forces in the all too likely event that the political criminals in Whitehall allow the drift towards civil war to reach the crunch point, when our support will indeed be vital to the republican population.

J.O'MAHONY

FEARS FOR DUBLIN GOVERNMENT'S PRISONERS AT PORTLAOISE

FEARS have been expressed for the safety of 17 hunger strikers in Dublin's Portlaoise jail. The hunger strike is in support of 18 demands including improved food, education and other facilities.

One of the hunger strikers, 27-year-old Patrick Ward, is reported to have been given the last rites.

Visits to the republican prisoners in Portlaoise have been stopped. In a letter sent to the Irish Minister of Justice Mr. Cooney, signed by Senator Michael Mullen, actress Siobhan McKenna and Mr. Seamus

Sorohan (a leading lawyer), the signatories state that they are concerned "for the health and well being of the prisoners affected by the recent disturbances at Portlaoise. Information received by us strongly indicates that these prisoners are

living in primitive conditions..."

The letter continues "The refusal to allow the relatives of the prisoners concerned to visit them has led to widespread and disturbing rumours."

The "primitive conditions" were caused when Irish police (Gardai)

went in to quell a prisoners' rebellion, and did their best to emulate the treatment meted out by the British Army at Long Kesh a couple of months ago. They destroyed all cell furniture, all prisoners clothes, radios, record

players and records; all toilet requisites, towels, sheets and pillows; all photographs of wives and children, rosary beads and other religious objects; cigarettes, flasks, spare spectacles and dentures; all legal documents (books of evidence etc), all eating utensils, and musical instruments.

The men are left with nothing other than the clothes they stand up in, and sleeping on the floors — some with mattresses, others with only blankets. All meals must be eaten off the floors.

Relatives and people nominated by them (including Fr. Denis Faul, who has acted as Chaplain to the Long Kesh men) have been rudely turned away from Portlaoise, and some threatened by the police and army guarding the place.

Fr. Faul has said he will be contacting the United Nations Committee for the Protection of Minorities to protest against the Irish government's treatment of these prisoners. Meanwhile, there have been protests outside the jail in support of the prisoners' demands, and insisting on the right of relatives and friends to visit them.

A Disaster Fund has also been opened, to help the men replace possessions destroyed by the Gardai. Contributions should be sent to: Portlaoise Disaster Fund, c/o Tony Ruane, Sinn Fein, 2a Lower Kevin Street, Dublin 8.

HOW JIM MOYNE DIED

IT TOOK just a minute before a number of warders and a British dog handler came into Hut 65 of Long Kesh camp for a head count. But one man was gone.

Jim Moyne, a young Republican volunteer, had just been wheeled to the camp hospital on a food trolley. Twenty minutes earlier, he'd been taken ill with a severe attack of asthma. He was unable to breathe, and his face and hands began to turn blue. The men in the hut immediately rang the alarm for medical help, did what they could for him, and, when he began to

turn black, gave him mouth to mouth resuscitation.

Still there was no response, and no interest shown by the warders to the repeated ringing of the alarm bell. Finally the men broke down the door of the hut, and carried Jim Moyne on a mattress to the gate of the compound. There was no sign there that the warders were making any response to the alarm bell; none had even come to the window to enquire whether the case was urgent or not.

When they noticed that Jim Moyne was seriously ill, they asked

the men carrying him to put him on a food trolley. Then they wheeled him to the camp hospital hut.

Half an hour later he was dead.

Jim Moyne was interned in April 1973. He was never charged with any crime, and never brought to court. Three months after his arrest he suffered a severe attack of bronchitis, and had to be flown by helicopter to a city hospital, where he spent two days in an oxygen tent before being returned to Long Kesh, to spend the last year and a half of his life.

He was the sixth man to die in Long Kesh, and not the first to be killed by medical neglect. 2,000 people attended his funeral in heavy rain.



THE Ad Hoc Committee convened by Peoples Democracy in London to oppose the Prevention of Terrorism Act held a public meeting in London's Conway Hall last Saturday evening (Jan.25th) to discuss the implications of the Act and to plan action against it.

A lawyer concerned with civil liberties opened the meeting by outlining the extremely repressive nature of the Act and the enormous arbitrary power its provisions give to the police and the Home Secretary. And he related this to the recent use of conspiracy charges and the Immigration laws against workers.

Alan Haslam of Workers Fight stressed the urgency of developing a united front campaign on this issue. He pointed out how the Act had been used since its inception to viciously intimidate Irish republican supporters in Britain, and was at the same time a very sinister weapon for use in the future against workers on picket lines, on demonstrations and in occupations, because so many of its definitions were very vague and

STOP RENEWAL OF JENKINS ACT

all-embracing. He criticised the deplorable lack of action by the left on this issue. The National Rank and File movement, he said, had voted in November almost unanimously to campaign against this Act, but the Organising Committee had so far done nothing.

Many people in the Troops Out Movement had considered such action to be a diversion from their platform, and most organisations on the left had been passive and fatalistic. Cde: Haslam stressed the necessity for all these organisations to support the Ad Hoc committee actively, and for the committee to produce an information bulletin and build a campaign in the trade union movement along with the Troops Out Movement and Rank & File, that would stress the relationship

between British oppression in Ireland and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and the need to fight for the withdrawal of troops and organise against the renewal of the Act.

Alan Hayling, for the T.O.M., pointed out that TOM had raised the issue in its meetings, but did not have the resources to take up the issue of the laws independently. However, he pledged the support of TOM for the committee, expressing the hope that people from the committee would speak at TOM meetings. The central question in fighting this law, he said, was the demand for the withdrawal of troops from Ireland and the combatting of chauvinism in the working class.

Fergus O'Hare, of PD, also dwelt

on the problem of chauvinism in a final contribution. He said that because of the threat of Civil War and a Loyalist takeover in the north of Ireland, it was especially urgent to put up a struggle against these repressive laws. It was vital at this time that a socialist movement be developed in Ireland.

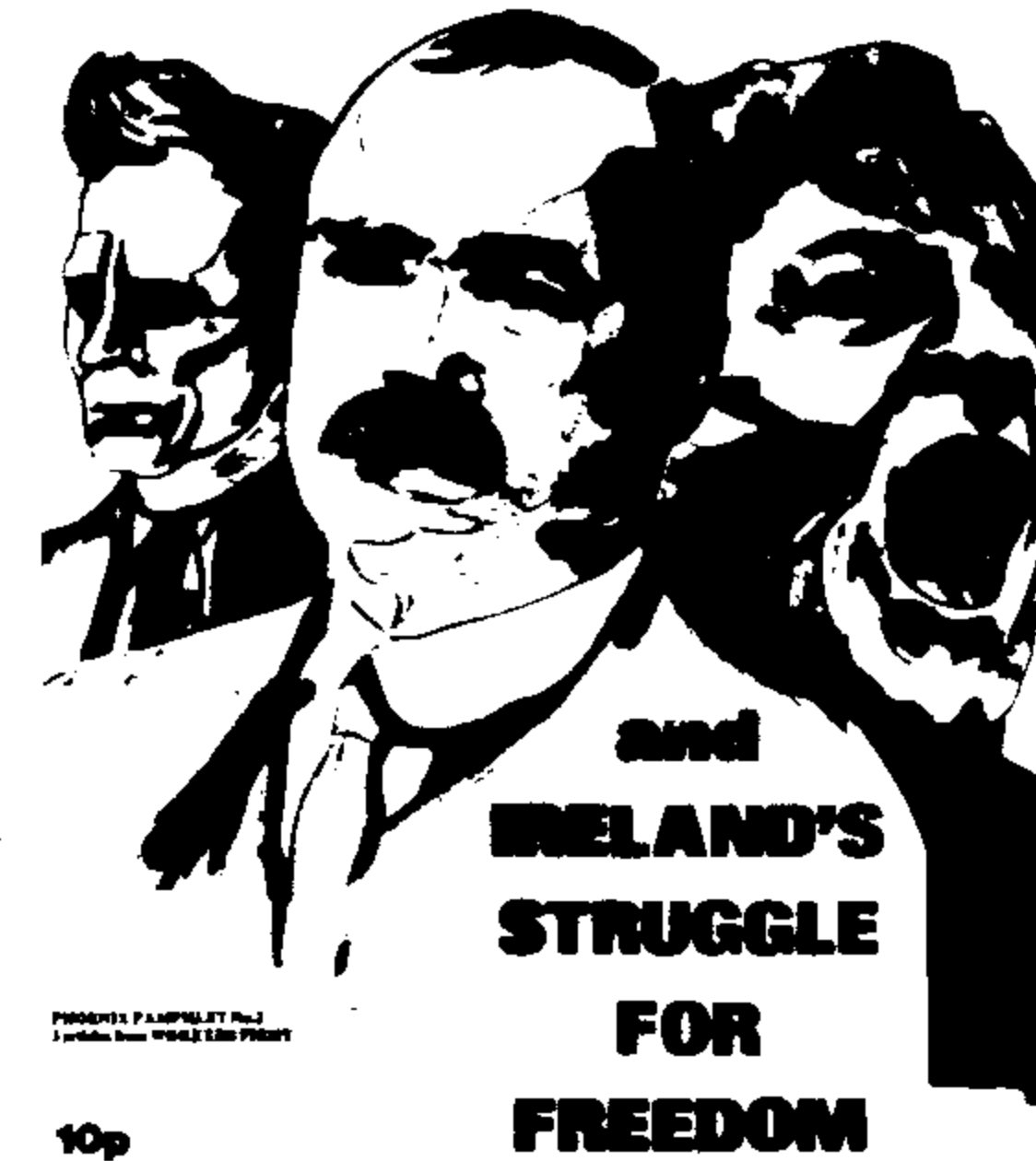
The meeting was attended by about 60 people, and many political organisations had showed no interest in either sending speakers or encouraging their members to attend. The poor turnout for such a crucial issue shows the importance of a campaign to bring home to people on the left the dangers of the Jenkins Act.

The Ad Hoc Committee is now to go ahead immediately with its plans, and a priority will be the development of an information bulletin on the way the Act is being used. The meeting formally reiterated its call on all socialists to join in united action to oppose this repressive legislation.

J.W.H.

Third Printing

JAMES CONNOLLY



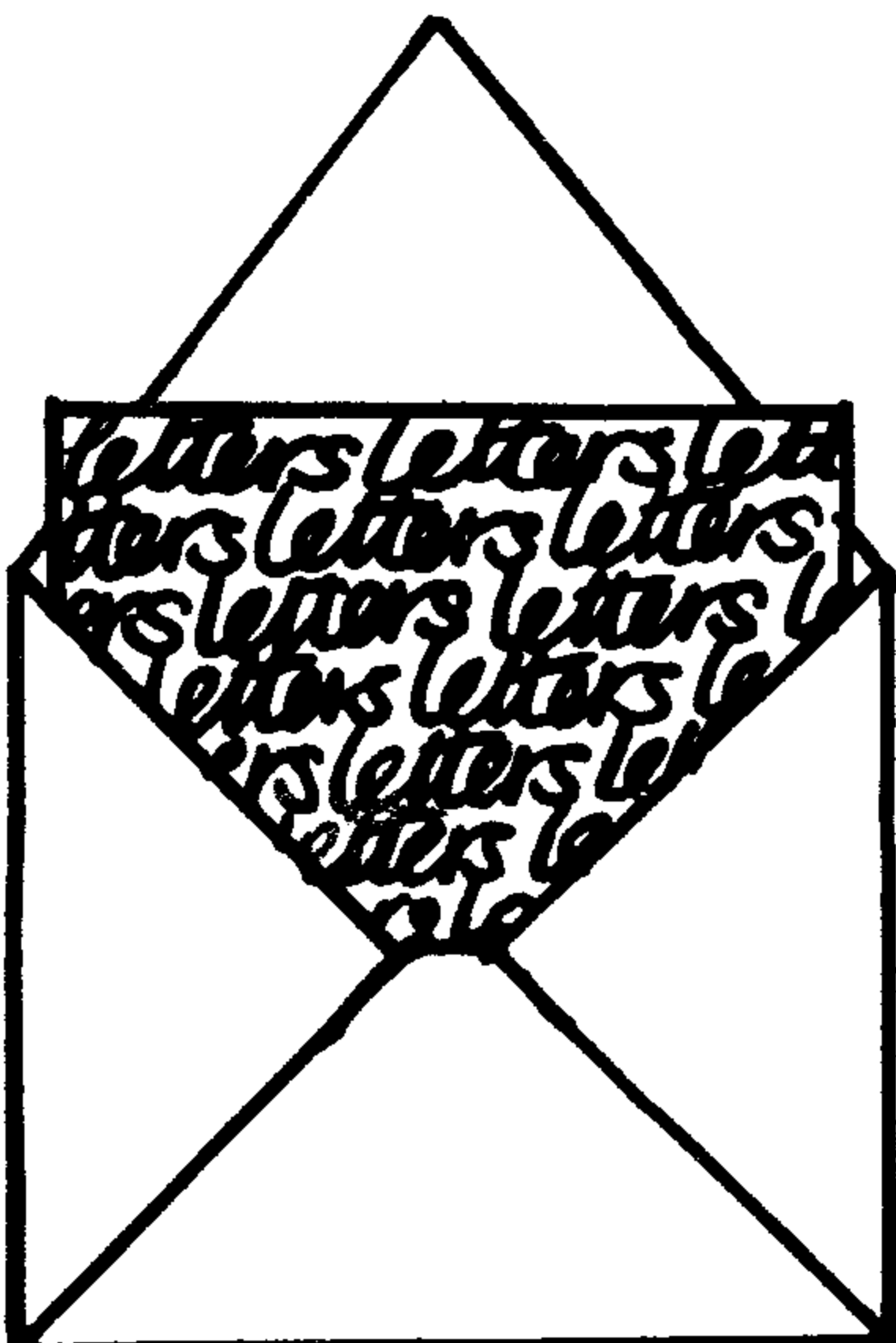
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Abortion lobbies

Comrades - James White, a Labour MP, has put forward a Private Member's Bill which will effectually negate the 1967 Abortion Act. If the Bill was passed it would reduce the legal period during which abortion can take place, and also cut out the social grounds for abortion, leaving only medical grounds.

Lobbying from reactionary organisations such as Festival of Light and SPUC has gained support from MPs in all parties. The Bill is at present proceeding to its Second Reading.

A lobby of Parliament is being organised for Friday February 7th to protest against this attempt to remove one of the few small rights women have gained in this country. All support is welcome. Meet at Lincoln's Inn Fields at 12.30. WOMEN DEMAND THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE. - Chris Davey, Enfield.



THE CLASS NATURE OF DEATH

Comrades - The article "Leukemia danger ignored" in WF83 raises clearly the question of workers' health and how it relates to their employment: and how the very fact of being born into the working class determines health and life expectancy.

For instance, twice as many children of the poor die in their first week of life as do babies of the rich. One in three workers over the age of 65 has bronchitis. 10% of workers retire before the age of 65 through ill health.

The Registrar General's statistics for death, which are divided into five social classes, even demonstrates the class nature of death. It shows that the chances of a coal face miner dying of TB are 16 times greater than those of a mine manager, and that he is 10 times more likely to die of bronchitis. A docker is 20 times more likely to die of TB than is a clergyman, 10 times more likely to die of lung cancer, and 13 times more likely to die of bronchitis. (In fact, clergymen seem less likely than anybody to die of disease, and show the longest life expectancy. Divine intervention?)

These facts are typical of the statistics. And why not? It doesn't need any stretching of the imagination to see that the work place with its dust and smoke, chemicals toxins and gases, is an important contributory cause of a whole variety of illnesses. Pneumoconiosis, silicosis, the recent disclosure of the high instances of leukemia in atomic energy workers and cancer in PVC workers, and the scandal of asbestosis - these are only the tip of the iceberg. Further investigation would probably establish firm and clear links between other manufacturing processes and yet more fatal or debilitating diseases.

Obviously, too, these causes are compounded with other and more general factors - workers' homes are

more likely to be close to factories, railways or motorways and affected by noise and air pollution; damp homes, deficiencies in food and its generally poorer quality will also contribute.

In WF82 the article by Neal Smith (How to control the conditions of work) shows how workers can start to defend themselves against this assault on their health, using the example of the workers at Lucas who formed a Science and Technology Advisory Service to which any Shop Stewards Committee in the Lucas Aerospace combine can apply for advice on the safeguards it should demand when organisational changes are about to take place or if new equipment and processes are to be introduced.

One very valuable contribution it has made concerned noise levels: this is too often ignored, yet at least 1 worker in 50 is at risk of hearing disability or total loss. There isn't even a legal limit for industrial noise in Britain, and the Department of employment code of Practice merely recommends 90 decibels as a safe level for 8 hours a day without ear protection. Yet in Holland the recommendation is 80 decibels, and the Noise Abatement Society reckons that 80 is just about the danger level. The work the Lucas Science Advisory Service has done in singling out their sonic ear valves as the best method of filtering out damaging noise should be widely publicised among workers at risk.

This sort of research is invaluable: in many cases managements give a token nod in the direction of health and safety regulations, but the protection they provide is too often uncomfortable, awkward to use, and inadequate: enough to give management legal protection, but quite useless to protect workers' health. (Another useful source of information is Pat Kinnersley's book "The Hazards of Work: How to fight them", published by Pluto Press at 30c. - Len Collingwood, Liverpool.

Remember us if at all not as lost
Violent souls, but only
As the hollow men
The stuffed men.

T.S. ELIOT, who died ten years ago, was probably the most important influence on English poetry in this century. Like many other writers who have had no sympathy with the socialist movement, Eliot was yet able to produce poetry which rendered very powerfully the decay and perversion of human power within the social relations of advanced capitalist society.

What we need to see is how he did this, trapped within a thoroughly bourgeois view which accepted all this as final; and how - with the solemn approval of the academic tribe - he came to devote his art to an utterly reactionary celebration of human impotence.

Eliot's early work from 1917, concerned the sordid degradation of life in the modern city. Breaking with the superficial complacency of the current poetic style, he managed to revolutionise poetic technique while expressing a hopeless and anti-revolutionary vision.

Eliot was suffocated by life under capitalism - a capitalism that could inspire human energies no further, except destructively; and yet he was completely unable to break from the values of that system.

His themes during these early inter-war years are indecision, impotence, a paralysing scepticism regarding all ideas, a sense of helplessness at the passing of time and at the overwhelming weight of social hypocrisy and paraphernalia, and above all a numbing sense of isolation in a mass society. This is summed up in a complete pessimism at having anything to live for
*Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.*

An atmosphere of decay and death suffuses these poems, culminating in "The Waste Land" (1922), in which one can sense the disintegration of an entire civilisation in the desert of the city -
*where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water.*

ABSURD AND WITHOUT REASON

In this most tragic of centuries, the epoch of capitalism's bloody decline, no past ideologies of "reason" or "faith" have been able to mask the nature of a system of production and accumulation for its own sake. Increasingly, the middle classes have been reduced by monopoly capital from God-fearing, industrious, purposive owners of small scale means of production, into an assortment of wage-earners - clerks, teachers, salesmen etc. Hopeless drudgery, amid the social explosions of wars and revolutions (coming from the revolt of the productive forces against the barriers of private property and nation state) gives rise to such widespread feelings of alienation that among those who cannot understand the material causes of this, life can seem absurd and without reason.

Such a sense of chaos and meaninglessness pervades Eliot's earlier poems, particularly the withering of any viable religious belief.

The world Eliot portrays cries out for being revolutionised, but the very nature of the man was at odds with so actively radical a critique. With his American Puritan background, he was very fastidious, introspective and erudite - and also deeply unhappy sexually. So he focuses on the failure of the 'hollow men' to find any significance in human relationships, places this in the context of his time in the England of the 1920s, and proceeds to view this fear of reality as a universal condition.

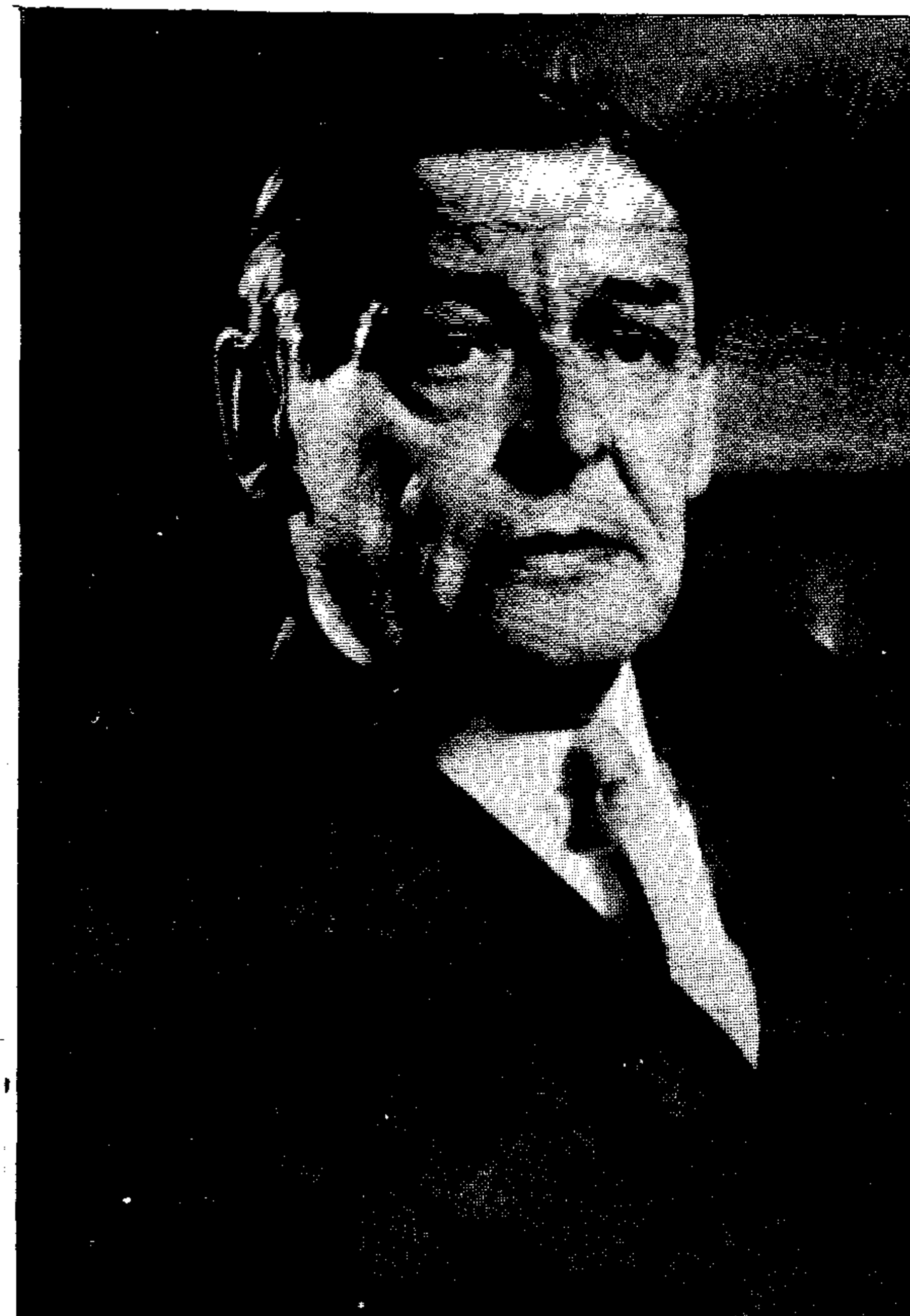
BETWEEN DESPAIR AND DISINTEGRATION

But still he craved order and purpose. Indeed, the tension in his poetry comes very much from the contradiction between its themes of despair and disintegration, and the rigorous control and discipline with which they are expressed.

But despite this impersonality, he could not rest with a mere vision of anguish and solitude. Eliot had broken with the romantic view of nature and the individual personality, but only to invert that individualism of achievement to the individualism of useless impotence. This gaping emptiness could not simply be filled with literature and learning "these fragments I have shored against my ruins". Eliot's need for order drove him to seek in ideological reactions (Anglo-Catholicism, conservatism and cultural classicism not to mention fascism and sympathy for authoritarian rule).

His work came increasingly to dwell on the necessity of subordinating the personality to an austere, ascetic Christianity as the only alternative to a hopeless drifting towards death and oblivion. This produced the

'thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season'



T.S. Eliot, "the most bankclerkly of English gentlemen" - the poet of petty bourgeois impotence

"Four Quartets" (in the 1940s), a celebration of mystical communion with God through renunciation and resignation, and the spiritual quest for 'moments of eternity'.

CULTURED POMPOSIT

His despair had become, somewhat pretentiously, sanctified, and his sense of desolation, always expressed in masterful language and rhythms, was consummated now by a sense of inviolable, inhuman purpose -

*We have taken from the defeated
What they had to leave us - a symbol:
A symbol perfected in death.*

T.S. Eliot is a key figure in 20th century literature because of the way in which he was able to develop innovations that revolutionised poetry in order to express a mode of consciousness that the old styles could not cope with. But his entire viewpoint was that of an educated, haughty, conservative petty bourgeois, for whom class is merely a sociological description, and the possibility of change is utterly fanciful and indeed obnoxious.

In fact he gave voice to only a narrow range of experience and was completely unable to portray the interaction of human beings other than mechanically and with a nauseated detachment. He is at home with states of mind and soul, where personality and error evaporate, and sureness of technique can create enduring images of a man in his cultured pomposity, straining after sainthood.

ALAN HASLAM

OPEN LETTER FOR A REVOLUTIONARY REGROUPMENT

Open Letter calls for a revolutionary regroupment, lays down 10 points as political guidelines and maps out practical steps towards unity. Copies from Workers Fight, 98 Gifford Street, London N1. CDF Please enclose a 43p stamp

'BLOODY SUNDAY' MEETING T.O.M. MUST NOT DUCK THE ISSUES

More than 300 people came to a rally held in Manchester on January 26th to commemorate the massacre of Bloody Sunday in Derry 3 years ago, when 13 peaceful demonstrators were suddenly gunned down by British Army Paratroopers.

Organised by Manchester Troops Out Movement, the rally was supported by other branches in the North West and Midlands.

Eamonn McCann, speaking first, described the events leading up to the massacre: the increasing collusion between the Army and politicians both in the north of Ireland and in Britain. The Army, he said, wanted an "open season" on the Catholic population, and found the right situation for this on the Civil Rights march that preceded the shootings.

LESSONS

He went on to draw out what he saw as being the political lessons of the event, emphasising the common policies of the Ulster politicians, the Army and the British government towards the dissident Catholic population. The way forward lay in a direct, socialist challenge to the power of this establishment.

Mike Walsh, from Birmingham Trades Council, then talked about raising the demands of the Troops Out Movement in the trade unions and Labour Party. He described the situation which existed in Birmingham after the recent bombings, when nearly the whole of the local working class fell into line behind Jenkins and the crack-down on the Irish population. Recognising that this was a direct result of the chauvinist indoctrination

of the English working class over the centuries, the only hope he saw was for those who support the cause of Irish liberation to conduct a lengthy and intensive campaign in the labour movement.

This point was also echoed by the next speaker, Pat Arrowsmith, speaking for the British Campaign for Withdrawal from Northern Ireland. Pat Arrowsmith, released on Appeal in December after serving 7 months of an 18 month prison sentence for handing out leaflets to soldiers, described the spreading disaffection amongst soldiers serving in Ulster.

Finally Alasdair Renwick, an ex-soldier, spoke on behalf of the Troops Out Movement. He mainly talked about the role of the Army against anti-imperialist struggles other than Ireland, and noted that the brutality of the Army was a constant feature, with soldiers encouraged to see the people of the occupied country as being different from themselves — a lower category of person, who can be treated without feelings.

SPECTRE

During an unfortunately brief discussion, speakers from the floor raised the need for solidarity with the republican movement. As they pointed out, this logically flowed from the demand of the TOM for self determination for the Irish people as a whole (a demand that had not even been mentioned by any of the platform speakers).

Significantly, those who raised the solidarity issue got more support from the meeting than did a speaker

from the IMG, who attempted to defend the present TOM position saying that solidarity would be an issue in "five years time", but that for now it was a question of disguising your politics and getting on with the 'mass movement'.

The question of solidarity must obviously be one of the key issues of the forthcoming TOM national delegate conference. As the spectre of Civil War increasing looms in the north of Ireland, the question of solidarity and support for the beleaguered republican population becomes more urgent.

Although the number of people present at the Manchester TOM rally is a hopeful sign, it did little to prepare for this urgent task.

Neal Smith

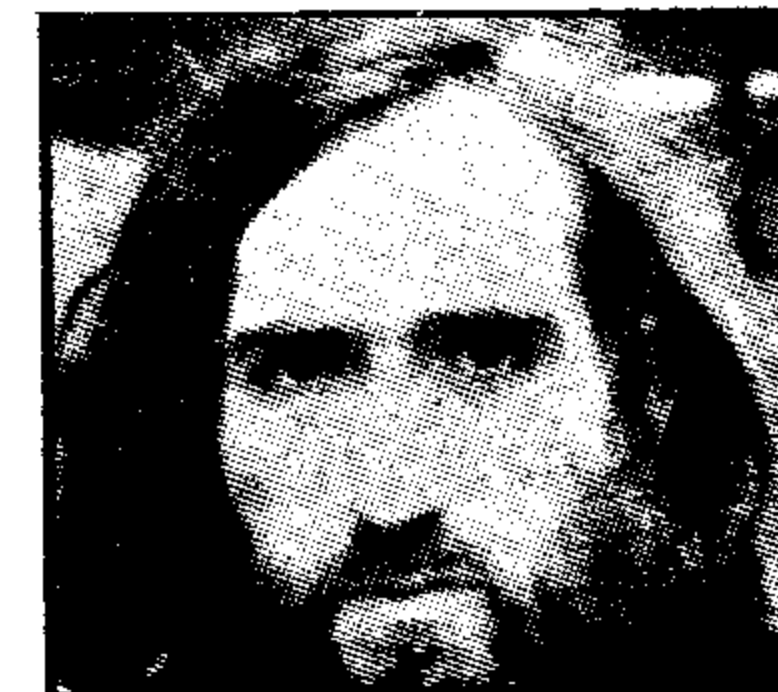


'Only a temporary victory' - Caprino

FOLLOWING a campaign of protest from the labour movement and immigrant and civil liberties organisations, the Home Secretary decided to release Franco Caprino last Friday (24th) after more than a month in jail. And the threat of deportation under Clause 42 of the 1971 Immigration Act as a 'threat to national security' has been lifted.

No reason was given for Franco's release. But it is clear that Jenkins was worried about the lack of any evidence at all against Franco and perhaps surprised at the size of the campaign for his release. In any case, the Home Office would no doubt prefer a more open and shut case to test out that clause (as yet unused) of the 1971 Act.

Also, it is possible that more traditional means will now be used to get Franco out of the country. He holds a 6-month visa which is due to expire at the end of February, a renewal usually requires a reference from an employer. It is by no means certain that Franco will get his old job back at Selfridges after his month's imprisonment.



If the visa is not renewed, he could be deported under normal immigration procedures.

Caprino views his release as only a temporary victory. As he says, there is nothing to celebrate, as nothing has changed. As long as the 1971 Immigration Act remains on the statute book, what happened to him can still happen to anyone who doesn't qualify under the terms of the Act as a 'patrial'.

The campaign to release him is being kept in being, and now has new objectives. First, it will continue to press for Franco to be able to stay in Britain. There is talk of demanding compensation for his wrongful imprisonment: his release two days before his appeal was due to be heard indicates that nobody seriously considered him a threat to the 'national security'. There are plans too, to take the case to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

But the main object of the campaign will be to start a widespread agitation for the repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act.

Bruce Robinson

prepare for the April salaries campaign, with the demands for £2,500 minimum starting salary, for cost of living increase protection for all teachers, and for the upward assimilation of Houghton Scale 1 into Scale 2.

Ian Hollingworth

SHREWSBURY FIGHT GAINS MOMENTUM

Solicitors for the Shrewsbury 2 have said that the Home Office has informed them that Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson are to be moved from Sudbury Open Prison to serve out their sentences separately in closed prisons.

This fresh outrage has been suggested as a punishment for the jailed pickets, on account of their refusal to wear prison clothes and do prison work. This refusal has two motivations: firstly as a sign of solidarity with the movement outside the prison fighting for their freedom, and secondly as a demonstration of the fact that they see themselves as political prisoners.

Peter Snape, Labour MP for West, has made the point that the vote at the last Labour Party Conference declared itself firmly behind Des and Ricky in their claim that they are political prisoners - victims of a Tory show trial. The scandal now, he said, was that they were the political prisoners of a Labour Government. Two other MPs, Martin Flannery

Labour MP for Hillsborough), and Maureen Colquhoun (Labour MP for Northampton North) have protested at this latest move by the Home Office.

The movement to free the 2 is gathering force, focussed on calling the TUC to call a one-day general strike. Region no 1 of the Transport and General Workers Union (London and the South) representing close on half a million members, has called for a one-day strike, as has NATSOPA London machines Branch which covers the press. AUEW East Kilbride no 5 and AUEW Edmonton no 3 have leant their support to the call. Support is also flowing in from miners: the long-standing support of the South Wales miners has now been added to by the Derbyshire area NUM and the Kent area council of the NUM.

In the Nottinghamshire coalfield 33 union branches are to be balloted on their attitude towards a one-day strike to free the lads. The Executive of SLADE has called upon

the TUC to call the day. Medway District Trades Council, Birmingham Trades Council and Midland UCATT have made a similar call as has the East Anglian Regional Council of the TUC.

So what's keeping the TUC from moving then? Despite Murray's instruction to "keep up the momentum", the TUC has done nothing but make repeated "representations" to the Home Secretary. In fact when Alan Sapper of ACTT suggested a mass demonstration to the jail, the TUC leaders simply "noted" the suggestion but refused to take it up. What we need are not exhortations from Len Murray, but a TUC that will act decisively. In all probability the TUC aims to spin out the time till Ricky Tomlinson is out and Des Warren near to the time of being paroled. We cannot allow this. Maximum effort must be put into calling on the TUC to call a one-day general strike and making preparations for unofficial action too.

PETE CONLAN

NUM AND THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

THE Government must be watching with some nervousness the drift of the present pay negotiations between the miners' union and the Coal Board.

Despite the fact that Gormley had his way over not naming a definite sum to be demanded and fought for, papers like the Sunday Times are already trying to calculate the current level of coal stocks and thinking in terms of a strategy for the government in the event of the present talks breaking down. Memories of the 1972 and 1974 miners' strikes can still create tremors of fear in the nooks and crannies of Whitehall and the business corridors of power.

Up to 240,000 miners are affected by the negotiations, which will enter a crucial stage during the first week in February.

Talks have centred on a new pay structure, with the NUM pressing for an enlarged grading structure to give more money to face workers and those highly

skilled miners who 'open up' new faces. As well as trying to compensate for cost of living rises, the NUM also has a 'target' of £60 a week for faceworkers.

Another sticking point is over the proposed production bonus, which would be worked out according to overall tonnage increase rather than a tonnage by shift increase. Here, the crucial question is, at what level should the bonus be 'triggered off'.

DANGER

Whatever the disagreements in the negotiating committee room, the Labour government still hopes to win the NUM leaders to a deal within the Social Contract. Certainly their major ally within the NUM, Joe Gormley, is for using "every clause and avenue within the social contract" — and presumably no more than that — to get what he thinks is possible.

The danger for other public sector workers is that an NUM-NCB deal within the Social Contract norm will add enormous weight to the pressure the government can exert on them to fall into line too.

LONDON Workers Fight forum. "Why socialists should oppose the 'Get Out of the EEC' campaign". Speaker: Simon Temple. 8.30pm, Sunday 9th February, at the 'George', Liverpool Road, NI (Angel underground).

About 250 teachers on unofficial strike against the Houghton Pay Award met last Thursday (23rd) in London and made plans for a campaign building up to the 1975 annual pay claim in April.

They knew from bitter experience that two days later the Houghton Pay Award would be formally ratified at an NUT "special salaries conference" packed with backwoodsmen and balding headmasters who would do very nicely thank you from this award.

Massive

Nonetheless, classroom teachers had taken unofficial strike action and, entirely through their own efforts, organised a massive lobby of the Conference, with street theatre and much cynical piss-taking. Compared with the disappointing turn-out at the lobby over the London Allowance campaign, this represents a real increase in classroom teachers' organisation in the space of a few months.

At the strike meeting on the Thursday, it was revealed that the NUT salaries department had prepared a claim for April which completely capitulated to the Social Contract and asked

Victimisations as NUT sell-out no.2 gets underway

for a mere £90 a year increase in the starting salary. This, then, is the "substantial improvement" the NUT Executive used as an excuse for the cop-out on Houghton.

Delegates pointed out the dangers of victimisation of strikers, and the meeting pledged itself to solidarity action should any case arise. Dorothy McColgan, herself a victim of a long drawn out case of political victimisation by her employers and the NUT, drew attention to the fact that the threatening letters being sent out by the Inner London Teachers Association (representative of all Inner London NUT branches) was completely undemocratic, since it was drafted before the Inner

London branches had had a chance to discuss Houghton — and when they did, they overwhelmingly rejected it.

Attempts at victimisation are also being tried by the employers in collusion with the NUT bureaucrats against those schools still maintaining the sanction of not covering for any teacher away for more than 3 days. It is vital that this aspect of the overall fight is not allowed to subside, and the campaign must be extended and consolidated. How many teachers outside London know that at one stage this sanction was officially extended nationally before being withdrawn at the end of the London Allowance campaign? Most important, though, is to

Teacher victimised for being gay

Twenty four year old John Warburton has been banned from working in any Inner London school because he refused to sign an agreement not to mention homosexuality in the classroom.

The trouble started when a pupil from his school — St. Marylebone Church of England Girls School — noticed him on a gay rights rally in Trafalgar Square last November.

Word spread in the school and Warburton had to face jeers every time he took a class. The only way he could maintain order was to bring the subject into the open and answer the

pupils' questions. This was evidently too much for the employers, and Warburton was summoned to an interview at ILEA headquarters where he was asked to sign the agreement.

In an honest and reasonable way, he agreed never to initiate a discussion on homosexuality unless it was in the course of a properly structured programme of sex education. But he refused to agree never to mention the subject, as such an agreement could make it impossible to deal with a room full of hostile children: in such a situation, if he agreed, he would either have

to sweep the issue under the carpet and pretend it didn't exist, or resort to sending kids to the Head — thereby undermining his own standing and consolidating the power of the hierarchy.

There was also an issue of principle at stake: if Warburton has been asked to sign an agreement in addition to his normal contract of service (vague though it is), and if he is forced to do so, then so could any other teacher, gay or not, be forced to do the same.

In the wake of strenuous denials by Education Minister Reg Prentice that the infamous

DES blacklist "list 99" contains names of teachers other than those connected with criminal offences, it becomes obvious that there are very many more subtle forms of discrimination being practised against some teachers.

The case of Dorothy McColgan was a case of political discrimination. Here we have a case of discrimination against homosexuals. The National Council for Civil Liberties, the Campaign for Homosexual Equality and the London branch of the Gay Teachers Group, are following it up.

I.H., T.B.