

WORKERS' FIGHT

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4p

NO INCOMES POLICY! WORKERS' ANSWER TO INFLATION IS

WAGES UP, RENTS DOWN

IF workers use rent strikes to parry the 'fair' rent Act, how will the Government react? That will depend on what they think they can get away with. But in the past they have used the police, the mercenaries of the bosses, to evict individual rent strikers.

No doubt the government has made contingency plans to deal with rent strikes. We must make our own plans.

Tenants should follow the action taken in Bolton and elsewhere, where rebate forms have been burnt. The use of the rebate system can only create a division, splitting those with rebates off from those without.

Our strongest card is industrial action. Link the rents struggle with the industrial strength of the working class!

We must promote the idea of industrial action wherever and whenever an attempt at eviction is made. Often tenants on the same housing estate work together in the same factory or industrial complex. *Now is the time to fight for pledges of industrial action if there are any attempted evictions.*

When, in 1915, Clydeside workers faced eviction in a rent dispute, industrial action by local workers forced the government to retreat. Today Liverpool and Clydeside workers are already pledged to action against the 'Fair Rent' Act. Their example must be followed.

Many Labour-controlled councils swore to defy the government, but have now collapsed when the time for action app-

oaches. Because of their treachery the defiance will be less than it might have been. And threats of eviction will be much more likely if there is a relatively small number on strike.

But that is NO reason to submit to the unjust laws of this government of property sharks and City of London spivs. It must be the spur which drives militants on strike to SPREAD the strike. The elected tenants' committees must take control of their areas and take action to prepare to resist evictions.

Striking estates must become real NO-GO AREAS against the government and its agents, whether rent collectors or police.

Flying pickets to neighbouring estates — and to militant factories and building sites — and the solidarity they can call forth: there we have the answer to the threat of isolation and possible eviction. There we have a weapon with which we may yet beat this High Rise Rents government.

THE TORIES HAVE LAID down a challenge — with Incomes Policy and the 'Fair' Rents Act.

The labour movement must meet that challenge. And at rank and file level it is doing so.

The tenants who are starting total or partial rent strikes throughout the country are giving their own "solution to the problem of inflation", and their own idea of what 'fair rents' means.

And fighting with them are a number of Labour councillors and councils, defying the Tories' law, putting themselves in danger of being surcharged for rent increases not collected, and being barred from office.

Where are the leaders? Where are the people elected and paid by the labour movement — the trade union leaders and the Labour MPs.

At Blackpool the Labour Party National Executive Committee recommended saying to those fighting — "we can't give you any help, it's on your own head". And the conference arrangements committee fought to stop the emergency resolution opposing the Tory Incomes Policy.

The delegates took a stand, rejecting the recommendation to leave 'no surrender' councils on their own, and passing the resolution against the Incomes Policy.

But resolutions are not enough to beat the Tories. They must be backed by determined and consistent action from the whole of the organised labour movement to draw together the fight against the various fronts of the Tory onslaught — the Industrial Relations Act, the Housing Act and the "Incomes Package".

Blackburn POLICE PROTECT FASCISTS



Police brutality at Blackburn

— aided by two National Front thugs

Once again fascist organisations have been on the march. This time it was the turn of the National Front and the place was Blackburn, September 30th. They had brought coaches from all over the country in an attempt to muster enough to have a demonstration at all. But even so they were no match for the left, and were met by a great show of force from socialists, militants and Asian workers from Blackburn and the surrounding towns, who had come determined that fascists should nowhere have a platform to spread their dirt, and to drive them off the streets.

The 700 anti-fascist demonstrators first marched to a rallying point about a quarter mile from the town centre. According to Police direct-

ions this was to be the end of the demonstration. No contact with the National Front demonstration was to be allowed.

But revolutionaries, trade union militants and many Asian workers linked arms and surged

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WORKERS ACTION

NO INCOMES POLICY UNDER CAPITALISM

Remember the 7% norm, anyone ?

At one time, after the postmen's and power workers' strikes, it looked as if the Tories might be gaining some success in their effort to boost profits by keeping down wages. They hoped to push down the level of wage increases notch by notch.

The miners put an end to that. And the complete ruination of the Tories' economic policy was shown clearly by the builders' strike. Despite the sell-out by the right-wing leadership - against the stormy opposition of the rank and file - the settlement, at 14%, was far above the norm the Tories wanted.

But as long as workers' victories stop short of overthrowing the whole private profit system, the bosses can and will fight back. The Tories have not managed to enforce the Industrial Relations Act. That's true. But they have achieved something with the Act. They have achieved the setting and the climate of opinion which enables them to bring in Incomes Policy.

Fundamentally, the Industrial Relations Act faces the labour movement with two alternatives: to submit to the bosses' "law and order" (the sort of "law and order" that considers it orderly to have a million unemployed) - or to defy that "law and order" and smash the Act with a general strike.

The leaders of the labour movement have dodged the issue. They are against the Industrial Relations Act - of course ! But - as even Hugh Scanlon said - "the courts must be respected". During the mass solidarity movement to free the Pentonville Five, only one union - the small dockers' NAS&D - called an official strike. When the TUC had the chance in their hands, they did not smash the Act. Instead ... wait three years, vote Labour, and perhaps Wilson will keep his promise to repeal the Act.

'CONCILIATION'

So the union leaders have drifted into fundamentally accepting the Tories' aims of keeping down wages - and only questioning their methods.

"Mr Macmillan will find that he will not have enemies inside the movement provided he endeavours honestly and with integrity, as I know he will, to try to bring about conciliatory processes, despite the policies of the Government, into the field of industrial relations" - Vic Feather, 16 April.

"I believe that conciliation will work far better than legal sanctions and the Government's policy of abrasiveness and confrontation" Hugh Scanlon, 18th May.

"No consideration can be given to any policy on incomes unless it is an integral part of an economic strategy which includes control of rents, profits, dividends and prices and is designed to secure a redistribution of income and wealth nationally and locally" (TUC conference 7th September). In other words, "consideration" will be given to any policy on incomes which is dressed up as an integral part of an "economic strategy" etc.

"We would not be opposed to productivity agreements" (like the productivity agreements on the docks which have led to 20,000 jobs lost?) - Jack Jones, 30th September.

"Even though we (ie Government, TUC, CBI) agree on the aims, there are differences of view on how we want to get these" Vic Feather 1st October.

The union leadership is under tremendous pressure from the rank and file. So even the corrupt, cynical right wing Chapple could not openly welcome Heath's proposals - "I don't think a voluntary incomes policy will be acceptable because you can't get volunteers. I am not volunteering anyway."

But all the TUC's and Labour Party's opposition has been on the level of tinkering: perhaps the maximum increase should be £3.38, not £2; perhaps the threshold figure for cost of living adjustments should be lower; perhaps the Value Added Tax rate should be reduced to 7½%...

PRICES AND INCOMES

Now, for a start, a married man earning £18 a week with one child and living in a council house with rent and rates of £5.90 would be immediately 39p worse off for a £2 pay rise (through loss of means-tested concessions etc.) For higher-paid workers, wage increases take them to a higher rate of income tax, and so lose up to a third of their value immediately. Heath's proposals leave out the increase in rents through the 'Fair Rents Act', the increase in food prices following Common Market entry, and the impact of Value Added Tax. They are simply a short cut to a wage cut.

But any incomes policy is against the interests of the working class as long as the economy is run for private profit.

Profit is the mainspring of the capitalist system. If profits were strictly controlled - outside the very exceptional, temporary circumstances of a war economy - the only result could be economic stagnation. Similarly, any attempt at price control flies in the face of the

central mechanisms of the system. All it would do is lead to massive evasions of controls, black markets, and flow of capital overseas.

Control on dividends ? But dividends not paid out get 'stored up' and only mean bigger capital gains for investors in the future. Taxation of capital gains ? The rich will find a thousand ways to evade this taxation. An incomes policy could assist justice only in a working-class planned economy.

Even if a capitalist government tried to make an incomes policy 'fair', all it could do halfway effectively is keep wages down.

The only effective weapon workers have to maintain living standards is the strength of industrial action. If that weapon is foregone in favour of Tory-employer-sponsored regulations and arbitration, living standards will suffer. Even more important in the long term, trade union organisation will be weakened. The trade unions will be tied to the bosses' State, instead of representing their members' interests.

So when the TUC leaders say, showing their left face, "opposition to wage restraint in any form", we must demand they stick to that. We cannot let them get away with their collaboration with the Tories scot-free, without protest from the ranks.

They must immediately break off all talks with the Government and the CBI. They must commit themselves to a general strike to smash the Act.

NATR demonstration in London



They must reject productivity dealing (which means the same, or greater production, from fewer workers - that is, jobs lost)

They are concerned about the lower-paid. Fine. Let them campaign for a series of strikes to win the £20 minimum they are already committed to. Let them make that £20 minimum - for both men and women - part of every claim.

They are concerned about the massive fortunes creamed off by speculators. There's only one solution there - nationalisation under workers' control.

They are concerned about rising prices. Fine. Instead of miserable 'threshold agreements' let's have full support for wage claims which enable take-home pay to at least keep pace with the cost of living.

'FAIR RENTS'

The worst example of rising prices at present is the 'Fair Rents Act'. It is vital that the labour movement acts on this issue.

Already at the Labour Party conference, Frank Allaun, 'left' Labour spokesman on housing, was heckled when he said:

"Neither as a party now, nor on behalf of a future Labour government, can we guarantee that there will be any payment to comrades who are victimised."

"I am instructed to say to councillors and tenants who have taken this courageous stand (of defying the F.R. Act) that they must do so on their own responsibility, as they have already done."

"They must not depend on any guarantee that we will find a way of helping them. I can say we will consider the situation and try."

What the Labour Party, and Labour MPs, should be doing, is organising Labour councils to defy the Act, expelling Councillors who voted for implementation, and help to organise tenants' associations for rent strikes all over the country.

That would go against "respecting the law" - as it would if local factories were to come out on strike as soon as any Council (or Government Housing Commissioner) attempts to evict a rent striker. But which is more worthy of respect - the bosses' law and their courts, the same courts which imprisoned the Pentonville Five - or the ordinary worker's right to afford a decent home and a decent living standard?

The Housing Act is the chief attack here and now on working class standards. The test for all socialists is what we do here and now. Every Council of Action, rank and file committee, and trade union branch should turn its efforts to aiding the tenants' struggle.

THE INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL COURTS IN ULSTER TO MATCH THE SOUTH:

NOW INTERNMENT IS 'LEGAL'

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT INTENDS to replace internment with Special Courts, to be set up under the Special Powers Act, and a Commission to "advise on all measures required to deal with terrorist organisations" has been met with total opposition by the anti-Unionist population in the north of Ireland.

The Provisional IRA claim it is an attempt to "legalise and justify internment" and stress that statements which are at present obtained "under duress" in army and police torture camps which are inadmissible in the normal courts, will be used to convict those brought before the new Special Courts.

The Civil Rights Association has referred to them as "internment Courts" and has stated that they are "preparing to do something special to enable the people in the streets to show their disapproval."

Paddy Devlin of the SDLP said "Prisoners appearing at courts of this type are not being brought there to see justice, they are there to receive sentences regardless of guilt or innocence."

The Unionists and Loyalists are of course delighted. Faulkner has wasted no time in reminding everyone that Special Courts were his idea, which he first put to the Heath government over a year ago. (Internment was also his idea and his solution to the problem of the IRA). Paisley has even suggested that the onus should be on the defendant to prove his innocence, not the state to prove guilt.

The Tories' argument, that the Special Courts will prevent harass-

ment and intimidation of witnesses and juries, which they claim is at present rampant, is a pure fabrication. At present, members of the IRA brought before the normal courts refuse to recognise them and do not enter a plea or defence realising quite rightly that they can expect no justice from a court which is part of the Orange state apparatus.

The nature of these courts should be clear to anyone who realises the vast array of military, political, and judicial weapons the Tories have in their arsenal and which they are willing to use on those who oppose their rule.

INTERNMENT

Internment failed to defeat the IRA and demoralise the Catholic working class. On the contrary it gave rise to the mass civil resistance campaign, a total rejection of the northern state and widespread distrust of any new settlement imperialism might attempt to impose on Ireland. Internment has even, as yet, prevented the SDLP from fully reintegrating themselves into a political system subordinate to British imperialism. The Tory Government was thus faced with a

two reports from Belfast by Austen Morgan

problem.

The coming of Willy Whitelaw, with a new found liberal image, saw a promise from the Tories that internment would be ended.

All those seized under the Special Powers Act and incarcerated in Long Kesh and Crumlin Jail under the Whitelaw regime, were referred to, not as "internees", but as "detainees". Some 70 of the 240 men still in Long Kesh have been put there by Whitelaw since last March and many others have been picked up and "detained" for varying periods. The subtleties of legal definitions matter little to the men who run the risk daily of being picked up and detained "at Her Majesty's pleasure" under the Special Powers Act.

This ploy fooled no-one in Ireland but it did enable the SDLP to move from their "no talks before internment ends" stance and allow-

ed the British Labour Party to chirp in unison with the Tories on British government policies in northern Ireland.

In the twisted logic only a Tory Cabinet is capable of, the government now claims that "a system of internment cannot be ended without putting something in its place. This does not mean however that there cannot be changes" (!)

CAMPS

Special Courts are nothing new in Ireland. Jack Lynch in Dublin is already one up on the Tories when it comes to incarcerating republican and socialist opponents of imperialism. Special Courts have been in operation in the South since June this year and already nearly 100 men have been detained under military custody in the Curragh. Only one case has so far been dismissed on appeal.

Conditions in the Curragh have been repeatedly described as even worse than at Long Kesh by visitors who have been to both camps. Capt James Kelly, a former military intelligence officer in the South (of the Dublin Arms Trial fame) recently referred to the "judicious spectacle of an Irish government keeping political prisoners in worse conditions than the British keep them Is there no length to which Lynch and his government will not go to curry favour with Heath?" he asked.

SDLP. BROKERS FOR THE TORIES

The elegant Georgian house with 15 acres of grounds at Darlington (the former home of a British army officer killed fighting for imperialism in India) has as much connection with and meaning for the working people of northern Ireland as the political non-event which took place there last week.

Darlington is just another in a long series of similar events which have taken place during the course of Britain's domination of Ireland.

Since June 1970 the British government's strategy in Ireland has consisted largely of the ever increasing use of military repression — internment, occupation of republican areas, harassment of republican and socialist organisations, and so on.

Heath and Whitelaw have followed the logic of a military strategy — one of increasing state repression and military violence, based on the ill founded and many times disapproved assumption that just a few more guns and a little bit more state terror will defeat the enemies of imperialism. This escalation, from 500 soldiers in August 1969 to 21 000 today, has led to an intensification of the resistance campaign against internment, a rejection of the sectarian Orange state in Republican areas, and a complete distrust of any so-called

solutions put forward by the British government.

NEW

Even by their own standards, Darlington was a failure for the Tories. A Conference of Stormont Parliamentarians, where a majority of the parties was absent and the rest largely irrelevant in the present political context, was doomed to failure from the start. Since 1969, when the last Stormont Parliament was elected, there has been a growth of new political organisations, both pro-imperialist and anti-imperialist, in northern Ireland.

The Alliance Party did not exist as a party in 1969 — its three MPs were renegades from other parties. The NILP had only one MP and has been a joke organisation for some time. Even the Unionist party today is only the rump of the party which ruled the Orange state for fifty years.

Most attention has focused on the Social Democratic and Labour Party, a party which was formed in August 1970 when six anti-unionist MPs with little in common except personal political ambition, came together. They were elected in 1969 for constituencies consisting largely of the main Catholic working class areas which have

borne the brunt of British Army activity over the past two years.

Even by the standards of conventional political analysts they should not be the important force they appear to be. They held only six out of Stormont's 52 seats and received only 7% of the total vote. The head counting of the academics of course is not what counts in the real world of politics — a truth Whitelaw is well acquainted with in its Irish context.

IRA

The IRA's guerrilla war against an imperialist army has dominated the political stage. Both wings of the IRA and their political supporters who have grown in, and receive their support from, the Catholic working class areas are the main enemies of imperialism at the moment.

British Army activity, even of the scale of Operation Motorman, has failed to destroy this force. The fall off in IRA activity is because of the need to adapt and change tactics not because a serious military defeat has been inflicted.

Darlington was designed to inflict a political defeat where a military one had failed. The isolation of the IRA from the Catholic population was to be done by repl-

S.D.L.P. leaders

acing them with a political leadership willing to compromise with imperialism. This is the role the SDLP were destined to play.

Though the British government and the media may have convinced many outside Ireland, including themselves, that the SDLP are the political spokesmen for the constituencies they nominally represent, they have fooled noone in the republican areas. The people of these areas know the SDLP, at first hand, not just through the images created on the television screens.

They know that the internees already released were freed because of the intensity of the resistance campaign and the determination of those taking part in it. The internees were not released because Hume, Fitt & Co. took tea and scones with Heath at Chequers and exchanged pleasantries with Harold Wilson.

The Darlington get-together was an attempt by the Tories to win the Catholic population back to Parliamentary politics — the same politics which allowed the sectarian Orange state to remain in existence for 50 years. And the SDLP, in return for flying visits to London, were offered the job as brokers by British Imperialism. This they were only too willing to accept. **see p 10**



CHILE REFORMS IN THE NAME OF REVOLUTION

At 8.15 am on October 22nd 1970, Rene Schneider, Commander in Chief of the Chilean Army, was travelling to his Santiago office when his car was intercepted by eight vehicles from which several armed men emerged, breaking the General's car windows they fired three shots, hitting him in the throat, thorax and right shoulder. Then they made their getaway.

This incident was part of a larger plot by the Chilean right to block the ratification by Congress of Salvador Allende's electoral victory. Since then four more plots have been discovered in Chile, in which members of the establishment have been implicated. The latest plot, organised by the neo-fascist 'Patria y Libertad' (Fatherland and Liberty) was unearthed a fortnight ago (29th September).

The plots have taken against a background of increasing violence in the streets and countryside. Last August running battles took place in Santiago between members of the Socialist and Communist parties on the one side, and fascist elements on the other. This was followed by demonstrations by small shopkeepers against Chile's



ALLENDE: his own safety is entrusted to a personal bodyguard - the people are 'entrusted' to the army of the bourgeoisie.

by
BAS HARDY

33% rate of inflation.

On the land, clashes between peasants and the police have escalated, resulting in a few deaths and many injured.

In such a situation the revolutionary left have applied an old maxim from the French Revolution. Referring to Allende, they say "He who makes a revolution by half only ends up by digging his own grave."

KEY IDEAS?

"I think that basic works like 'State and Revolution' contain key ideas, but they can't be used as a catechism." Allende proclaims that the workers have come to power in Chile. However, Allende's claim is clearly not reflected in the Chilean Congress, Judiciary and Army, a fact which would indicate that he needs to re-read Lenin's 'catechism'.

Allende did not become President in 1970 by winning an overall majority of votes. He polled 36%, 2% less than when he ran for President in 1964. What did happen was that unlike '64 the right fielded two candidates, thus splitting their vote.

Allende's Presidential victory had to be ratified by Congress, which meant that he had to do a deal with the Christian Democrats. In return for assuming the Presidency, Allende had to support a Bill providing 'democratic safeguards', preventing him from changing the personnel of the Army, courts and administrative apparatus, nor could he alter the political monopoly in the media. Allende's power became the power only to carry out what the Chilean bourgeoisie would concede.

What did this mean concretely? Allende's Land reform or nationalisation decrees would go for approval through congress. If they were too radical in part, then those parts would be removed.

But all is not lost for Allende! In the judiciary all but one Court have acted without 'class bias'. And what is that one court displaying class bias? The Supreme Court!

The Supreme Court has made countless decisions in favour of landowners against the peasants. It has also obstructed the government in its investigations into the circumstances surrounding the death of General Schneider. All Allende can say about the attitude of the Supreme Court is that he is "very worried". But tampering with the courts would mean 'interfering with the democratic process'.

ARMY

But what of the army? Allende proclaims that he has "absolute confidence in the loyalty" of the armed forces. Unfortunately this loyalty does not extend to his personal protection, and to safeguard his skin Allende has had to form his own bodyguard from among the

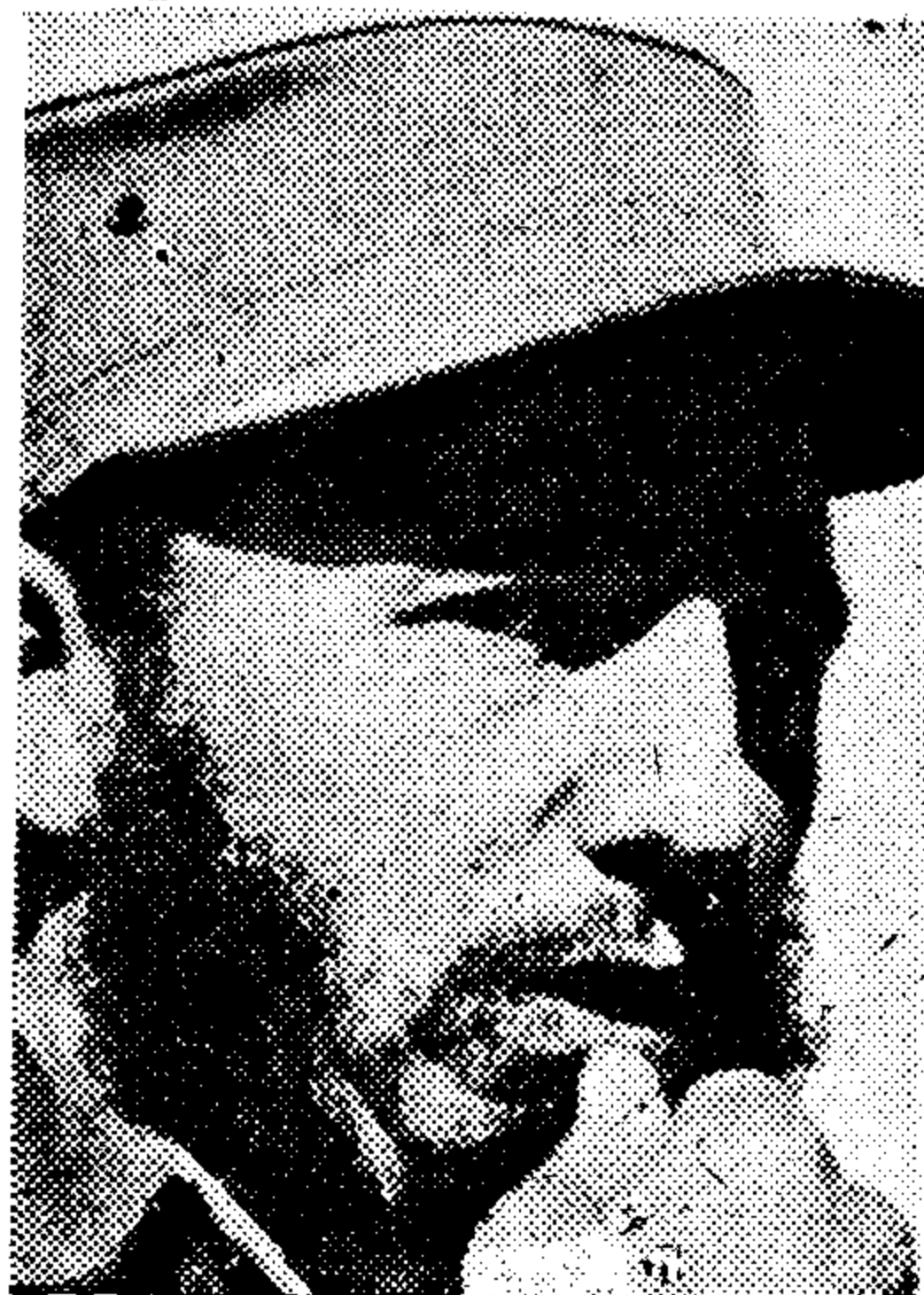
ranks of the Socialist Party.

The attitude of the Chilean Communist Party to the army illuminates even more clearly the reformist wishfulness existing in the Popular Unity coalition. "The Army", explained the C.P.'s general secretary, Luis Corvolan, "is not invulnerable to the new winds blowing in Latin America and penetrating everywhere."

If he could not learn from 150 years of Latin American history, events in Bolivia should have been enough to convince him otherwise.

NATIONALISATION

Allende's nationalisation of the copper mines is merely an extension of the policy of 'Chileanisation' carried out by the previous government. Under President Frei (1964-70), 51% of foreign owned mines were nationalised.



It is also true that nationalisation of the basic industries is currently more acceptable to US imperialism than it has been in the past. In recent years foreign investments have shifted from the primary (raw materials) sector of the economy to the industrial sector. By taking over and 'rationalising' basic industries, Latin American governments provide cheap inputs for industry, similar to the way that the nationalised industries in Britain provide cheap coal, steel, gas etc.

The real test of Allende's 'socialist' intentions would be shown in his willingness to nationalise the industrial sector. So far he has only done this with 150 out of the 30,500 firms in Chile. And this is as far as the Popular Unity's programme intends to go.

CONTROL

And the workers in the nationalised mines? Surely, as Allende has talked about the 'new man' of 'socialist' Chile, the workers should expect to have control over the nationalised sectors at least? "But" Allende says, "... we are not going to hand over a company to the workers just so that they can produce what they want or to let them turn the fact that they control a company which is of vital importance to their country to their own personal advantage in order to demand higher earnings than other people. We are against any policy of that nature."

Allende insists on mere 'participation' of the workers with the state appointed bureaucrats chosen to run these industries. He also talks about the excessive wages of the copper miners (77p a day) and their need to "work more, produce more, sacrifice more".

These workers might understand such exhortations to sacrifice if Chile bore any resemblance to a workers' state. But with both the bourgeois state and the prosperous parts of industry remaining intact, workers in Chile are no longer well disposed to listen to appeals for restraint coming from the 'Companero Presidente.'

Coming to office, the government granted on average wage rises of 35%. The Chilean rate of inflation prior to this was, surprise surprise, 35%. But now Allende says the Government must "regulate income by law ... to facilitate economic development." The honeymoon between the working class and Allende did not last long.

LAND REFORM

On land reform too, the Popular Unity has stepped into the shoes of the previous government. Under Frei, 8.7 million acres were expropriated. So far Allende has expropriated 5.7 million.

This policy has only been speeded up because the peasants took over the land following the victory of the P.U. in the elections. The Allende government has actually told many peasants not to continue this process because the government needs time to find the money needed to pay the landowners' compensation.

This policy of compensation to the big landowners is particularly grotesque since most of the land in Chile was forcibly stolen from the Mapuche Indians in the first place!

In recent months the Government forces have been used against the peasantry to clear them off the land and in one case a police detachment stood by while landowners fired mercilessly on peasant squatters, killing one of their leaders (a member of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left - MIR).

The MIR has recently said that while Castro's policies in the early '60s could be designated "Operation watermelon" - green on the outside, red on the inside - the Chilean state of affairs is more like a radish: red only on the outside.

As disenchantment with Allende grows and spreads among the masses the MIR is starting to make substantial gains, particularly among the peasants and the students. But the main stumbling block in its growth as a real revolutionary force is its estimation of the Popular government.

According to the MIR, the P.U.'s programme attacks "some vital nuclei of capitalism". Given the fact that this programme is almost identical to that of the bourgeois Christian Democratic Party, such a statement is incorrect.

The MIR intends to join the Government once "its concrete political line" ceases to "remain confused". The MIR doesn't state in other than very vague terms what criteria are needed for an end to this 'confusion' and could indeed fall into the same trap as the SP and CP by participating in what is patently a bourgeois government.

Apart from its work amongst the peasantry, the MIR also needs to develop links with the workers in Chile, who are now disillusioned with Allende. This is now becoming a matter of urgency as demoralisation could set in if they can see no alternative direction.

Whatever the outcome Allende cannot last much longer. His role, rather than to attack the bourgeoisie, has been to head off the movement of the masses. He has been holding power out of the goodwill of the Chilean bourgeoisie. That goodwill has now run out. Allende has served his purpose for them.

The Chilean masses can no longer be kept at bay by reformist promises and can only be countered by force. As both classes group themselves for the final struggle (the bourgeoisie, thanks to Allende, better prepared than they had been) Allende's parliamentary road will prove of little consequence. The 'Revolution without rifles' will fade in the sound of gunfire.

BLACKPOOL

Hot air and no sunshine

Labour Party conferences generally fall into two categories. The sort where Labour is in power, where it's all "Don't rock the boat, brothers", where the government of the day receives a standing ovation for running capitalism, putting down strikes, starving the old and aiding imperialism around the world. And the sort where a lot of hot air is blown about, the erstwhile governors of capitalist Britain are comrades and brothers, and the air is filled with good deeds ... to come.

What they both have in common is that neither decides on any action by workers here and now against capitalism.

The Labour Party conference last week in Blackpool was faced with one main immediate issue (besides the Fair Rents Act) — that is, Incomes Policy.

The Labour Party is now in opposition — and can afford to oppose Incomes Policy. But even now it is just "Heath's £2" that Labour opposes — not the very principle of regulating workers' living standards by friendly 'give and take' with the employers' State.

The Conference raised no objection to the TUC-CBI-Tories talks continuing. For the careerists and officials who make up the top ranks of the Labour Party and TUC, a cosy 'peaceful coexistence' with the employers is their direct route to a comfortable life.

The Labour Party is 'concerned' about the lower-paid — but there was no suggestion at the conference of mobilising the forces of the Party to help the farmworkers or local government manual workers or the hospital ancillary workers or anyone else in their wage claims.

The leaders of the big unions, the men most closely involved in the Government's talks, did not even want to speak in the Conference debate on Incomes Policy.

Rather than reflecting real mass working-class activity in the constituencies, the Labour Party conference at present is more a safety valve for the Trade Union officialdom.

The Trade Union leaders would far prefer to commit a Labour Government to repeal and nationalise everything — sometime in the future — than to commit themselves to action now.

What the Conference — and the Labour 'left' — liked most of all was the Common Market sideshow.

COMMON MARKET

There was a tremendous display of flag-waving on the Common Market issue. We are asked to cherish 'national sovereignty' — the blue-blooded first cousin of 'national interest'.

But socialists should have no interest in persuading the working class to get involved in the 'Great Debate' between two capitalist alternatives — capitalist Britain outside the EEC and capitalist Britain inside the EEC. The 'Great Debate' is simply a diversion from the real tasks of fighting the employers' offensive which is coming in or out of the EEC, with differences only of form.

Any attempt to get Britain out of the EEC once in is not very

different from an attempt to split up big monopolies and go back to the era of 19th century small businesses. The EEC is an organic product of the development of capitalism as it breaks through national boundaries in its growth to larger and larger units.

To prefer old-fashioned capitalism ('Sovereign Britain') to modern capitalism (EEC) is a diversion from the fight against capitalism here and now, as it is, to gain the strength, the experience, and to build the movement necessary to break capitalism, modern or old-fashioned, and gain workers' power.

After this latest Conference charade, we ask two questions:

1. Why support Labour at all?
2. What can we do to promote a real socialist alternative?

The obvious answer to the first question is, because the alternative is the Tories. But the obvious answer isn't quite enough. Why should the bulk of the working class support Labour, rather than, as it once did, the Liberals?

The Labour Party was founded as an organisational expression of the incompatibility of workers' interests with Liberal-Tory 'give-and-take'. It embodied the principle of workers acting and organis-

in was seen by the Clydeside workers as a weapon against redundancies — and, whatever its deficiencies, it served as a rallying point for all the divisions of what was UCS.

Now it is not even an ineffective weapon. In reality it is little more than benefit payments made to those who have been sacked by the Official Liquidator.

So far the Fighting Fund has been able to pay those who have been made redundant and who haven't gone to look for work elsewhere. (2000 have done just that).

But by January 1973 all work on outstanding UCS contracts is expected to be finished and the 1800 men now employed by the Liquidator will be made redundant. Marathon say that they can only employ 900 more by the end of the year, which means that up to 1000 men will be 'temporarily' unemployed.

In the dictionary of Wayne Harbin 'temporary' means between 12 and 18 months which is a long time to wait around when there is absolutely no guarantee of employment anyway.

LEVY

It was the threat of the work-in's ranks being swelled by 300 and eventually by up to 1000 that two weeks ago prompted the shop stewards coordinating committee to reimpose the 50p levy. But it was then that the policies of the shop stewards committee rebounded on them.

The four divisions of UCS were split up. Scotstoun, Linthouse, and Govan are now owned by Govan Shipbuilders and have a completely different situation to the Marathon workers at Clydebank.

The rates of pay for Govan Shipbuilders are 61p an hour with a 19p bonus, while Marathon pay 90p an hour with 10p production bonus. Also Marathon workers receive redundancy payments since they are involved in a change from shipbuilding to oil-rig building.

A meeting called to endorse the decision of the shop-stewards was boycotted by practically all the workers at the Govan yard and most of the boiler-makers at Scotstoun and Linthouse. At two further meetings of the Govan workers the motion to re-impose the 50p levy was overwhelmingly defeated. Jimmy Reid accused the Govan workers of being sectionally motivated and selfish. Nearer to the truth would be that they were disillusioned with the work-in. If the work-in was a real fight for the right to work, then the Govan workers would have taken a different attitude. But the wag-

ing independently in the political arena, not just being the client of this or that faction of the employing class.

The control of the Labour Party is and always has been in the hands of bureaucrats, position-seekers, opportunists, whose horizons are firmly within the limits of the private-profit capitalist system. But still it is based on the bedrock organisations of the working class, the trade unions.

Still, it is not just an alternative to the Tories, it is, until the mass of the working class supersedes the stage in its political and ideological development represented by the Labour Party (or bypasses it in the totally exceptional situation of a General Strike with embryo organs of working class administration) — until then, our alternative, the only alternative the working class has.

So the real answer to the question "why support Labour?" is not that a Labour government is a "lesser evil" than the Tories. If you look at the record of 1964-70 (Incomes Policy, in place of Strife...) it is very doubtful whether it is a "lesser evil". The real answer is that the Labour Party is

Continued back page, col.2

es for the work-in amounted to much the same as redundancy pay, and, since the Clydebank workers were getting redundancy pay anyway, the others saw little reason for forking out. Eventually the Govan workers did reverse their decision through loyalty to their shop-stewards who resigned when the vote went against the 50p levy. But what could not be reversed was the fact that the unity of the UCS workers had been decisively ruptured.

STRATEGY

The Airlie-Reid strategy has led workers in the Clydebank yard into a dead-end. The work-in is entirely inadequate for defending the jobs of those who will be sacked by the liquidator and not re-employed by Marathon. Those who are employed by Marathon will be working under a shameful four-year no strike agreement.

From the beginning the CP leadership has failed to lead a struggle against the Government by using the ships already in the yard as a bargaining point. Instead of demanding nationalisation they sought to "sell" the yard to potential investors by showing what reasonable men they are.

They do not see the fight against UCS redundancies as part of the fight against capitalism. They lean over backwards to try to show that UCS can be run as a profitable concern under capitalism — which is possible only if the workers take a large wage cut and large loss of jobs.

The work-in was supposed to impress Marathon and the like with the industriousness of the UCS workers. To this end it was decided not to support the Sept 5th strike against the Industrial Relations Act. It was decided to sign the "no strike" agreement with Marathon. They decided to accept a £3 pay rise from Govan Shipbuilders after one week's negotiation when the demand was for £6 and when it was widely thought that Govan would settle for £4.

Here there is a vicious circle: Reid is "reasonable"; Marathon takes advantage of this and pushes for further concessions; Reid being reasonable makes the concessions.

The only hope UCS workers have of breaking the vicious circle is to use the strength they have — the bargaining point of the unfinished ships — through a sit-in strike. This tactic could spark off again the nationwide solidarity evoked by UCS, and apply the strength of the labour movement to a clear programme of nationalisation under workers' control, no loss of jobs and no loss of pay.

U.C.S.

Sackings

Loom

Again

The threat by Marathon to pull out of the takeover of the Clydebank yard marks yet another notch in the tightening of the screws which have already half strangled the struggle of the Clydeside workers.

For the fact is that the fight for the right to work which only 15 months ago sparked the imagination of the whole labour movement is now a shambles of compromise and horsetrading.

Almost certainly Marathon will not withdraw. They are already heavily involved and with the expansion of North Sea Oil the Clydebank yard will provide rich pickings for the American firm. Marathon's president, Wayne Harbin, is solely concerned with squeezing the leaders of the shop stewards' coordinating committee for more concessions.

And, sad to say, given the past record of these leaders he will in all probability get what he is after.

SITUATION

The situation on the yards now is that Marathon employs about 350 men who are redeveloping the yard for the building of oil rigs. The majority of the rest of the labour force are employed by the Official Liquidator and are engaged in finishing off contracts of the now defunct UCS.

A few hundred are taking part in the 'work-in'. A year ago the work-

Workers' Fight says:

THE 'FAIR' RENTS ACT IS AN ACT OF ROBBERY!

NO



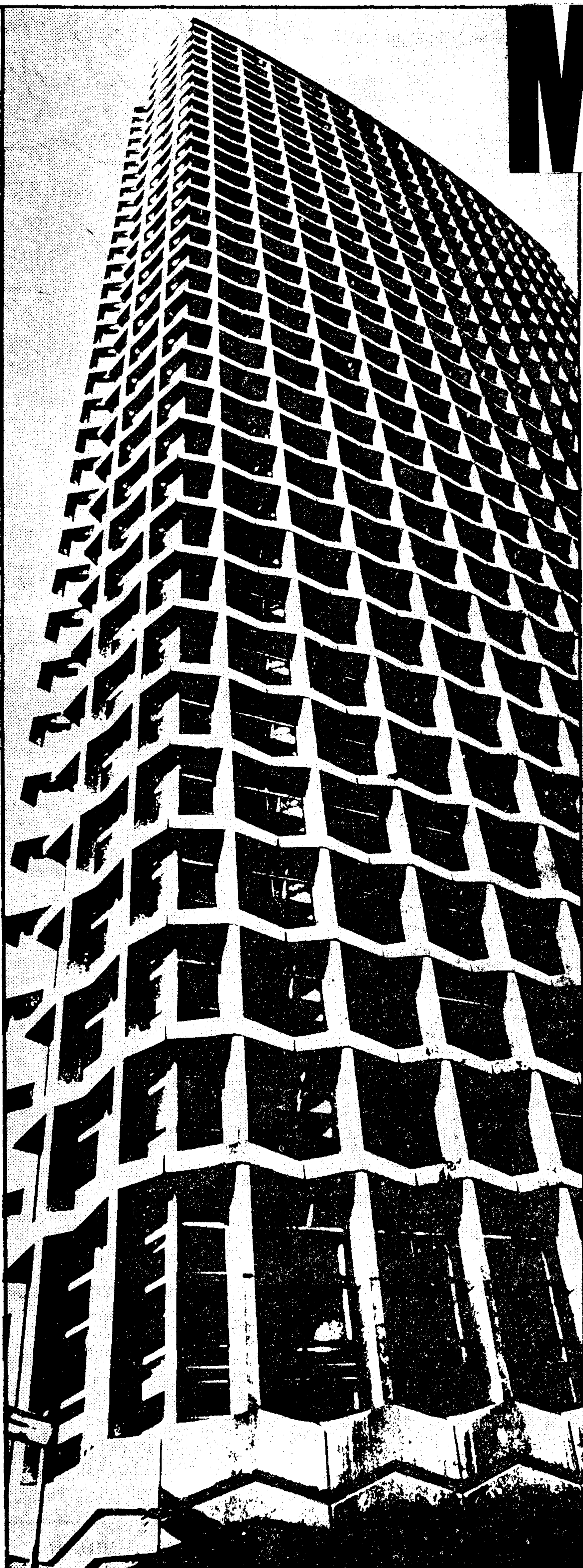
TO FAIR RENTS



CENTREPOINT

THE EMPTY MISSION-

MAKER



"Richard Edmonds, chairman of the Town Planning Committee (of the LCC, forerunner of GLC) said that "...given the Development Plan and its intention not to affect the commercial buoyancy of London, I always had a particular feeling that I mustn't antagonise Big Business" (Richard Edmonds was a Labour Party member on a Labour controlled Council).

By March 1962 the LCC was given the St. Giles Circus properties by a company called Sovmots. Sovmots is a subsidiary of Oldham Estates, a Hyams company. In addition Oldham pay the LCC £18,500 per annum (fixed for 150 years with no possibility of increasing this amount). The least that can be said about this is — to quote Oliver Marriot of the Sunday Times — "it does, however, seem scandalously unbusinesslike that the rent should have been fixed for 150 years."

The "scandal" becomes more obvious when one remembers that rent revision clauses were common at that time (1959) and there was therefore no reason to fix the rent at all. The whole point of course was that Hyams intended to make a fortune out of the difference between the fixed amount and the ever-rising re-letting rent. That is why he doesn't mind the building remaining unlet for a whole period.

So long as rents keep rising the higher Hyams "steps on the escalator" the better, because the longer he waits the bigger the difference between the fixed rent he pays and the rising (revisable) rent paid to him.

The figures for this are astronomical: Hyams handed over £1.5 million worth of land to the LCC. Construction and interest charges on the building of Centre Point came to about £3.5 million. That means that Hyams' outlay has been £5 million. When he lets, however, he will receive about £1,160,000 a year. This gives Centre Point a value of £16.7 million and Hyams a profit of £11.7 million on one building!

If there is any doubt that this can be done, consider: in 1955 a consortium including Hyams built Woolworth House in Marylebone Road, London. It cost £800,000 to build and was not let until 1959, four years later. When it was leased its value was reckoned at £2 million. That is: the consortium now owned a £2 million property and still collected an astronomical rent.

But to simplify matters let us extract the figures for the 'value' of the company in successive years

1959	— £22,328
1960	— £152,060
1961	— £6,482,579
1962	— £7,571,645
1963	— £11,829,602
1964	— £23,364,503
1965	— £31,597,748
1966	— £38,988,748
1967	— £46,201,053.

Hyams' personal fortune was estimated in 1967 to be some £24 million.

By the chairman of the Association of rent Inspectors on being asked about the crates of booze that he had received from the Freshwater Company, one of the country's biggest landlords: "It would be churlish to misconstrue such an act of basic human friendship." (quoted in "International Socialism".

On July 17th 1956 the LCC approved a plan for the road system at St. Giles Circus. To do this they had to buy up the surrounding property. But this property was owned by Mrs. Beatrice Pearlberg and her more than once bankrupt husband Henry, jointly with the Pelham Company. It so happens that the real name of Messrs. Henry and Paul Pelham is Pearlberg, being the sons of Mr. and Mrs. Pearlberg — so simplifying the matter of ownership somewhat.

Although compulsory purchase orders were served on Pearlberg/Pelham it was clear from the complexity of the legal wrangle that followed that it might take years for the LCC to acquire the land by compulsory purchase. The only thing to do was to buy out Pearlberg/Pelham. But the LCC didn't have the money for that. A stalemate seemed inevitable.

One day, however, Richard Edmonds, the Chairman of the LCC's Town Planning Committee (see panel top right) received a phone call from his lawyer. His lawyer happens also to be Harold Wilson's lawyer, Ted Heath's Rhodesia emissary, Lord Goodman. Goodman introduced "fellow socialist" Richard Edmonds to fellow shark Harry Hyams.

Hyams offered to buy out Pearlberg/Pelham using his own money (obviously Hyams is vastly richer than the LCC) plus some more of the adjacent land. He promised to give the LCC the land it needed for the replanned road system in exchange for a no-questions-asked planning permission.

While on the one hand the public seems to gain (it gets the land for road use free) it doesn't get off scot-free. Hyams was given carte blanche to pile up on the site left after the road development all the office space that he would otherwise have spread over the whole area.

But if the floor-space built on the total ground area would have been the maximum allowed by town planning regulations, then the same floor-space built onto the smaller ground area inevitably vastly exceeded that permitted by the regulations. Thus Hyams drove a coach-and-horses through the plot ratio regulations which the LCC had set down to protect workers against undue congestion, and so dramatically broken were they that they became impossible to enforce in the future.

Whereas the LCC could only offer Pearlberg/Pelham £55,000 (which is about what Pearlberg/Pelham paid for the properties) Hyams bought the lot for £500,000.

reports.....reports.....reports

It is clear that the 'Fair Rents' Act has come into force before the tenants' movement is fully prepared to counter it. Even in Liverpool, one of the most militant centres of struggle against the Act, tenants' associations are only just being formed in many areas.

But in many places a lead has been given by the tenants already organised. The movement can snowball, drawing in new sections with increasing momentum. The following reports give a picture of how the movement is getting under way.

BOLTON

On 4th October the Bolton Tenants Federation met and decided to withhold the rent increase. They also decided that any eviction would be met with a total rent strike.

The Federation represents the five tenants associations in Bolton, organising about 3,000 tenants.

And meanwhile WORKERS' FIGHT members have been helping to organise a sixth Tenants Association on the Deane Road Estate. The Association will be holding its first public meeting next week.

Howard Sweeney

MANCHESTER

Altrincham tenants have 95% support in their rent strike. Ardwick and Hattersley have about 75%.

In Altrincham they have had no trouble with rent collectors. In both Ardwick and Hattersley rent collectors attempted to bring the police in - but without success; the policeman called in in Altrincham told the collector that he (the policeman) didn't intend to pay his increase either!

In the small estate of Droylsden the association now has 100 members involved on rent strike.

On Sunday 5th October, Droylsden tenants are going with a commando squad on to other estates, and then they are going to tour Droylsden with loudspeakers.

They also picketed the local council offices when people were paying their rent and recruited more members that way. In addition tenants' association representatives will be visiting local factories and building sites to get union support against victimisations.

At a Wythenshawe (Woodhouse Park) tenants meeting the main speaker, George Taylor, a member of the Communist Party, had a different policy to recommend. His way was to write off to Manchester Town Hall and state that one didn't agree with the increases. He also told tenants that his wife took pride in her rent book - she had never been in arrears in 30 years.

A WORKERS' FIGHT member then stood up and said she had never been straight with her rent book! This brought cheers from the audience. She also advocated taking the struggle to local factories and picketing the Town Hall - which the meeting agreed to, although Taylor hadn't mentioned them.

Fran Brodle

LIVERPOOL

The rent rises are not due to start in Liverpool until 9th October. But there is an impressive array of opposition lined up.

On Sunday 1st October, 1500 tenants met in Birkenhead and decided on a total rent strike, while 500 meeting in Bootle decided to withhold the increase.

Bootle tenants also decided to

organise a flying squad to stop evictions.

Total rent strikes are also planned in Fazackerly and Tower Hill Estate, Kirkby, and many other estates plan to withhold the increase.

The Trades Council has taken some initiative - it has set up some tenants' associations, as at Netherley, and in 28th September they formed a tenants' Co-ordinating Committee

On October 4th, Alderman William Sefton, pro-implementation leader of the Labour Group on the Council, called a meeting to rally his supporters. But the anger of militant tenants in the meeting quickly converted it into an anti-Fair Rents rally.

Paul Barker

GLASGOW

In retaliation at Glasgow Corporation's decision not to implement the Singer Sewing Machine manufacturers are refusing to pay a part of their rates. They are withholding 9p in the £ of their rates - 9p in the £ being the amount that Singer's rates were increased by the Corporation when they refused to raise rents.

The Confederation of British Industry has endorsed Singer's action. But a mass meeting of Singer's 6000 workers on Oct 4 expressed full support for the Corporation.

Joe Wright

COVENTRY

The Coventry Tenants' Federation has decided to withhold the increases. This decision has taken effect on a number of estates including Samuel Vale flats, Willenhall, and Radford. On the latter two estates, tenants have picketed the rent collector. One Labour councillor, Joan Shortland, is not paying the increase.

The main aim of the Federation is to organise more Tenants' Associations, since many estates are as yet unorganised.

In nearby Nuneaton, Ald. Jim Walstell, leader of the Labour group on the pro-implementation council, has resigned from the Labour group and is leading a rent strike.

Roger Litawski

NORTHAMPTON

Two Tenants Associations have been formed, on Kings Heath and Briar Hill estates. They have submitted a petition of 1200 signatures to the Council, and organised a demonstration outside the Town Hall when, on October 1st, the Tory controlled Council made its final decision to implement. But as yet they do not feel strong enough for a rent strike.

The Labour councillors walked out of the meeting. But, far from undertaking any positive action such as helping to set up tenants' associations, all they could do is complain that the tenants who turned up to demonstrate against the Act had not turned out to help the Labour election effort.

In nearby Corby the Communist Party-led Tenants Associations had put their trust in the decision of the Labour Council not to implement. When the Council turned about and decided to implement recently, the tenants were left without the preparation and independent organisation necessary for immediate direct action.

Dave Green

BIRMINGHAM

The Birmingham City Council finally cracked and decided to implement the Act on October 3rd. The tenants' coordinating Committee is meeting on 7th October to decide its response. Of the eight tenants' associations one, Pool Farm, is already pledged to withhold the increase.

C.S.

BRISTOL

Three Tenants Associations in Bristol - Southmead, Lawrence Weston and Kingswood estates - are not paying the increase. It is to be hoped that their action will serve as a spark and raise the low

level of mass activity in other associations which resulted in an attendance of only 120 at a demonstration on 30th September.

Simon Temple

CLAY CROSS

At Clay Cross, the first Council to come out in total opposition to the Act, the Labour Council is still showing the way. They have put out posters and leaflets urging their tenants "Do not pay any increase fixed by the Tory Government" and pledging "Not to evict any tenant who refuses to pay any more rent!"

If every Labour Council had done likewise the Act would have been dead and buried long ago.

Trevor Cave

WELL, THEY DON'T CALL THEM 'HIGH-RISE' FOR NOTHING



A Housing Charter

NOT A PENNY ON THE RENTS!

TAKE THE LAND AND BUILDINGS OFF THE BIG PROPERTY OWNERS

TAKE THE MANSIONS OFF THE RICH - NO PENNY OF COMPENSATION TO THEM FOR THEIR LOSS.

NATIONALISE THE BANKS, THE BUILDING SOCIETIES AND THE OTHER MONEY LENDING INSTITUTIONS!

NATIONALISE THE BUILDING INDUSTRY. PLACE IT UNDER THE WORKERS' CONTROL - AND PAY NO COMPENSATION TO THE VULTURES!

LEWISHAM

A few tenants, including Tenants Association leaders and Labour Councillors, are withholding the increase already; but the mass withholding is to be started at the end of a careful campaign.

Public meetings are being held on all estates with votes taken on whether to withhold the increases - the five meetings held so far have all been unanimously in favour. Estates will be canvassed, asking each tenant whether he is prepared to withhold - and when an estate canvass has given a positive result, the increase will be withheld.

Loudspeaker meetings, petitions, and leaflets at places of work have also been used by the Lewisham Joint Action Committee. A meeting is being arranged with local shop stewards to enlist support, and the JAC is demanding a pledge from Lewisham (Labour) Council that it will not evict tenants who withhold the increase. Steve Woodling

NEWCASTLE (STAFFS)

The Tenants' Association is of long standing: in a sense, this can be a weakness, since there isn't the same upsurge of enthusiasm as with a newly formed Association.

But a demonstration in Wolstanton gathered 1000 people.

So far it is reported that only 6% of tenants are not paying the increase - but that's the Council's figure...

Pat Longman

TEESSIDE

Teesside at present stands as a sad testimony to the possible result of a defeated rents strike. In 1967-'68 there was large scale tenants' organisation in Teesside. But the rent strikers were isolated and defeated. Today: nothing - until a wave of militancy elsewhere shows Teesside tenants that defeat is not inevitable.

Tony Duffy



WHERE WE STAND

workers fight

□ CAPITALISM is inseparable from the exploitation by the bourgeoisie of the working class 'at home' and (since 'advanced' capitalism became imperialist) of the workers and peasants in the colonies and neo-colonies abroad.

It is a vicious system geared to buttressing the strong against the weak, to serving the handful of capitalists against the millions of workers, and to keeping many millions in poverty so that a few may prosper. Capitalism exalts property and degrades life. It is at the root of the racialism which poisons and divides worker against worker. It is a system of massive waste and social disorganisation, at the same time as it forces the working class to fight every inch of the way to better or even maintain its wages and conditions.

Having once been progressive, in that it at least developed, in the only way then possible, the productive resources of mankind, it is now a totally reactionary force in history. Its expansion after World War 2 gave it merely the appearance of health: in reality the boom was like the flush on a sick man's face. And already economic expansion has given way to creeping stagnation.

□ TODAY the ruling class can keep their system going only at the cost of large scale unemployment and attempts to cut the living standards of workers in the 'rich' parts of the world, of massive starvation and bloodshed in the 'poor' two thirds of the world, and of the ever-present threat of the destruction of humanity through nuclear war.

□ THE ONLY WAY OUT is for the working class to take power and to bring the resources of the modern economy under a rational working class plan, in place of the present unplanned and blind private-profit system. Having overthrown capitalism and established social ownership of the means of production, the working class will build towards a truly communist society, in which at last the principle will be "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

□ The working class has created political parties for this purpose — LABOUR PARTIES, COMMUNIST PARTIES, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. — But in country after country these parties have joined capitalist governments and managed capitalism. They have betrayed the socialist aspirations of their working class supporters, tied the labour movement to the bosses' state, interest and ideology, and destroyed the political independence of the working class.

□ The task is therefore to build a socialist party which will stand firmly for the interests of the working class. WORKERS' FIGHT is a group of revolutionary socialists, aiming to build that party: a party which is democratically controlled by an active working class membership, which preserves its political independence and fights the ideological domination of the ruling class.

□ The basis of our activity is the scientific theory of MARXISM, the only theory which gives a clear understanding of present day society and of the necessity of revolutionary change.

□ Although they cannot organise the struggle for workers' power, the TRADE UNIONS are indispensable for the defence of workers' interests. We fight for the independence of the unions from all state control, and within the unions for militant policies and for democracy. We see the trade union bureaucracy as a distinct stratum which acts as a broker between workers and bosses. Its life and work-situation is quite different from that of the working class. Lacking a direct, necessary allegiance to working class interests, or any fundamental historical interests of its own, its general tendency is to work with the bosses and their state against the working class.

□ Only a mass national rank and file movement, linking up the different industries and guided by the ideas of revolutionary Marxism can, in this period, turn the trade unions into reliable instruments of working class interests, independent of the bosses' state.

□ We fight against the INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT, against any incomes policy under capitalism, and against any legal restrictions on trade unionism.

□ We fight against UNEMPLOYMENT; for a national minimum wage; for work or full pay; against productivity bargaining.

□ We fight to extend the power of workers to control the details of their own lives in industry here and now. We stand for the fight for WORKERS' CONTROL with the understanding that it can be made a serious reality only in a workers' state. We are against any workers' "participation" in managing their own exploitation under capitalism.

□ We believe that the "PARLIAMENTARY ROAD TO SOCIALISM" is a crippling illusion. The capitalist class will not leave the stage peacefully; no ruling class ever has. Socialism can be built only by smashing the capitalist state machine (army, police, civil service) which is the ultimate defence of the bosses' power in society, and replacing it with a state based on democratic Workers' Councils.

□ The LABOUR PARTY is a capitalist party in its ideas, its policies, and in its record in government. At the same time, the bedrock organisations of the working class, the trade unions, support and finance the Labour Party. There is an open valve connection between the Labour Party and the unions, allowing the possibility of large-scale active working class participation in the party.

□ We relate to the Labour Party, therefore, not by simply denouncing it, but by attempting to advance the working class towards outgrowing and breaking through the stage in its own development — ideological, political and organisational — represented by Labourism.

□ We fight for full and equal rights for WOMEN, for female emancipation from the male domination which has co-existed throughout history with class society and which has its roots in such society. We fight, in particular, for the emancipation of women of our own class, suffering a double and triple exploitation, who have been most accurately described as the "slaves of the slaves."

□ We fight against RACIALISM and against immigration controls. We fight for the integration of immigrant workers into the labour movement and for a united fight against capitalism, whilst supporting the right of black minorities in Britain to form defence leagues or independent political organisations.

□ We give unconditional support to the struggles of oppressed peoples everywhere fighting against IMPERIALISM, and to their organisations leading the fight.

□ British workers have — fundamentally — more in common with every single worker throughout the globe, irrespective of race, religion, nationality or colour, than with the whole of the British ruling class. We see the fight for socialism as a world wide struggle, necessitating the creation of a world revolutionary party. We give critical support to the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL.

□ We stand for a political revolution of the working class against the bureaucracies of THE U.S.S.R. and the other countries called 'communist', which we consider to be degenerated and deformed workers' states. The social regime of the different Bureaucracies has nothing in common with socialism, let alone with real communism. At the same time we defend the nationalised economy in these countries against capitalism and imperialism, unconditionally: that is, irrespective of the selfish, usually anti-working class and anti-revolutionary policies of the ruling bureaucrats, and against those policies.

□ There are OTHER POLITICAL GROUPS (including the official British section of the Fourth International) which have generally similar aims but methods differing from ours, or differing conceptions about what needs to be done here and now. We consider all these groups to be seriously — sometimes grossly — inadequate in theory and practice. We favour unity in action with these groups where possible, and a serious dialogue about our differences.

REVIEW OF THE LEFT PRESS

workers press on rents, on

Ireland—it's all the same...

The main thrust of the bosses' attack on the working class here and now is, without doubt, the 'Fair Rents' Act.

On 30 September the Workers Press gave the views of the Socialist Labour League on this issue.

"Beware of rent strikes isolating struggle — defeat Tories to beat rent Act" was the headline.

After explaining the coming rent increases, they state:

"... the IS (International Socialists) now says 'the Tories can be beaten' with rent strikes.

"But this is also dangerous nonsense. The central question remains not to 'beat the Tories' but to make the TUC call a General Strike to force the Tories to resign and elect a Labour Government pledged to socialist policies and the repeal of the Housing Finance Act."

"... Councils of Action are being set up all over Britain with the aim of leading the campaign to make the Tories resign through a General Strike.

"Unless the tenants have this perspective, there is a grave danger that groups like IS will lead rent strikes into purely protest action in isolation from the working class organised in its trade unions. On that basis rent strikes will be defeated."

Now, although we are not supporters of the International Socialists, we must point out, in elementary accuracy, that the IS do call for industrial support for the rents struggle.

The logic of the Workers Press statement is, therefore, that any tenants who thought that they should launch a struggle against the Fair Rents Act, calling for industrial support, should stop now. First you must form a Council of Action — a genuine, SLL-led Council of Action, though, free from 'revisionism'; then a General Strike; then — wait a minute, you can't smash the Act yet — an election; then vote Labour; and then — at last, we're there — pressure the Labour Government to repeal the Fair Rents Act.

The same approach is found on another main issue facing the British working class — the struggle in Ireland. This was discussed recently by Workers Press on 4 October.

"... if the three years since trouble first began in 1969 hold any lessons at all, it is that terror carried out by groups of individuals achieves only the incitement of counter-terror."

"The troops will not be withdrawn from Ulster, internment will not end, and decent living standards and jobs opportunities will not be provided for all workers until, as a first step, the Tory government is forced to resign and a Labour government elected which is forced to carry out socialist policies."

The same view was put forward on 2 October.

"... the only answer is in the unity of Protestant and Catholic and British and Irish workers to force the Tory government to resign and return a Labour Government pledged to socialist policies."

What would be the culmination of a tremendous political development — the "unity of Protestant and Catholic and British and Irish workers" — is seen as coming even before the far more modest "first step".

But in the meanwhile, before the unity of all British and Irish workers, what? Should the Republican workers defend themselves by the only means possible — that is, with guns — against the violence of the British Army and the Orange para-military forces?

If they take the advice of the Workers Press, no. They, like the tenants, should wait. Workers Press talks about "the futile use of the gun" and describes the IRA as "terrorists" — "while army retaliation against terrorists is becoming massive and ruthless ..." (2 Oct).

Thus the Workers Press fails to state support for the Republicans — fighting for the progressive goal of a united Ireland and against imperialism — against the British Army and the

Orangemen fighting to preserve the meagre relative privileges granted to them as the clients and supporters of British imperialism. It is just 'terror' and 'counter-terror'.

But by far the greater part of the military action of the IRA is not, in a Marxist sense, 'terrorism'. It is not the action of tiny groups isolated from the mass struggle. It is the action of a popular militia, working in small units. It is guerrilla warfare.

One can only be grateful that the Workers Press line on Ireland is not followed in Vietnam. Otherwise the NLF would never have started fighting, and Diem would still rule his police state.

The method of the SLL is a strange mixture of ultra-leftism and reformism. They — in ultra-left style — insist on raising "the question of power" as the solution to every problem. At the same time, they put the "question of power" in the utterly reformist terms of "a Labour Government pledged to socialist policies".

The contradiction between the two came out very clearly in the Workers Press of 2 October. The SLL is supporting a candidate for national organiser of the AUEW, Jim Bevan. They were put in a quandary because Bevan's CP-supported opponent, Bromley, already advocated the SLL's formula: "Our task is to remove this Tory government at the earliest possible opportunity and return a Labour government pledged to socialist ideals".

Bevan's reply is: "Such a programme cannot be realised under the reformist leadership which presently dominates the unions".

Think about that a bit. The 'first step' on everything — the fight against the Fair Rents Act, the fight for freedom for Ireland — is to force the Tories to resign. BUT this "cannot be realised under the reformist leadership which presently dominates the unions". So the real first step is to ensure that the SLL captures the leadership of the trade unions. Then the trade unions under revolutionary leadership will ... put in a Labour Government!

The SLL is renowned on the British left as the group which never admits or analyses the slightest mistake. The result of this is the present political mess of all the reformist and ultra-left deviations from the League's past.

SDLP — BROKERS

From p.3

Their refusal to attend caused as much anxiety for the SDLP as it did for the British government. If they had attended they would have lost any remaining support and credibility they have among Catholic workers. Their refusal to send White-law their proposals was a feeble gesture for home consumption given the fact that they liberally scattered 50 000 copies of their document around Irish and British political parties.

As expected Darlington came up with nothing new. It did not even live up to its own pathetic expectations. The British government's attempt to impose a solution on northern Ireland, under the guise of 'consultation' with the people of the area, has been a farce and has been shown to be such. Only a democratic decision of all the people of Ireland, north and south, can begin to solve the problems of Ireland.

MACHINE TOOL WORKER

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WHAT'S WRONG WITH A THRESHOLD AGREEMENT

by JACK SUTTON

Heath's proposals for a £2 limit on wage rises coupled with the introduction of threshold clauses have once again brought these threshold agreements to the forefront of the wages struggle.

The idea of Threshold Agreements was first suggested by the TUC some months ago and they have figured prominently in the talks between the TUC and the Government since then. Some agreements (between BOC and the TGWU/GMWU, for example) which include a threshold clause have already been signed.

Others — local government manual workers, hospital-Ancillary Staffs — are in the pipeline. But what exactly are Threshold Agreements and what lies behind them?

The basic idea behind Threshold Agreements is that future wage (and salary) settlements would include automatic provision for further wage increases should the cost of living rise by more than some agreed percentage. An 8% pay rise, for example, might be agreed with a further rise of 1% for each 1% the cost of living rises by more than say, 5% during the year.

On the surface this looks fair enough, but a little investigation soon shows that far from being 'fair', Threshold Agreements are just the latest ploy to cut workers' living standards. For a 1% rise in your wage does not mean a 1% rise in the money in your paypacket. The fact is that for workers who earn more than £20 a week pay, almost a third of any wage rise goes straight to the Government in the form of income tax and higher national insurance deductions.

The situation for lower-paid workers is even worse. For them every wage rise (unless it is a really massive increase) means a wage cut. A man with 4 children, for instance, earning £22 a week now has a net disposable income of £25.08 thanks to family income supplement and rent and rate rebates.

But if he receives a £2 pay rise his net disposable income will fall — to £23.75 because his higher wage level will disqualify him from receiving certain benefits like free school dinners and make him eligible for income tax.

In order to keep up with the official cost of living scale — the Retail Price Index — wages under a Threshold Agreement would have to rise by at least 1.3% for each 1% increase in the scale.

PRICES

The Tories have other tricks up their sleeves as well. The official Government Retail Price Index, which the TUC has suggested should be used to calculate the percentage increase in the cost of living, does not measure the real effect of price increases for most workers, especially the lower paid. According to the official index, the average cost of living has risen by 62.6% in the last 10 years.

But the same figures show that the basic necessities of life on which the biggest proportion of most workers' wages are spent have risen by much more — bread by more than 70%, meat by 78%,



rents by 91% (this is without the new 'Fair Rents' Act), and bus and train fares by 107%.

The thing to remember is that the expenditure pattern — the family budgets — of lower paid workers do not follow those of the "average worker". Lower paid workers spend a much greater proportion of their income on things like food, housing, public transport, and light and fuel.

And in the last few years it has been items in precisely this range that have increased faster in price than the average increase in prices of all items in the official index. As a result the cost of living for lower paid workers has gone up faster. It's obvious that far from enabling workers to keep up with the rise in the cost of living Heath's and the TUC's proposals mean gradual wage cuts.

Threshold Agreements have other dangers inbuilt in them too. For instance, a threshold clause may state that the cost of living allowance will be paid to the extent by which the cost of living rises beyond 5% in the next six months. This means that although workers will get the cost of living rise they will have to wait until the six months is up before it is paid. In the meantime, of course, they will have to put up with a loss in their buying power.

Again, some agreements contain a clause (like the one in the recent builders' settlement) which says that any increase in the cost of living above 8% will be compensated for — but, and here's the rub — only by the amount by which it exceeds 8%. If, for example, prices rise by 12% in so many months, then the basic will be raised by 4%, not 12%.

TRADE UNIONS

But perhaps the greatest danger in the attraction of Threshold Agreements from the Tories' and employers' point of view is the hope that trade unions will settle for considerably smaller basic increases, because they would not feel it necessary to include protection against future rises in the cost of living.

The Government is hoping that after the first round of wage settlements, the unions will respond by accepting a substantially lower

level of settlements in all future years, as they accept that wages are insured against cost of living rises.

Even if this doesn't happen they can still reply to a hefty wage demand — "Get stuffed, you've already had a cost of living rise, what are you trying to do, ruin the economy....."

It is for these reasons that Threshold Agreements must be opposed. It's no good Vic Feather saying that a policy of Threshold Agreements "is not wage restraint and has no relation to any policy of wage restraint". He knows full well that Threshold Agreements do mean wage restraint.

STUDENTS: BUILD THE L.C.D.S.U.

Last year saw a definite change in student politics. The slogan of 'worker-student' solidarity has taken on real meaning. The help given by students during the miners' strike (fund raising, picketing and publicity) considerably aided the miners' victory. Many workers now really welcome support from students.

In this period of increasing worker and student solidarity, the Tories are launching a severe attack on students. Among their proposals, which have been temporarily postponed, are plans to give university and college authorities more control over student funds, to appoint a Registrar of Student Unions, to insist on a standard 'Aims and Objects' clause in all student union constitutions, and to put union membership on an opt-in basis. The purpose of all these proposals is the same — to stop student unions being an area where left-wing ideas have influence and to stop student unions using their funds to aid strikers, tenants, and Irish republicans and socialists.

What has the National Union of Students done about the Tory offensive? The NUS, during the 1967-69 upsurge, was simply anti-student. With Jack Straw and Digby Jacks as presidents, however, it has moved. NUS is the prepared to engage in a certain amount of militancy on 'student-unionist' issues, in order to bring student unrest within its channels. However, Digby Jacks, the Communist Party president of NUS, has continually played down the political issues and accepts the principle of state supervision of funds. Action against the

And there is more to it than £.p. The principle involved is that Threshold Agreements try to con workers into relying on Government regulations, rather than their own organised strength, to gain a decent living. It is the basic issue of whether unions are to be responsible to their members or to the employers' Government and the employers' State.

A massive ideological and political struggle must be waged against any form of prices and incomes policy, wage restraint, or 'conciliation'. Workers must not be fooled by nonsense such as the 'national interest' and the ritual cries of protest from the Trade Union officialdom.

Tory proposals have been limited to a one-day stoppage and a demonstration in London. The failure to link up the political issues meant that when the Tories postponed implementation of the proposals most of the steam was taken out of the NUS campaign.

One positive thing to come out of the Tory attacks is the formation of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Student Unions — an alliance of socialist students. It is significant that the Communist Party refuses to send delegates to its conferences. At the last NUS conference the LCDSU candidates gained over a quarter of the votes standing against Jacks and Co. The LCDSU has been the only group to stand irreconcilably against state 'accountability' on student unions. It has also taken a principled stand of support for the Irish Republicans against the British Army, and practical student support for workers' struggles.

The International Socialists, one of the main forces in the LCDSU up to now, has recently withdrawn from the Liaison Committee on the grounds that the issue of student union autonomy is no longer sufficiently live to be a basis for a useful alliance.

But the Government proposals have only been postponed, and in any case attacks by college administrations on student union autonomy are likely in the very near future. We consider the IS decision shortsighted.

But student union autonomy and aid for trade union struggles are not the only issues. There is the need for socialist students to study as socialists — to criticise, carefully and thoroughly, the established ideas put over to them in their college courses. And if the large numbers of socialist students who do exist are organised, they could be a powerful force in driving the racists and fascists now reappearing on our streets back to their sewers.

BLACKBURN From P.1

down the streets to the railway station where the fascists were assembling.

The police and the fascists were taken completely by surprise. The Front retreated up a narrow street guarded by a Police cordon. The demonstrators then consolidated their forces and charged the police barrier: it was smashed! To the chant of SMASH THE NATIONAL FRONT the leading section of the demonstration flew into the fascists, who were rapidly retreating again.

The police finally got the upper hand by moving in mounted police and blocking the road down which the fascists had marched.

There were 14 arrests in all, and police violence against anti-fascist demonstrators was the rule.

The demonstrators later managed to reassemble around Regency Hall, leased by the Labour Council to the fascists, who were by now holding their meeting. A large force of police had also mustered outside the Hall.

It was at this point that the magnificent unity and solidarity shown by the demonstrators was shattered. A member of the International Socialists announced through his loud hailer that the IS contingent was to make its way back to the coaches and that the demonstration was over! Despite the fact that the fascists and the police had been effectively beaten by united action earlier on in the demonstration, the IS speaker said "We cannot beat the fascists," and withdrew.

It is vital that all future attempts by the fascists to organise their forces be met in a very determined fashion. We must argue patiently with workmates and neighbours who have been influenced by racist propaganda — particularly that of the National Front.

We must explain that unemployment and housing shortage are not caused by immigration but by ruling class policies. We must explain that if the labour movement is weakened by excluding or discriminating against black people, this will hold back the fight against the ruling class — for jobs and housing and other things too. We must explain that the Tories are using immigrants and black people as scapegoats.

With individual racials, we can explain, talk and try to reason. But when racials and fascists organise in the streets, that is no time for patient explanation. Unless we drive them off the streets now, they will grow, gain confidence and attempt to develop on a paramilitary basis so as to terrorise the labour movement and especially our black fellow-workers.

We cannot afford to let them grow as they grew in Italy and Germany in the 1920s and '30s. We have to stop them now!

N.B. Heavy fines will probably be imposed on many arrested demonstrators. The Asian Workers Federation is launching a BLACKBURN DEFENCE FUND — contributions to: Mrs. Patricia Horn, 16 Queensway, Blackburn.

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— as yet and in general — the only form through which we can put the concept of *political action of workers as a class* (rather than sections of a class) — even though in a fettered, mutilated form.

So the answer to the first question is closely connected with the answer to the second.

Workers Fight, at present, argues for a general strike to smash the Industrial Relations Act. The general strike transcends normal politics and

contains the potential of unfettered working class politics.

It is therefore not linked with a call for a general election to put in a Labour Government — because an electoral contest, being a passive, parliamentary process, creating a "wait-'till-they-get-in-and-make-laws" attitude, just doesn't mix with the momentum and direct action of workers in a general strike. In a general strike situation, the arranging of an election can be a very cheap concession for a government to pay

to cool workers back to work.

But in an ordinary election we would definitely support Labour. We fight for our own programme, as set out in *Where We Stand*, and advocate calling on the Labour Party to aid the working class struggle in each concrete practical issue, but never waiting for the Labour Party.

Centrally, in this situation, we should demand of the Labour Party leaders that they do not negate the basic reason for the Labour Party's existence — that they take a stand for the independence of workers' organisations from the bosses' state.

Against any legal restrictions on trade unionism.

Against any incomes policy under capitalism.

The right to employment, or full maintenance for anyone not placed in a job. This cannot be done by 'reflating the economy', 'making Britain competitive', and the like. There must be a shorter working week and a minimum wage for all, employed or unemployed.

With the aid of this process of putting Labour leaders to the test on each concrete issue, we believe we will convince increasing numbers of workers that a revolutionary road is the only one to serve the interests of the working class, and thus promote the formation of a genuine socialist alternative.

Lancs. Engineers win after eleven week strike



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DOCKS 4,700 take severance

The Temporary Unattached Register (TUR) — the 'pool' of unemployed dockers — officially ceased to exist on September 29th.

Large numbers of dockers — 1,700 in London and 4,700 altogether — have accepted the Jones-Aldington severance payments, and the remainder on the TUR have been allocated to employers.

In London, Tilbury, the India, Millwall, and then finally, the Royal docks have dropped the overtime bans which operated when the TUR existed.

It seems fair enough to give dockers who want to take a lump sum and get out the chance to do so. But what is the net result?

Those individuals who have taken their redundancy pay may retire or get other jobs, or think themselves comfortable until their severance lump sum runs out, and they find themselves hard-up and unemployed. But the overall result is that jobs are lost! Someone somewhere loses a chance of a job. And the union organisation of the dockers is weakened — as is shown by the decision to work overtime while nearly one million are unemployed, and by the fact that some ports are still operated recruitment schemes.

The realistic and necessary demand to fight unemployment and preserve dockers' trade union strength is **FOR A 30 HOUR WEEK.**

Eleven weeks of solidarity for 1200 Lancashire engineers ended on 28th September with the winning of a £3.25 pay rise.

During a ban on overtime imposed as part of the 'Engineers Pay Claim' dispute the Walmsley men were approached by the employers to lift the ban in order to install new equipment (a cupola). The men as a gesture of good faith to the management agreed, hoping that the management would return the gesture at future wage negotiations.

This was not to be so. With the equipment installed the men re-imposed the overtime ban. But the management said they couldn't run the equipment without the overtime being worked, and suspended 30 men who refused to work overtime.

The Bolton Works promptly met and withdrew their labour. And the management retaliated viciously, locking out the whole work force at Bolton on June 15th.

The news spread to nearby Bury works, which struck in sympathy. The men at the Wigan plant, when they returned from holiday, also withdrew their labour in support of their brothers in Bolton.

On 25th September there was a half day token strike by engineering workers in Bury in support of their brothers at Walmsley, and a demonstration in the town centre. The high point in the demonstration came when the Walmsley workers entered and occupied the Bury factory. This apparently shook the management and they immediately offered £2.65 as a settlement.

This was rejected, but member at one factory became uneasy about the negotiations when he discovered that the management was sending lorries to make deliveries before the new offer (which at this stage was not made public) had been put to the rank and file.

Numerous rank and file workers approached a WORKERS FIGHT representative expressing their concern about a possible sell-out, and asked for assistance in producing a leaflet to distribute to a further mass meeting on the following day, in the hope of avoiding a return to work until the maximum had been obtained from the management.

A majority vote accepted the £3.25 and a return to work, but many had reservations, expressed in angry remarks as they left the meeting: "A sell out", "a disgraceful performance", "a load of smooth talk to get us back" — "eleven weeks for what will amount to a miserable few bob."

At a further mass meeting, again at Bolton, the Walmsleys men heard their officials tell them that they should accept the new offer of £3.25 (which was only 60p more than the previous offer) and that it was the best they could obtain from the management. Having been told on Tuesday that £2.65 was not enough, the men were told on Thursday that they had secured a magnificent victory.

The fact is that compared with the agreement negotiated by Scanlon on 18th August for engineers nationally, the lads at Walmsley had undoubtedly scored. But was this as good as they could have obtained, considering they held the stronger position?

For possibly the first time in the history of the Company the four factories at Bolton, Bury and Wigan stood united in their opposition to the management. They stuck together.

But also, the full time officials have shown themselves up as, at best, grossly incompetent. With the rejection of the first offer, the men were at a high point of strength and morale, and the management had begun to crumble and offer money. It was precisely at this point that the officials recommended acceptance.

In future it would be better if the full time officials were kept out of a leading role in negotiations, or else given a firm mandate on what they should settle for. Rank and file committees should be set up and at the outset of a dispute they should negotiate the terms.

What was unfortunately not brought out in the Walmsley dispute was the question of a reduction of the working week. If this is not taken seriously by engineers then even more will join the growing ranks of the unemployed.

The occupations were a crucial factor in winning the dispute, enabling workers to go onto the offensive against an initially aggressive management.

Finally, the unity between the four factories is a precious gain. Keep in contact!

H. Sweeney
Norma Dunster