

# Workers' fight

Pages 4&5  
NEW THREAT  
FROM NIRC

5p

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## A working class Policy for the Crisis

If the Government dares to impose a wage freeze, the immediate answer must be a General Strike...

● Fight the idea that there is a common national crisis. There is a crisis of the bosses' system and problems for those who run it. Their solutions, even those agreed with Labour and trade union leaders, are not going to be ours. We need to resist the 'special situation' kidology. It is their system: if they can't run it then we will change it for a better system, a working class system. Meanwhile any talk of sacrifices in the national interest is just dope for suckers.

● Don't fall for sops. So what if they make a few tax attacks on the speculators in property? That only means that the ruling class as a whole is willing to trim the interests of one of its parts the better to help subordinate the working class to itself.

Labour Party demagogues make a big fuss about features of capitalism such as the Lonrho scandal, which even Heath doesn't dare to defend. But it is not only the dirty face of capitalism which is unacceptable but the whole corrupt body of a rotten system which will go on

condemning workers to deprivation, shortages and conflicts as long as it survives.

● We must not accept short time working with loss of pay. Cut the working week with no loss of pay! The trade unions must fight layoffs with the demand for work or full maintenance.

● The whole of the fuel industry - the oil companies and the gas exploration companies - must be nationalised under the control of the working class. It is proof of the nature of capitalism that the Government itself is having great difficulty in finding out the true facts of the oil situation from the oil monopolists.

Demand that the books, accounts, records and deals are opened for inspection by workers or their representatives or nominees.

● If the Government dares to impose a wage freeze the answer, immediate and powerful, must be a general strike which also takes as its goal the repeal of the Industrial Relations Act and the scrapping of Phase 3.

We must scrap the Industrial Relations Act, not allow it to be a bargaining counter for the government in a deal with the union leaders.

We must insist that there can be no more interference with free collective bargaining in face of the monstrous inflation which now grips the capitalist system. Let the bosses pay - the working class must refuse to pay.

Prepare now for a general strike - by spreading the idea, and by establishing connections between the rank and file bodies.

Demand the recall of the TUC to organise a General Strike. \*See back page

● Campaign for a high minimum basic wage, for a 35 hour week and for automatic cost of living rises for those on a fixed income.

● Demand that the Labour Party breaks the bipartisan policy in Parliament into which it is increasingly slipping, and campaigns in support of the unions to get the Tories out.

Demand that Labour campaign for an immediate General Election on at least

the policies of widescale nationalisations etc. of its last Conference. Demand that Labour comes out in full support of the miners, the railmen, the engineers and others who are fighting Phase 3.

Demand that the Labour Party pledges itself to carry through immediately on election the following measures:

Repeal the Industrial Relations Act and compensate its trade union victims.

End all government interference with the trade unions; no incomes policy under capitalism; demolish Phase 3 and the 'counter inflation' legislation of which it is part.

Bring in a guaranteed £30 minimum wage tied closely to the cost of living.

Scrap the Housing Finance Act.

Enforce equal pay for women NOW.

Abolish all racist Immigration Acts.

Unconditionally withdraw British troops from Ireland.

## Support Miners, Railmen!

# WORK OR FULL PAY!

THERE MAY BE two million unemployed by February. And for those still at work, the Government may attempt to scrap Phase 3, which Heath says is TOO GENEROUS, and replace it with a straight WAGE FREEZE.

These are only two of the dire predictions for the immediate future as Britain is engulfed by a deep national and international sudden crisis, undermining all the assumptions of growth on which Phase 3 was based.

Shortage of oil threatens a major cut back in production, mass layoffs and even steeper inflation eating even further into our wage packets.

Now the Government has provoked the miners and railmen into mounting a major industrial challenge to Phase 3. The month old overtime ban of the miners is hitting hard with a 30% drop in coal production. The train drivers' overtime ban threatens the Government with widespread disruption. The engineers are working out a strategy to pursue in fighting their claim. And the power engineers' action, hitting directly at electricity supply, isn't helping to lighten Heath's darkest hour.

These are the elements of the crisis the government faces. The favourite scapegoats of the government and its Fleet Street lie factory are the miners and the railmen. Their solution, so far as they pretend to have one, is that the miners and railmen should settle "in the national interest".

They look to the union leaders to bale them out of the crisis of their system's making, and to the Labour leaders to keep a common front with them against trade union militancy. Meanwhile, the emergency powers taken by the Government at the start of the crisis, including centrally coordinated special police squads to deal with pickets, are being renewed and strengthened.

They are so worried that the President of the CBI - the spokesman for the big bosses' organisation - even calls for higher taxes on the rich ... temporarily, of course: he hopes that will act as a cosmetic on the raddled face of capitalism and help the trade union leaders sell their members on the idea of a 'National Emergency' that must be met by a common capitalist Labour policy.

They have brought Tory Gauleiter Willie Whitelaw back from Northern Ireland to try and patch up a new fabric of agreement between the union leaders and the Government. There is talk, as yet vague and unofficial, of the Industrial Relations Act being up for negotiation, perhaps as part of an emergency deal. Meanwhile Sir John Donaldson rides the range robbing the unions in the interests of the capitalists.

The scarcely avoidable confrontation between the Unions and the NIRC on the issue of compensation awards against the

Continued back page

## IRISH HUNGER-STRIKERS FORCIBLY FED



SEE p.8

## Kirkby TENANTS JAILED



Police hold back protest picket at Walton Jail.

ON Thursday 6th December at 7.30 in the morning, Bailiffs came to the Tower Hill Estate, Kirkby (near Liverpool) to arrest three men for defying the government. One of them had already gone out to work, but the other two, Larry Doyle and Brian Owens, were taken off to Walton Jail.

The police in fact are after 13 people on the Tower Hill Estate, all militant tenants who have put up a fight against the Tories' Housing Finance Act and refused to pay the council rack-rents. The warrants for their arrest were issued after they persistently refused to appear in court to answer earnings attachment summonses in respect of their arrears in their rent since the rent strike began.

They had in fact been warned that the men would be taken to Walton and the women to Risley Remand Centre. But instead of obeying the court summons, the men went into hiding with their children, while the women were ready to mobilise at a few minutes' notice through an already established alarm system.

Immediately after the arrests, the Rent Action Group began the job of visiting local factories to ask for action. On the next day, three Kirkby factories were out on strike in support of the jailed tenants. The dockers are to hold a

meeting on Wednesday 12th December to discuss action, other meetings are planned at other Merseyside works, and the AUEW District Committee has already committed itself to recommending strike action if any tenant is jailed.

Larry Doyle, after some time in Walton, agreed to appear in court and was released. But Brian Owens, a building trade shop steward, is still refusing to 'purge his contempt' of the court.

On the Saturday, tenants marched round the Estate, and on Sunday a mass picket of 700-800 gathered outside the Jail. They included tenants from other areas of the north west, trade unionists and members of political organisations. And every evening there has been a 2-hour picket outside the jail, regularly attended by 50 or so people.

Another mass picket of the jail is planned for next Sunday (16th). This one must be bigger and not just attended by local militants. It is important that the defence of these working class fighters be supported all over the country, with strike action and with support for the mass pickets at the jail.

# OIL-CRISIS OF PROFIT



by John Cunningham

**OCCASIONALLY** there is a break in the hullabaloo about "miners holding the country to ransom" — and then it's the evil, conniving, treacherous Arabs holding the West to ransom...

But what are the Arab states being condemned for? Just for acting on one of the basic principles upheld by the capitalist press which now condemns them — the principle of trying to sell on the best conditions possible.

The oil giants have long had their suckers in the Middle East oil fields. Their gross receipts from 1900 to 1960 amounted to around 32 billion dollars. World-wide, 90% of oil is produced in and exported from the oil-exporting underdeveloped countries. But 90% of that 90% — together with the bulk of the profits made — is consumed in the rich countries of the world: the USA, Europe, Japan.

Only the blindest hypocrisy can condemn the Arab states — reactionary and oppressive though they are — for seeking better commercial conditions for their oil, or for pressuring the western powers to stop supporting Israel.

King Faisal of Saudi Arabia has been coming under increasing pressure from the more militant Arab leaders like Colonel Gaddafi of Libya — themselves under pressure from the people — to take a stand. The 10% cut in oil exports to those countries supporting Israel represents the very least he could do.

## Inflation

The cut in production, particularly when accompanied with a rise in price, is very much in the interests of the oil-producing countries. The oil they still have is a more stable asset than the currency they receive for it when it's sold: they are estimated to have lost as much as £600 million pounds just through currency inflation at the beginning of this year.

The Arab action has been used as a jumping-off point for general alarm about an overall "energy crisis". The alarm has been the greatest in the USA — even though the USA has been scarcely hit at all.

In fact, the Arab action is very limited. As one paper put it, "Europe may get a little chilly, but it won't freeze". US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has made haste to try to fix up a settlement in the Middle East — but there is no doubt that the Arab states are finally willing to make a settlement. And to use the Palestinian liberation movement as a bargaining pawn which can be sold out in return for concessions elsewhere.

Overall, proved world oil reserves amount to more than 550

billion barrels — enough for about 20 years in the future. The estimates of resources are made by the oil monopolies, who have an interest in under-estimating rather than over-estimating; reserves may in fact last much longer than 20 years.

There are well known alternative sources of energy — using nuclear power, heat from the sun, and the earth's own heat. No-one can doubt that the effects of modern science could find economical ways of exploiting them well within 20 years. It is only the short-sighted, profit-orientated nature of capitalism that makes for 'energy crisis'.

## Cornered

But the US oil giants have an interest in building up an 'energy crisis' scare. As early as September 1972 they were deliberately cutting back their refining capacity. They can utilise the Arab action very conveniently to their advantage.

Although there is no question of oil running out altogether, the more profitable reserves will certainly not last for ever. The monopolies want to see to it that their profits do not run out together with those reserves. They have to secure finance for the opening up of new reserves and new energy sources. (Already they have cornered, for example, most of the world's uranium reserves).

For some time now the projected Alaska oil pipeline has been held up by the 'ecology lobby', which is concerned with the effect on the natural environment. By using the scare, the oil companies can not only push for its completion, saying that it is in the national interest, but also probably get the US government to put up some of the staggering £1,875 million needed for it.

They can also press for finance to develop other energy sources.

And there are several advantageous side-effects. In this year alone in the USA, 2000 independent petrol distributors folded up. The giants can more and more control the whole process from well to pump. At the same time they use the crisis to push up prices in the USA and boost profit levels there — where they were previously lower than in Europe or Japan.

The whole of US capital gains from the effect on their main competitor, Japan. Japan depends almost entirely on the Middle East for its oil, while the USA, with large oilfields in Texas and elsewhere, gets only 5% from the Middle East.

What we have, then, is not a shortage of oil — but a 'shortage' of oil profits. It is not a crisis of energy — it is a crisis of the system of production of profit. ■

## Naomi Wimbourne argues - BUILD NATIONAL P.S.C. NOW!

100 people met in Leeds University on Saturday November 24th for a teach-in on Palestine. This meeting, arranged by Leeds Palestine Solidarity Campaign, was intended to launch a national campaign with a view to holding a conference in the New Year, and establishing a national organisation to enlist support for the Palestinian conflict with the Zionist state of Israel.

Unfortunately the majority at the Leeds meeting rejected the idea of setting up a national campaign, arguing that serious work should first be done in the localities, and that central political direction was undesirable.

They were opposed by the IMG and Workers Fight, but it was agreed that the Leeds PSC should act as a coordinating committee and communications centre, and attempt to arrange a further meeting in a few months. Now there is, unfortunately, a big danger that the interest that has developed in the Middle East situation will die down before a firm solidarity movement can be consolidated.

The desperate need for solidarity, for the lies and distortions of the Zionist press to be countered with real knowledge about the Middle East and the Palestinian struggle, was stressed time and again by speakers at the teach-in.

## Power

Frank Girling of Sheffield PSC said that until large-scale discoveries of oil were made, the Arab people remained relatively free of exploitation by western powers. Now, however, it is these western, imperialist interests which determine the course of development of the Arab world. The USA, Britain, France and West Germany all have vital interests in the area, and the ruling regimes, whether unashamedly feudal dictatorships like Feisal's and Hussein's or ostensibly 'progressive' like Assad's & Sadat's, are mainly concerned with maintaining their own power and making profitable links with the West. It is only pressure from the Arab masses which forces these regimes to act in support of the Palestinian cause.

Britain, he said, in its support for Israel, participates in denying the Palestinian people the right of nationhood and the return to their land. Thus, we in Britain have a duty to unite our forces with those of the Palestinian struggle against our Government's complicity in their oppression.

# Need for a Palestine Solidarity Campaign



Palestine guerrilla youth parade in Jordan before Hussein's slaughter

An important contribution to the discussion was made by Sami Ramadani, from the Committee for Solidarity with the Revolution in Palestine and the Arab Gulf, and the Committee for Defence of the Iraqi People. He outlined the development of resistance movements among the Palestinians.

As a result of Zionist settlement in Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel which excludes Arabs from citizenship in their own country, the Palestinians are landless people. Since 1948 they have lived in territory occupied by Israel and in refugee camps or dispersed in other Arab countries — chiefly Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

Those who wanted to fight for the restoration of their land joined already existing Arab organisations, some communist, some nationalist, some Moslem, and took part in the general movement for Arab unity as a means of

winning their own struggle. But from 1956 onwards it gradually became clear that clinging to the coat-tails of Arab leaders like Nasser would not lead to the liberation of Palestine, nor to the ousting of imperialism from the Middle East.

At about that time a magazine called 'Our Palestine' was produced. People began to split away from the various national Arab organisations, at first in small numbers, and come together on the basis of their Palestinian origins. This movement marked the beginning of Al Fateh.

The first military action took place on January 1st 1965, and was an attempt to sabotage Israeli plans to divert the course of the river Jordan into Zionist-held territory — a plan which had, amazingly, awoken no response from the Arab governments concerned! The Palestinians remember well, too, that their first casualty was inflicted by the Jordanian Army.

Now, Ramadani said the Palestinian resistance movement has united the scattered Palestinian people together in a common purpose, and with an understanding that their allies are the oppressed people in the 'third world', the Arab masses, and the working class in industrialised west. The Palestinians have a very clear understanding that they are fighting Zionism as a representative of imperialism, and not the Jews as people. And in their overall strategy they have had to take account of the reactionary forces in the Arab camp, and include as one of their aims the struggle to overthrow these elements so as to secure a democratic, secular Palestine for Jews and Arabs alike.

Thus they see themselves not just as the most victimised section of the Arab masses, but also as the spearhead of the Arab movement against imperialism. This, then, is a struggle where both super-powers are involved up to their necks; where Arab reactionaries are jockeying for advantage with a militarist, racist bastion of imperialism; and where the Palestinian and Arab masses are struggling in this situation to build their resistance forces. That a meeting where the importance of this struggle was made blindingly clear should put aside the responsibility of organising a solidarity movement is a blunder which must be corrected as soon as possible. ■

If you, or your organisation are prepared to take part in solidarity work preparatory to calling a national conference, please contact Q. Taie, 3 Lucas Place, Leeds LS6 2JB

## FUEL CRISIS SHORT TIME Cut profits, not wages!

**THERE** has been talk of an 11-day shut-down over Christmas because of fuel shortage. In the USA, General Motors has already announced plans to close down operations at 16 assembly plants this month. And that's even before the Arab oil boycott has had any effect.

Britain will be far harder hit by the oil cutback than the USA. The Engineering Employers' Federation has talked of laying off 70,000 workers.

While the oil monopolies push up their profits (1972 profits were 60 to 80% up on 1971) workers will be asked to make sacrifices because of the shortages.

We should refuse. We should demand that the sacrifices be made from capitalist profits. It is not true that the world is short of energy, taken as a whole. If we make sacrifices to get through the 'energy crisis', we are simply covering up for the oil monopolies' profit drive and their decades long super-exploitation of the Middle East which has now produced a (very limited) backlash.

To start taking responsibility for the crises and chaos of capitalism is to abandon our own interests. The logic is to accept redundancies, speed-ups, wage cuts.... all are justified in terms of the common 'national interest'.

But this capitalist system is not our system. Our interest is in overthrowing and replacing it, not in patching it up. If there are lay offs because of the oil crisis, we should demand WORK OR FULL PAY. Full pay should be guaranteed even if working hours are cut. Working and living conditions must be OUR first priority — not profits.

# How Greece got its new Dictators

With the coup of November 25th the Greek military have launched a new offensive of repression to prop up the stability of their state. After the mass uprisings which saw fierce street fighting and the reimposition of martial law, all hope had gone of restoring the policy favoured by the United States and their protege Papadopoulos of bringing in enough bourgeois normality to appease the EEC and solve Greece's investment crisis.

On 26th November the new President, General Demetrios Ghizikis, and his powerful backer General Ioannides — the head of the military police — purged out numerous army and police chiefs to make themselves quite secure. U.S. interests revealed themselves through the choice of Premier, Chicago lawyer Androutsopoulos.

## Liberalisation

Not long before the coup, Ioannides had tried to get Papadopoulos to appoint his protege Ghizikis as Army Chief, but failed. Now he can secure by arrests and purges what he failed to do manoeuvre and negotiation.

Why did Papadopoulos fail? What were the forces and pressures behind the mass uprisings?

The process of 'liberalisation' initiated by the Papadopoulos regime was not even half-hearted. It was simply an obscene sham. And yet it evoked amongst the mass of Greeks a new daring, and impressed upon the old Junta a new restraint.

The struggle of the students, however, goes back further than the 'liberalisation' of this Autumn. Already a year ago they were in

active struggle against the Junta which, having already set the students back at square one in its early years by reversing all the educational reforms of the Centre Union, then set about reorganising the education system. Not only was there the pervasive strict political supervision, but now also the Junta was moving to produce a cheaper and more technologically oriented system of higher education.

Last Autumn saw a growing opposition to the 'student leaders' appointed by the government to head 'student unions'. Demands for elections and a free student assembly began to gain ground rapidly. In the New Year, students at the Athens Polytechnic began an open struggle against the Papadopoulos junta, in clear opposition to a variety of repressive laws.

On January 26th a mass demonstration of student strikers at the Polytechnic chanted slogans not only to do with education but also on the theme of 'Bosses Out'. The Junta responded with a mass of arrests — "starting", as one student said "with those with the longest hair and working their way up."

## Thuggery

Already 11 months before last month's coup changeover, it was clear that the Junta would face difficulty from the students as the thaw continued, because each time it proceeded, the students' use of their wider room for action meant that Papadopoulos immediately resorted to the old methods of violent repression.

The revolt of last January was so widespread that even at Iannina, the capital of Epirus — the most



Occupation at Athens Polytechnic — prelude to Police chief's takeover

reactionary region of Greece and a base for the new Generals' Junta — students struck and were victorious.

The next round came in February. In response to the growing student movement the Junta enacted Law 1347, which says that student 'troublemakers' can be immediately drafted into the army. When this failed to quell the students, the regime resorted to straightforward thuggery. A meeting at the Pharmaceutical School was broken up with terrible violence by the police. In response Athens University, the Law School and the School of Medicine declared their solidarity. Two massive demonstrations were followed by occupations of university buildings. On February 22nd, another mass meeting drew support from sections outside the students, with slogans ("Bring back our brothers", "Freedom", "People, we want your solidarity") which go

## by PAUL ADAMS

far beyond the immediate educational issues. In Salonica in the far north, 100,000 students marched against the Junta.

Finally brute force prevailed. An occupation of the Law Faculty, started after the mobilisations had begun to ebb, was broken up with a ferocity unusual even for the Greek police. Meanwhile, the annual 30% inflation was forcing the working class into action. A strike of building workers, traditionally militant, won a clear victory.

Despite the brutal force which met them earlier in the year, the students courageously went into the attack in November, impelled by the conditions imposed on them. On 14th November the Athens Polytechnic students met and demanded the right to elect their own officers. Their demands ignored, they occupied the building, putting forward slogans and demands that show up the intolerable effects of the junta on education — "End Law 1347", "Abolish supervision by General Security Police Student Division", and "Increase state expenditure on education". Papadopoulos, anxious not to expose the new 'normalisation' by over hasty repression, hesitated as the numbers involved in the occupation mounted.

## Clashes

Before long there were 10,000 in the Polytechnic and 3,000 in Salonica. A radio station was set up and, realising the indecision of the junta, the students decided to rally workers, peasants and others to the banner of a general anti-Junta revolt.

Demonstrations of workers and students began spontaneously in many parts of Athens. And now the Junta knew that it must act! But already things had gone very far. In the clashes that followed once the police terror squads were called in, buses and trolleys were overturned and used as barricades, and workers tried to take over various buildings; they made three attempts to storm the heavily reinforced Ministry of Public Order.

Workers formed a committee to act jointly with the students, who by now had been joined also by high school students. Joint self-defence squads were set up. A demonstration of peasants set off in tractors from the rural outskirts at Megara to demand the overthrow of the Junta.

Armed clashes with the police and the military became common. On a 100,000 strong demonstration, the self defence squads fought off armed police snatch squads — but still many were arrested.

Shaking off the last vestiges of hesitation, his 'normalisation' policy in tatters, Papadopoulos urged on his military command, sending in tanks and armoured cars as the death toll mounted. Using a vast array of weapons, the army and military police managed to retake the three mile radius of liberated Athens around the Polytechnic. The Polytechnic radio station could be heard calling on all Greeks to rise up — but, such were the limitations of student leaders, that in the same breath it denounced another radio station calling for a "smashing of the state" as a provocateur. (It seems that it very likely was, but the slogan should in fact have been that of the student uprising.)

Then on the same radio firing could be heard; then chaos, and finally silence.

At 10.50 on the morning of Saturday 17th November, martial law was declared and later a curfew imposed. The fighting hadn't quite died down, but now the state was clearly in control. Papadopoulos, however, was seen to have failed, and failed dangerously. A week later he was ousted.

After a whole series of heroic clashes, dissipated through lack of leadership, the slow work of underground organisation must now start again. For the new Junta, the contradictions that unseated the old one begin: they must steer between their need for draconian control and the US's economic strategy which calls for normalisation.

They have imposed a harsh military rule — and at the same time released three important bourgeois politicians from long house arrest. These two actions symbolise the two available courses.

The release of George Mavros and John Zigidis (both members of the right wing of the Centre Union) as well as Kanellopoulos (a leading member of the traditional rightist ERE and the last premier before the 1967 coup) may signify a slightly unexpected variation to the 'Government of National Unity' tune. This particular air is played by everyone from the three factions of the Greek Communist Party to the ERE and the American C.I.A.

## Resistance

For the moment, their release acts as a ploy, raising hopes and helping to delay resistance. Soon the USA will play the 'National Unity' card. When they do, whether with Karamanlis as head or someone less discredited like one of the three just released, the masses will move into action again.

In the absence of a revolutionary party, however, a combination of this ploy with reforms and liberal and stalinist demagoguery may prove sufficient to resolve the immediate crisis. ■

SEE P.6  
for background

# Triumph go co-op

The meeting had been under way for a few minutes only. No resolution had yet been put. Few even knew what the recommendation of the negotiating team was going to be. All they knew was that for Triumph Motorcycles, Meriden works, (Coventry) the crunch had come.

Then someone pulled out from his inside pocket a business card and grinned. The card bore the words 'Triumph Motorcycles (Meriden) Limited' — the name of the new company the workers here are determined to run. Before any speeches could be made, the cards were being dished out to everyone there. "As soon as is practically possible, a company will be founded of which you will be the owners". Meriden workers were told by Bill Lapworth, T&GWU District Organiser. He explained that until next July an interim company would be set up which was 'labour only' in the sense that the only investment that it would make would be labour. This company would be a cooperative owned by the workers, having the status of a licensee of Norton Villiers Triumph, and having all manufacturing, patent and trade mark rights.

NVT would continue to be the owners of the land and materials, plant and produce. But NVT Director Dennis Poore would guarantee supplies and guarantee buying all bikes produced at Meriden for a fixed sum yet to be negotiated.

What would happen in July? "The workers will have the right to buy the factory up to July at market value of the company with its name, patent rights and trade marks" was Lapworth's information. "The exclusive right to the TRIUMPH name would have to be negotiated, but they would be producing the 2-cylinder."

One of the big unknowns is still pay and conditions. The platform at the meeting stated that "There is no offer to re-employ anybody on the terms that existed before. What you will be asked to be in the first stage is the part-owner of a company. What you will do will be your business. It will be your decision."

The vote was never in doubt. Not because everyone was happy, but because there seemed to be no alternative. Unanimously the mass



Meriden stewards Denys Johnson and John Grattan, with bikes

meeting decided to start work the following Wednesday. They had offers of assistance from the Chrysler electricians to get the plant in running order by then.

After a long struggle against redundancy, the Triumph workers at Meriden have taken the decision to start the biggest experiment in workers' control in Britain.

But there are still many unanswered questions. How is the money going to be raised to buy the company? There are a lot of worries about this, and as many ideas as worries.

The workers' cooperative must not be crippled by debts built up through having to raise the finance. That way the Triumph workers will simply end up cutting their own wages, and even making themselves redundant. Workers' interests could end up being sacrificed to profits as surely as they have been by Poore.

It has happened before. A shoe factory in Ireland was turned into a workers' cooperative recently; soon, one third of the work force was laid off, and the remainder were doing more work than the whole of the original workforce.

The Triumph workers must demand

that the state foots the bill. The state was willing to give Poore £4.8 million and all he could do was run the industry down. Why should the workers foot the bill for the losses of capitalism? There should be a campaign for a government guarantee of finance while the workers continue to control the factory.

In addition, it is important that the workers don't simply accept Poore's financial reckonings. Otherwise they will find themselves working to fill the pockets of Poore and of the moneylenders who get the interest on Poore's debts. There must be a campaign for access to all the commercial and business secrets of NVT all the dealings with the government, all the loans, agreements and deals.

Most important, the Triumph workers and the whole labour movement must recognise that these important demands cannot be won just by the efforts of one factory alone. A campaign of solidarity must be developed in the whole labour and trade union movement. ■

JACK PRICE

The National Industrial Relations Court has just completed its second year in operation, and it is about to celebrate its birthday with the biggest bombshell that has hit the trade union movement since the Taff Vale case in 1901.

The Industrial Relations Act is, in fact, alive and well and living in Chancery Lane, despite the temporary muzzling of some of its big guns. Under this Act the NIRC and the local Industrial Tribunals make their daily pronouncements on collective bargaining agreements, closed shops and unions' rules. For example it told ACTT that one of its rules (forbidding members to take the Union to the NIRC) could not be legally implemented.

Already there have been over a dozen cases of these courts intervening to reinstate scabs like James Goad into Union membership, or compensating scabs for losing their jobs as a result of pressure from other workers.

APEX has been charged £106, the T&GWU £728, the AUEW a total of £4,783 to compensate five scabs! The NGA, which has already had to pay £1,300 to compensate an ex-member expelled in 1963, could come in for a whole spate of compensation claims if it doesn't re-admit people expelled for scabbing in the 1959 print strike.

Other cases are coming up soon, a number of them arising out of the May 1st strike against Phase 2.

These cases are programmed into the Act. With the Tribunals and the NIRC handling hundreds of unfair dismissal cases, it will in fact be increasingly common for every scab to go running to the NIRC for his pound of flesh.

## Taff Vale

But all these cases, serious though they are, are chickenfeed compared with the sort of amounts that could be levied in 4 cases now before the NIRC.

So far, all compensation paid has been to individuals, and the amount one person can be awarded is limited to about £4,000. The big amounts that the Court has grabbed have been in contempt of court fines — that is, punishment for defiance of the Act.

Now, the first cases are coming up of compensation to companies for their commercial losses, and this compensation can be taken off unions even if they are ever so obedient, recognise the Court and put up a defence in it.

The taking of this compensation is part of the normal functioning of the Act.

This is a complete reversal of the immunity from such claims established by the labour movement in 1906. In only a slightly veiled form, the Industrial Relations Act takes the trade union movement right back to Taff Vale.

This historic case, where the House of Lords awarded £23,000 in damages against the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, was a landmark in trade union history. It exposed trade union funds to potentially crippling civil actions by employers to recover losses incurred in strikes, and spurred the trade union movement to throw its weight behind independent labour representation in Parliament to change the law.

It took only 5 years after the Taff Vale judgment for the position to be changed in the clearest possible way with the passing of the TRADES DISPUTES ACT in 1906. This stated that no actions would be allowed in civil law against a Trade Union as it was not a 'legal entity'.

After that, trade union funds were safe. If an employer wanted to sue, he had first to squeeze through whatever loophole he could find in the 1906 Act (which included a whole lot of other immunities from court action and legal interference) and then he could only sue an individual, such as the union's President, which was hardly worth it. There was always the risk of heavy High Court costs, and no chance of any worthwhile damages.

Between 1906 and 1971, if an employer lost money or lost contracts because of a strike — well, that was the very point of the strike, and there was nothing the law could do to compensate him.

## Bosses gloat

The Industrial Relations Act has changed all that. "The Act codifies the ragbag of legislation [from 1871 to 1965]... repealing such devotional literature as the Trade Disputes Act of 1906, upon which lay the right of the trade union movement to virtually complete legal immunity from the consequences of industrial action." So wrote Peter Paterson in *An Employer's Guide to the Industrial Relations Act*. And he had every reason to gloat.

In what ways does the Industrial Relations Act remove the trade unions' legal immunity?

First, it says that trade unions, whether registered or not, are legal entities that can be sued in their own name. This applies both to ordinary civil proceedings and those at the NIRC. "Any judgment order or award is enforceable by way of execution, punishment for contempt or otherwise against any property belonging to or held in trust for that organisation as if it were incorporated." (I.R. Act, Section 154) So, instead of cases against, say, Scanlon or Jones, since 1971 the AUEW and the T&GWU, and of course all other unions, have been sued directly. In line with the Act's pretence of 'fairness to all sides', employers' associations are also made into legal entities that can be sued. But, when individual employers are already all incorporated, who would want to sue an association of them. The fairness is a complete sham.

## Reversal

Local bodies, shop stewards committees and the like, can also in theory be sued. The NIRC has said that this will depend on individual cases. But since the Heaton's case, where the Court of Appeal decided that the T&G was responsible for the actions of its stewards unless it withdrew their credentials, the NIRC has preferred to attack the union centrally — the idea being to force the union leaders, through financial penalties, to discipline their members. That, after all, is one of the main purposes of the Act.

On this point of whether or not a union can be sued, the I.R. Act

# UNIONS TO PAY BOSSES FOR

# NEW THREATS FROM THE

constitutes the most complete reversal of the 1906 Act, which had put into law the defence put up in the Taff Vale case, that a union was "not a corporation, nor an individual, nor a partnership. It is like a club, not a legal entity."

But the Act is not quite so crude and blatant a piece of union-bashing as to openly bulldoze its way through all the gains of 1906. If you look up sections 131 and 132, on civil liability, they appear to repeat the 1906 Act word for word, except for the significant change that the immunity from civil actions now applies to industrial disputes (between workers and employers) and not to trade disputes (which included struggles between workers and other workers or between two trade unions).

## Trick

But the secret of the trick is in Section 131, which says that no action can be taken against a union if the matter has come, or could come, before the NIRC. So it interposes the NIRC or the local Tribunals to stop civil actions. (Except in "non-industrial" disputes — i.e. those mentioned above, and also political strikes such as actions in defence of tenants or against a government. These latter were not covered by the Trade Disputes Act either, but for the crucial cover given by the fact that trade unions were not legal entities that could be sued at all. This cover is now of course removed.)

So the crucial thing is what happens at the NIRC. There, an employer can't sue a union for a common law wrong. Instead, he can complain about a whole variety of "unfair industrial practices" — AND BE AWARDED COMPENSATION!

Before the Industrial Relations Act, a union was safe from the law (unless it broke the criminal law) if it was immune from civil actions. As Lord Donovan put it in his Report commissioned by the last Labour Government — "Much the

most significant aspect of that freedom [from legal interference] is the immunity from liability for tort [civil wrong] based on the principles of common law."

Now, there is a completely new legal concept of civil wrong added to the law, and it is tailor-made to hit the trade unions. As G.W. Rideout writes in *Trade Unions and the Law*, "The principles of the torts of inducement to breach of contract and intimidation are incorporated into purpose-built heads of liability, aimed specifically at industrial activity."

"The test of contemplation and furtherance of a trade (industrial) dispute, which formerly defined protected activities, is now used to define the area of liability for the new 'unfair industrial practices'."

"The ultimate cynicism, however, is achieved by the provision which maintains and even extends all the former statutory protection from the law of tort. The end result is to render the law of tort as such virtually unusable, but to replace it with a new form of liability founded on the most extensive of its principles and infinitely more efficient as a method of control" (My emphasis, RV)

Except that they are specifically directed at trade union activity, unfair industrial practices are very closely based on common law torts. For instance, the tort of threatening an illegal act is now translated as the unfair industrial practice of threatening an... unfair industrial practice! "The law of tort has lent the unfair industrial practice much of its inspiration." (Rideout)

Unfair industrial practices are many and varied. They include:

\*strikes (or other industrial action) undertaken without 'proper' notice;

\*sympathetic and solidarity strikes in support of other unfair industrial practices ("whereas as employer may be reluctant to proceed against organisations with which he has to negotiate, he may be more willing to take action to prevent support from outside organisations" Rideout);

EVEN WITH WORLD, THE RAILWAY CO START LOOKI



\*action (strikes, blacking, picketing etc.) to induce a breach of contract with someone not a party to the dispute, or even to "prevent him from performing it" — a vast extension of the previous law on breach of contracts.

\*And it is an unfair industrial practice to continue a recognition strike once it has been referred to the Commission for Industrial

# TAFF VALE — BEGG

scabs could not be either won over to the strike or physically stopped, they would simply take over the jobs and stay in them, and a labour force of strikers would be replaced with a labour force of scabs.

The gentlemen of the British ruling class establishment were most concerned about the rights of 'free labour', which was so often set upon by 'trade union bullies'. And in the much-abused named of Freedom, they proceeded to attack trade unions. As John Saville writes "Through all the decade of the nineties and well into the new century, a hostility developed towards trade unionism in general and new unionism in particular that bordered at times on the hysterical."

In an increasingly vicious anti-union atmosphere, judges proceeded to reinterpret the legislation of the 1870s, reading into it all sorts of meaning which its framers very probably had not intended. They would find little holes in an Act through which they could drive massive great wedges. And by 1901 they had made 3 major breaches in the Unions' protective legislation.

1. PICKETING — although as early as

1859 it had been permitted to peacefully persuade people not to work, this had been left out of the 1875 Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act, which defined the right to picket in a trade dispute merely as 'the right to obtain and to communicate information'. Hawk-eyed Law Lords spotted this omission when dealing with the case of Lyons against Wilkins in 1899, thus making effective picketing illegal by definition: because, once the picketing had succeeded, then people would have been persuaded not to work, which had been pronounced illegal.

2. CONSPIRACY — The 1875 Act had specified that where an act done by one person isn't a crime, it's not a criminal conspiracy if lots of people get together to do it. Then in 1901, the Law Lords got clever again, and decided that they could do the trade union concerned for civil conspiracy, as the 1875 Act had not mentioned that.

3. DAMAGES — In August 1900 workers of the Taff Vale Railway Company struck. The Company brought in outside blacklegs, and the strikers picketed Cardiff railway station and had considerable success in

## The Industrial Relations Act and the fight for a GENERAL STRIKE

11 important articles from Workers' Fight, with introduction & appendix. An invaluable collection on the history, experience and theory of the General Strike. 20p plus 5p post. From 98 Gifford St., London N.1

IN 1871 a Liberal Government recently elected by, among others, a newly enfranchised section of workers, enacted legislation which put the trade unions as organisations on a legal footing. It did not specify the legal right to strike (and neither did subsequent legislation), but still the TUC, then only 3 years old, was so pleased with it that it narrowly defeated a resolution that it should disband itself because its objects had been achieved!

Trade unionism at that time was confined entirely to the skilled craftsmen, the 'aristocrats of labour'. With the panic brought on by the French Revolution over, and Chartism dead and gone, the ruling class willingly enacted more legislation in the 1870s to help incorporate trade unions into their society as solid and respectable institutions.

But from 1889, with the rapid growth of the New Unions, the position quickly changed. The labourers and unskilled 'general' workers now organising could very easily be replaced by scabs, who at one point were even organised into a "National Free Labour Association". This organisation had recruiting offices — "free labour exchanges" — around the country and it also acted as a political and legal anti-union pressure group.

There was often bitter and violent conflict between strikers and scabs, and picketing for the first time became a really vital defensive weapon to ensure not only the effectiveness of a strike but also the continued availability of the job after the strike. If

# STRIKES

# AT

# N.I.R.C.

ALL THE INFLATION IN THE £23,000 PAID TO THE TAFF VALE COMPANY IS NOW GOING TO BE VERY SMALL INDEED...



by  
**Ron Vandy**  
and  
**Maxine Landis**

So far, the big fireworks and the big penalties have been over injunctions being ignored. These were the cases of the dockers' blacking and picketing container bases, and more recently the AUEW refusing to call off the strike at Con-Mech for union recognition and the reinstatement of two sacked stewards.

The NIRC got quite a bloody nose from the dockers, and it now prefers not to issue Interim Orders/injunctions. As G.W. Rideout comments, the injunction "suffers from the major defect that the sanction for non-observance is imprisonment for contempt of court. ... The first example of imprisonment of individuals [and you can only imprison individuals] was not exactly a success."

So, the big stick has been put away — but only to be replaced by a bigger, and more effective stick. The same writer continues: "It is possible that an action for compensation, or more often the threat of such an action, will replace the injunction as the principle remedy where the respondent is an organisation the funds of which can be attached."

It is also a fact, as mentioned already, that whereas the breaking of injunctions is an act of defiance and the retaliation is a special act of punishment, the levying of compensation for commercial loss is part of the normal functioning of the Act as it was formulated, and is not based on loopholes or an over-technical interpretation of its provisions.

Nor does it depend on the personality of a particular judge. The attacks on Donaldson by Labour MPs, while richly deserved, are quite beside the point in this issue, and Whitelaw is quite right to direct them to attack the Government which framed the law. (Moreover, the sudden discovery that the Act is political because political funds were sequestered shows how bone-headed these Labour MPs are. The Act was always a political attack on the working class and its

organisations.)

There are four cases now before the NIRC in which compensation may be levied. In two of these cases, judgment in principle has already been made against the unions concerned.

The first of these cases is Con-Mech Engineering Limited v. AUEW where, on top of the £75,000 fine for contempt the NIRC President Sir John Donaldson stated "Con-Mech may in due course make good a claim to compensation for any losses it is suffering." Con-Mech's Managing Director Robert Dilley has also stated that he will indeed make a claim, and the NIRC is already holding the balance of the £100,000 which it sequestered from AUEW funds — £25,000 — from which to pay all or part of Dilley's blood money.

The second case is of GENERAL AVIATION SERVICES v. T&GWU, on which the NIRC delivered its 54-page judgment on 20th November.

GAS is a Canadian company which was operating at Heathrow Airport. The Joint Shop Stewards Committee blacked it, refused to handle the baggage of passengers travelling on aircraft belonging to one of GAS's clients, and picketed an aircraft belonging to the client. As a result, the client cancelled its contract with GAS and GAS's other main client soon followed suit. GAS, after 2½ years at Heathrow, packed up its own bags and left.

The action was not official, but in the view of the NIRC the T&GWU, whose stewards were in the majority on the Heathrow committee, is nevertheless liable. "It might have been open to the Union to have deprived the shop stewards of the authority which undoubtedly they had, but we have looked in vain for any such action. We have no doubt that the Union, through its shop stewards, was guilty of unfair industrial practices against GAS."

## No limit

Donaldson's precedent for finding the Union liable through its stewards was the Heaton's case. And this, together with Craddock's (another container depot firm) is also awaiting judgment on its claim for compensation arising from the picketing and blacking that led to the first big fine on the T&GWU in March 1972.

What will this compensation amount to?

Section 116 of the Industrial Relations Act says that if a union is unregistered there is no limit to the compensation it can be charged.

Con-Mech said early on in the dispute that it had already cost

them £75,000 — and the strike is still on.

Workers' Fight No. 37 P.5

them £75,000 — and the strike is still on.

**G.A.S. HAVE SAID THEY'VE LOST ONE MILLION POUNDS!**

With all the inflation in the world, these sums are making the £23,000 paid to the Taff Vale Railway Company seem very small indeed.

And this is just the start.

This, then, is the point at which the trade union leaders must decide to fight back, or to knuckle under. We are very probably about to witness our 'leaders' arguing that they've done their best, but now they have to register in order to "protect the fabric of the union". They will even say that it is their painful duty to their members to register — thus limiting compensation to a mere £100,000 a go.

And it is true that if they continue to stand in between full cooperation (i.e. registration) and a real fight back, they can say goodbye to their members' funds: 'boycotting' the Act and the NIRC will become even more of a liability than it's been up to now; and still leave the Act with all its powers.

## Threat

Militants must organise now to stop a rout and make sure instead that a real fight is mounted to get rid of the Act. For it isn't just a matter of principle to reject it as a piece of savage anti-working class legislation. After the new judgments it could have a really deadening effect on the class struggle.

For the purpose of laws is not so much in their enforcement as in the threat of it. In the past two years there must have been thousands of 'unfair industrial practices' blithely and probably unknowingly committed by workers in their day to day struggles throughout industry. But now that the first penalties are being exacted, the threat of the law will come into force.

The danger is that in every action from now on, union officials will come scurrying along to say 'you can't do this', or 'if you do that we will get taken to the court'. Pressure will be on them to withdraw credentials from militant stewards in case they get the union into trouble with the law. And no-one will ever be quite sure that after a strike, the employers won't go to the NIRC.

This could have a devastating effect on the class struggle.

## Wipe it out!

In a way, the labour movement should be thankful for these cases. Too many people thought that after its Pentonville Week fiasco the Act was 'on ice', or had had its teeth knocked out. There was always a danger that it would be let to carry on, only to come out with its most damaging clauses at some future date, perhaps when the working class had suffered some major setback and was too weak to defend itself and stand up to the attack. If that happened, the Act could really be used to put the boot in and send the trade union movement right back to the last century.

Now every single militant can see that this Act must be smashed now when we have the strength and the will to mount a massive struggle and wipe it off the statute books.

And it will need a massive struggle. Not just marches and straggling walk-outs — they are useful for spreading the struggle and building up strength but they will not decisively get rid of the Act.

What is needed is an all-out general strike of at least the major heavy battalions of the working class, to come out and bring others out with flying pickets and mass demonstrations, to scare the life out of the capitalist class and its government so that they will gladly abandon the Industrial Relations Act that so nearly cost them their whole system.

Relations for its opinion on the matter.

It can issue an Interim Order (like an injunction) to tell the union to stop the action for the time being.

It can order compensation to be paid.

And it can institute its own contempt proceedings if compensation isn't paid or if its orders or injunctions are not obeyed.

What happens when an employer takes a union to the NIRC for committing an unfair industrial practice?

The Court can do four things. It can issue an Order determining the rights of the parties.

# JUDGES' CONSPIRACY TO HARM THE UNIONS

winning over some of the scabs, whereupon the Company took the union, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, to court. It applied for an injunction to stop the picketing, naming Bell (the Union's General Secretary) and Holmes (its West of England Organising Secretary) and

also naming the Union.

Basing itself on the 1871 legislation and on all legal precedent since then, the Union demanded to be left out of the proceedings, but the court ruled that the union must stop its efforts to "procure a breach of the contract" between the hired scabs and the Taff Vale Railway Company.

The A.S.R.S. appealed, and won, but the company then took the case to the House of Lords, where the point at issue was whether the Union could be sued at all, and that its funds were held by trustees and couldn't be touched. Their lordships' statements and comments were heavily political and reeking of the prevailing anti-union hysteria. Their main drift — which has again become familiar since the Industrial Relations Act — was that trade unions could not be "above the law". But they couldn't actually find which law unions were supposed to be above, and instead they proceeded to set themselves above the 1871 law and reinterpreted it so as to charge the Union £23,000 in costs and damages.

But the effect of this legal hamstringing of trade unionism had repercussions which the Law Lords

certainly hadn't expected. A decision of the House of Lords on a point of law stands until Parliament frames a new law, and the Taff Vale judgment turned the attention of the trade union movement towards achieving direct labour representation in Parliament — that is towards extending trade union bargaining within the capitalist system directly into politics.

Hitherto the TUC had sponsored certain Liberal MPs, rather as the AFL/CIO sponsors certain Democrats in the USA. These were known as 'Lib-Lab' MPs. Attempts by militants and socialists to get independent trade union MPs were regularly voted down or neutralised. Keir Hardie had been elected under the banner of the small socialist Independent Labour Party (founded in 1893) but one socialist MP didn't create a workers' party based on the trade unions.

In 1900 the latest in a series of attempts to organise for independent trade union MPs was set up — the Labour Representation Committee. Taff Vale gave it a tremendous boost, and made the attainment of parliamentary representation urgent and vital for the trade unions. In 1906

## STRIKE!

ON THE  
**Taff Vale Railway.**

Men's Headquarters,  
Cobourn Street, Cathays.

There has been a strike on the Taff Vale Railway since Monday last. The Management are using every means to decoy men here who they employ for the purpose of black-legging the men on strike.

**Drivers, Firemen, Guards, Brakesmen, and SIGNALMEN, are all out.**

Are you willing to be known as a

## Blackleg?

If you accept employment on the Taff Vale, that is what you will be known by. On arriving at Cardiff, call at the above address, where you can get information and assistance.

**RICHARD BELL,**  
General Secretary.

Photo: Chris Davies (Report)

# GREECE

## INCURABLE CRISIS?

ANALYSIS BY GEORGE PLATOS

In Greece, one coup follows another. But the torture chambers and concentration camps only change to the extent that a few of yesterday's torturers may be added to the roll call of today's prisoners. The new military junta has no solution to those problems which have dogged Greece since the war. Rather, it represents a further narrowing of the social base of the regime — a fact which is reflected by even more hysterical propaganda and increased repression.

The two pervasive problems of Greek society which lie behind the rise and fall of the Papadopoulos regime, are the dominance of agriculture and small scale production in the Greek economy (combined with speculation, usury and landlordism in the towns) and the lack of unity of the ruling class which is directly reflected in the different arms of the state machine.

### Backwardness

According to the 1971 census, 12.8% of the economically active population are manual workers in the manufacturing industries, compared with 52.4% employed in agriculture. Certainly some of those in agriculture are workers rather than peasants, but the vast majority of peasants farm small sub-subsistence plots of land.

Moreover in the towns, vastly disproportionate numbers are employed not in production, but in 'public administration' or the army or some other state department. Thus in 1969 40% of the state budget was spent on defence and 22.2% on administration, as against 1.3% on welfare, 13.1% on education and 8% on health.

The backwardness of the economy is also marked by the small units of production which are the norm for both agriculture and industry.

The first major political attempt to

solve these problems came in 1961 with the setting up of the Centre Union party under the leadership of Georges Papandreu.

The formation of the Centre Union was part of a world wide picture of Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress" strategy. In Greece it meant an alliance of monopoly, large and middle capital around a programme of liberal technological reforms. The Centre Union tried to solve Greece's problems by encouraging the concentration of capital into larger units, particularly in association with the EEC and American 'aid'.

The Centre Union came to 'power' in 1964, but the fact that it formed the government didn't in the least mean that it had control of the state machine. Andreas Papandreu, son of the Prime Minister and himself Minister of Co-ordination, recalls that one of his first actions when he took office was to summon a leading member of the KYP (the Greek CIA — a body which is paid for directly out of the US budget!) and tell him to stop bugging his office. "I can't do that", replied the KYP man, "you don't give the orders here".

This story reveals not only the extent of US influence, but also the degree of independence from the government of sections of the state apparatus. Moreover, the very title *Minister of Co-ordination* gives a frank declaration of the divided nature of the Greek capitalist class — divisions which are sharply reflected in the state structure itself.

The Greek ruling class is divided into three major factions. The traditionally pro-British extreme right wing faction consists of the monarchy and its supporters, the generals in the army, the older sections of Greek capital, the navy and the bulk of the Church.

The traditionally pro-US faction consists of the colonels, the IDEA group of officers, the NATO units, the Air Force, the KYP, newer sections of

capital (particularly those linked with the Greek-American community) and the Zoe and Sotir factions within the Church. Thirdly, there is the liberal bourgeois group around the Centre Union.

Lacking a traditional base within the state machine, the Centre Union had to rely on Parliament, while the whole repressive apparatus of the state remained firmly in the hands of the other factions. It was a situation which contained all the elements of a major crisis.

Out of weakness the Centre Union was forced to look for a mass base. Using Parliament and democratic slogans they appealed for popular support. But to the same degree that the masses (including the peasantry) responded, so room for manoeuvre was cut away from the Centre Union.

The government became partly captive to a mass movement which it not only could not control but was also actually going to attack with measures such as agricultural rationalisations.

Of course, the C.U. by no means based itself on the masses; calls on 'the people' were used as mere tactics within a process of ministerial horse-trading and secret caucus-building.

### Sacked

The breaking point came in 1965 when King Constantine sacked Georges Papandreu and thus opened Pandora's box, unleashing a train of events the momentum of which still exists today. Characteristically the sacking was prompted by two incidents, both of which involved competition between the King and the Centre Union for influence within the Army.

The dismissal of Papandreu and his government brought demonstration after demonstration. While workers, poor peasants and students thronged the streets demanding Papandreu's

return, the King bribed 45 Centre Union MPs to join the extreme right and set up a government.

This turned out to be a costly blunder since the balance within the Centre Union shifted to the left and in any case the move failed in its original objectives. There followed a series of ultra-conservative governments appointed by the King. At the same time the mass movement became more vigorous and more conscious, continually threatening the governments and hemming in the freedom of its own champion, Georges Papandreu.

The growth of this radical mass movement left the ruling class with two choices — either Papandreu would be re-instated by the long promised elections, or an iron fisted dictatorship would seize power and quell the mass movement with martial law. But no faction of the Greek bourgeoisie could by itself gain dominance of the situation.

Paralysed by their own disunity and relative equilibrium, they watched the forces of the oppressed classes rise ever more threateningly.

All Papandreu could do was to continually refuse to give the mass movement any direction or organisation for fear of the consequences both before and after the elections if he ever again formed a government. All the extreme Right could do was to plot to stop the elections.

As it turned out, a coup organised by the monarchists was pre-empted by the coup organised by the US. Both had the specific aim of forestalling the elections. The colonels' coup of 21st April 1967 marked the victory of the pro-US faction over the monarchists, a victory which was soon confirmed by a purge of all sections of the state machine, including the highest levels of the Church and the Army.

The US had instigated the 1967 coup

out of impatience with the disunity and paralysis of the Greek bourgeoisie in the face of the rising mass movement. Imperialism's interests in Greece were and still are considerable. Greece is important as a reliable naval base for the Mediterranean fleet, with the strategic aim of containing the Soviet fleet and as a base for operations in the Middle East (the 1967 Middle East war broke out just six weeks after the coup). Economic interests revolve around the desire to use Greece as a springboard into the Common Market and the strong financial links of groups such as Esso-Pappas, Onassis, Niarchos, Spiro Agnew and Litton Industries.

### U.S. Imperialism

For American imperialism a solution to the 'problems of state' was a precondition for a solution of the economic problems, but at the same time this precondition cut across — at least in the short term — immediate economic interests. For example, the imposition of martial law meant that Greece was suspended from associate membership of the EEC until the return of a civilian government.

The performance of the Papadopoulos regime was from an economic point of view a miserable failure. The US got the Junta to ease into a facade of civilian government under Markezinis so as to be able to look to the economic problems and come to terms with the EEC.

The slightest liberalisation, however, met with a response from the masses, for although resistance had been kept below the surface it was far from stamped out.

### Civilian Government

At the same time, any moves towards civilian government — even under Junta leadership — posed a threat to the positions of some of the leading supporters of the Junta. Those holding 'political commissar' positions in civilian institutions stood to lose their status and the money coming in from the positions. But much more important, the slightest change of course by the Junta evoked a reaction from army officers, who had known nothing but naked force for six and a half years and who couldn't understand anything but the mumbo-jumbo of Hellenic Christianity, anti-communism and rural folk-lore.

The resurgence of the mass movement and the reaction of sections of the army to 'liberalisation' provided a new polarisation and a basis for yet another coup. Thus the 'new junta' toppled the 'old junta'.

On Saturday 1st December over 800 supporters of the 'Troops Out' campaign marched from Shepherds Bush to Hammersmith Town Hall where a rally was held. The rally was addressed by 3 speakers — Brian Nicholson of the T&GWU Executive Committee, Jim Kemp, T&GWU convenor and member of the IMG, and black activist Althea Lecoint, who linked the struggles of the black colonial people to the struggle of the Irish.

This demonstration, being the first demonstration around the slogans of the Troops Out movement (Troops Out and Self determination for the Irish people) can only be welcomed. However, the make-up of the demonstration did give some indication of the strength and weakness of this new attempt to build a campaign around the Irish issue.

### OSTRICHES

The fact must be faced that a large sector of the left had done nothing to support the demonstration, and all the indications are that they will continue to ignore the campaign generally. As usual the sectarian members of the SLU and the CP were absent or were in the forefront of the Communist Party's internationalist Socialist line which denigrated the Irish people's struggle for self-determination. Any serious campaign will need to concentrate on the question of why that struggle should be supported.

Many instances were experienced of the Irish solidarity work done in this country will probably not be surprised at the absence of this 'unholy trinity'. But more disturbing was the scant support given to the mobilisation by the Irish organisations, Clann na h'Eireann and the Provisional Sinn Fein, not to mention the Irish community as a whole.

Given these facts it would be utterly disabling to imagine that the Troops

## WHICH WAY FORWARD FOR TROOPS OUT CAMPAIGN?

Out campaign will be built up to anything like the similar movement in the USA over the Vietnam war. Among many other factors, the casualties inflicted on the Army by the IRA are still relatively small and the Army itself is a mercenary army and not a conscript one as in the US.

Therefore, the extent to which the working class can be mobilised is limited. In fact the Troops Out movement is largely a somewhat resuscitated edition of the old Anti Internment League. It probably has the possibility of involving some sections of the labour movement where there have been stirrings in favour of getting the troops out of Ireland. However, any tendency to dilute the position of open solidarity with those fighting the British Army in Ireland is both unprincipled and likely to produce few positive results in the given conditions.

People will favour bringing troops home either for the reactionary reason that "the Irish should be allowed to get on with slaughtering each other", or else because they understand and support the Irish people's struggle for self-determination. Any serious campaign will need to concentrate on the question of why that struggle should be supported.

### EXPLICIT

To do that, what is needed is more than just a mention of self-determination. What is needed is a full campaign of solidarity with the IRA. If the delusions about prospects for a mass Troops Out movement which some of its initiators seem to entertain lead them to underplay the need for solidarity, the new organisation will be

a step backwards.

In our opinion it would have been better to attempt to rebuild an explicit solidarity campaign (we in fact proposed this within the AIL). Workers' Fight will now work for a full solidarity position within the Troops Out movement.

It is also important that the campaign should concentrate its efforts towards the trade union movement — already South Shields Trades Council have taken a lead in this area. The fact that a member of the T&GWU Executive spoke on the

platform and that a NUM speaker was billed (although he could not make it) are a healthy indication.

While the Troops Out movement will probably not develop into a mass movement (which of course doesn't mean we don't try to make it into one) the possibility of building a meaningful solidarity movement does exist. In any case, socialists and trade unionists — SHOULD GIVE THEIR ACTIVE SUPPORT to build the Troops Out movement.

BY DANNY REILLY

## LAST NIGHT ANOTHER PROPAGANDA FILM

In *Last Night Another Soldier* (Dec. 6th) the BBC tried to drum up sympathy with the Army in Belfast.

We saw a small group of likeable enough boys, training for and then beginning a tour of duty in Belfast. They weren't looking forward to it, and when they got there it was just "tension and boredom". One of them wishes he weren't in the Army. The others think it's "just a job".

Not one had the least knowledge of the politics or history of Northern Ireland. "It's not our affair" they are told by the officers. And not one of them questions that. Nor do they question whether they have the right to go to another country to patrol and 'pacify' it, nor wonder whether it's really a 'province' of Britain and why that should be so.

They are taught how to arrest people and seem rather awed by "being coppers as well as soldiers". As to internment without trial, they probably don't even know that it's anything different from any other system of 'restraint' or imprisonment.

Naturally they see themselves as the centre of all things — their fears, their sleepless nights, their injuries — "we're on the receiving end." The film itself did nothing to contradict this, but occasional backdrop of haggard ghetto faces might just have given some viewers a different idea.

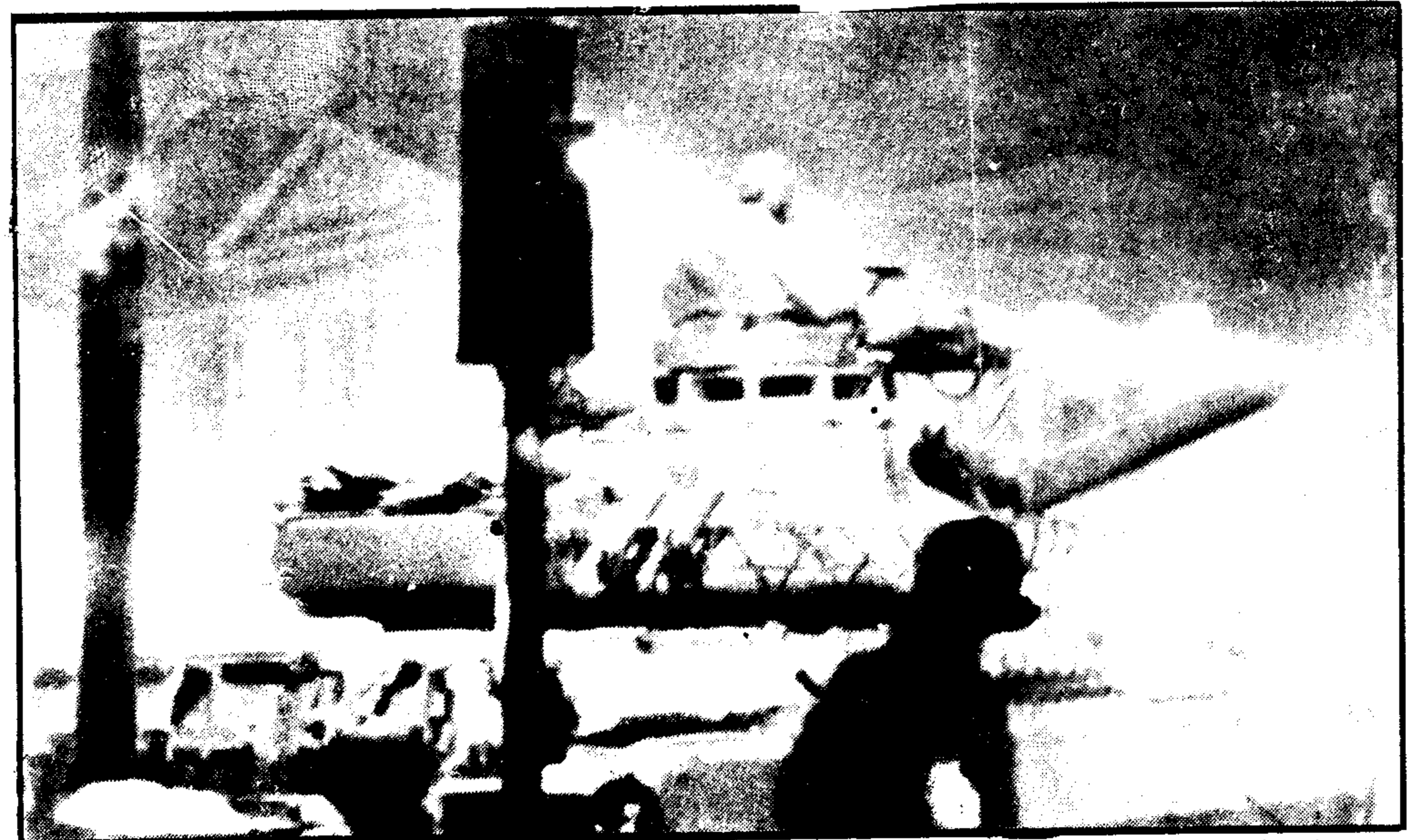
The only question the soldiers do seem to ask is why they are so hated. Even a tiny toddler, one relates, was making a v-sign as he passed. Two who were there once before are on an IRA death list. "You'd think we were

murderers" says another. Yes, perhaps we would if remembered Derry. But the film wasn't made to remind us of Derry's 13 likeable enough young men shot down by the British Army.

No doubt if a cameraman went to film any group of soldiers of any army, talked to them about their personal fears and problems and then edited the best bits together, he'd come up with much the same result.

They say the camera doesn't lie. But the truth it tells depends on the direction it's pointing in. Eilkan Allan in *The Sunday Times*, previewing the film, says, "As one gets to know these few men more and more one feels increasing sympathy with them as individuals..." Yes, so did I. That's the film. But there's a bit more to it than that.

Spilke



# LEFT WING STUDENTS FIGHT FOR SOCIALIST PROGRAMME

1,200 students assembled at Margate on 23rd-26th November for the first of this year's two National Union of Students Conferences. The particular importance of this conference comes from the fact that students have reached a crucial stage in the Grants Campaign and also on a number of other issues.

Since the last conference, NUS activity around grants has consisted only of sporadic and badly organised 'days of action' — a form of struggle which has in no way led the campaign forward. Two main lines were put to the conference for the future of this campaign.

One line sees action as being simply support for the negotiations of the NUS Executive; the other sees direct action as being the main weapon in the fight for better grants.

The first line was put forward by the 'Broad Left' — a Communist Party dominated caucus inside NUS which snuggles up to the bureaucracy in the hope of giving it a leftist tinge. The Broad Left includes many leading NUS bureaucrats as well as rank and file CP and Labour Party members. At its first meeting during the conference the 'Broad Left' refused admission to members of all other left organisations, and thus showed that by 'Broad' it meant being little more than a CP election machine and pressure group.

## ALTERNATIVE

The opposing view is held by the 'Socialist Alternative' composed mainly of International Socialists and members of the International Marxist Group, which attempted to counterpose direct action to the present meaningless negotiations around the Triennial Review.

Neither of these tendencies, however, has so far succeeded in building a substantial base amongst the mass of students. And such a base is very necessary if resolutions at NUS conferences are not to be mere pious hopes.

The main issue facing the conference was that of grants. A resolution was passed overwhelmingly which censured the NUS Executive for "lack of leadership" on this issue. Another part of the resolution called upon the Executive to stage a national rent strike — a move which was bitterly opposed by the NUS Executive and the 'Broad Left'.

Closely linked with the Grants campaign is the issue of the Government White Paper on Higher Education. For both of these issues are about access to Higher Education. In the same way as low grants are an attempt to limit the number of students by providing education on the cheap, so the White Paper proposes the setting up of a new further education course, the Dip. H.E. More commonly known as the "two year degree", the Dip. H.E. is supposed to be a two year course which should provide access to either the third year of a degree course or else to two years' teacher training.

## MALE CHAUVINIST?

Dear Comrades,

In a week which saw an English Court send Irish revolutionaries to prison for life, what does Workers Fight have on its front page (relegating the Belfast 9 to half a page on p.11)?

It indulges in a piece of fatuous, male-chauvinist 'satire' about Princess Anne's wedding — hinging on the idea that she is such an ugly woman that she must have grabbed the first man she could and forced him to marry her (even though he calls her a "kinky scrubber").

Are we reading Tit-Bits or a serious political paper? This bourgeois way of thinking about women is what all revolutionaries should be fighting, not encouraging. Such sexism insults all women and has no place in a revolutionary paper.

N.P.

**EDITOR'S COMMENT:** I think this comrade is reading too much — and also too little — into the piece by Dave Brodie. Too much, because of course the details of the story were not meant to be precise equivalents or comments in themselves. Nor were the

However, it is almost certain that holders of the Dip. H.E. will have no choice but to teach, as colleges running full degree courses show no sign of accommodating Dip. H.E. The conference was opposed to the Dip. H.E. and voted to block it.

## FRAGILE BASIS

Overall the conference provided a somewhat firmer base for a fighting grant campaign, although the steps towards it were faltering and confused. Student militants will need to work much harder among the ordinary uncommitted students to ensure that the campaign is carried forward. But it seems that IS, at least, are not prepared to do this — their sectarian isolation in 'IS Societies' and general attitude to students as paper-sellers was reflected in the small number of IS delegates at Margate.

The IMG, on the other hand, have attempted to work among the broader sections of students, but this work has been unsystematic and has largely consisted of building abstract 'student-worker' alliances. Militants need to take up very concretely the issues raised at the Margate conference — the issues of grants, of accommodation, of policies on higher education etc. — and work around them among the mass of students whom they deeply concern.

At Essex University, hundreds of students have been mobilised around issues relating to their own standards, on demands which relate directly to their lives. A large proportion of the students have been drawn into struggle there. Of course students must see that they have a direct interest in supporting workers' struggles — but these links will be far easier to make among people who have mobilised themselves to fight in their own struggles and have experienced a fight even on a very mundane, bread-and-butter level.

The Margate conference provided a fragile basis for these sort of mobilisations — it is now up to militant students in the localities to make sure that flesh is put on the bones of the conference decisions.

*N.B. Early in the Conference a vote of censure was passed on Steve Parry, a Communist Party member of the Executive. At the World Youth Festival in East Berlin earlier in the year, Parry had attacked a member of the GAY LIBERATION FRONT on the NUS delegation and torn down a placard he was carrying. Parry offered no defence for his action, but it seems likely that he did not want to 'offend' the East German authorities who were opposed to propaganda on the issue of Gay rights. An attempt to remove Parry from the Executive failed. If Steve Parry fights for higher grants in the same way he fought for Gay rights, students can all look forward to a cut in their grants...*

ROBIN CROSKERY NEAL SMITH

*words of a frog-turned-dragon meant to be taken as a model of revolutionary thinking.*

*Too little, in the sense that there was a very serious core to the piece, and one that in particular concerns women. Surely it is the beauty business and the physical 'selling' of women that is precisely the most degrading aspect of male chauvinism; to say a woman is not beautiful is only demeaning if one assumes that without beauty a woman has nothing to offer. The other aspect is the glamorising of marriage, which to me was a far more obnoxious aspect of the wedding in question and its attendant publicity than, say, the amount of money that the Royals receive.*

*It was this 'Fairy tale dream wedding' propaganda that the piece set out to deflate, by the device of turning various bits of it upside down. Thus the Princess is not as beautiful as the 'story books' (i.e. popular press) would have you believe, and the soldier-boy far from grateful for his transformation.*

*Perhaps, though, if it needs so much explaining, it didn't make its point clearly enough.*

# Long Kesh Internees' co-op fights continual harassment

Life is hard in Long Kesh, Britain's internment camp near Belfast. The latest issue of AN EOCHAIR, the bulletin written by the internees, describes the plight of the youngest internees: "The first thing that happens to a youth on arrival is to be stripped of his dignity and self-respect by having his hair hacked off. He is then taken to Cage 14 where his 'character training' begins."

"When young prisoners move around they must march in Indian file and must not speak. The penalty for breaking this rule is a few days in solitary confinement on starvation diet."

As for 'character training', "academic education does not exist for the young prisoner, and no attempt is made to teach him a trade."

On the contrary, these young internees "do the general work around the camp, like cooking, emptying the bins and any other dirty job that needs doing, and although the regulations stipulate a 40-hour week they work an average of sixty or seventy hours."

For all the men, there are constant humiliations and searches, which involve the wardens crashing through personal property, wrecking handicrafts made for sale, tearing up photographs and frequently taking away items they fancy; then the prisoners are searched personally, being made to strip naked and bend over.

Tony McShane tells how, while standing naked during a search, he saw the wardens sniggering as they read through a private (and already censored) letter they found in his pocket. When he reached out to retrieve it, the whole group of wardens pounced on him and beat him half unconscious, carted him off to a cell where they worked him over some more, and then brought him up to the Governor on a charge of 'assaulting an officer in the course of his duty'.

The Governor apparently commented cynically "I see you have come off the loser" and duly sentenced him to serve three days in the punishment cell on bread and cold tea larded with further harassment.



At the beginning of 1973 and after repeated attempts, the internees have finally succeeded in forming a co-operative to produce handicrafts — a variety of goods in leather and wood, attractively decorated with Celtic designs or symbols and portraits from the Irish republican struggle. All proceeds are administered by the Co-op Council and shared amongst the

dependents of the internees.

Orders for Christmas should be sent in at once, as due to the very difficult conditions there are often delays in sending goods. But the wait will be well rewarded: despite all the problems and the restrictions on the tools that can be used, the products are attractively turned out and solidly made. See price list below for details.

## LONG KESH CO-OP

- Gents wallets, modelled — Plain, £2.25; Coloured, £2.50
- Gents billfolds, modelled — 2 zips, coloured £2.75; 1 zip coloured, £2.50; 1 zip, plain £2.25
- Ladies wallet/purses, modelled — Coloured, £1.80 & £2.75; plain, £1.60 & £2.50
- Granny purses, modelled — coloured £2.50; plain £2.25
- Cocktail purses, modelled — coloured £2.30; plain £2.15
- Non-modelled hide purses (various grains and colours) — £1.00
- Wall plaques (plywood with design) — large, £2.00; medium, £1.25; small, 75p
- Harp in mahogany, decorated — large, £6.00
- Celtic crosses in mahogany — painted design, £2; carved design, £4
- Painted handkerchiefs — £1.50

Prices do not include postage

Orders to: Pat O'Hare, Cage 21, Maze Prison, Long Kesh, Lisburn, Ireland  
or: Sean O'Briain, 54 Elderfield Road, London E.5

# BOSSSES' INTIMIDATION SHOWN UP BY TRIAL OF NORTH WALES 24

BY CYNTHIA BALDRY

WITH THE TRIAL of 6 building workers in Shrewsbury going into its tenth week, and possibly finishing soon, it is all the more urgent that action is taken now to get commitments for industrial action if any of the six is found guilty on any of the charges against them.

We must ensure that the 6 on trial now, and the 24 (who include the six) who will be on trial after Christmas, get the best possible Christmas bonus through large sections of the labour movement making it absolutely clear that they will not tolerate any of their brothers being found guilty.

The people behind this trial — and evidence has shown that the employers and the government were not at all unconnected with the staging of it — are out to nail picketing.

## AGITATORS

The prosecution has been mainly concerned to prove its own notion of how rank and file trade unionists go about spreading a strike. Their idea is that these 6 were the leaders in 'a common accord to stop work on sites by intimidation'. They assume that normal working class solidarity must somehow be 'engineered' by "professional and political agitators" (as a Detective Chief Inspector put it to one of the defendants) who are outside 'respectable' trade unionism and who have to conspire and intimidate to get support.

Defendant John Carpenter was asked if he issued commands 'like an

army officer' and if he was 'in charge' of a group of pickets. No, he replied, he was neither an army officer nor an employer that he should give orders. It was 'the trade union movement as a whole' which was in charge. Alan Abraham, Liverpool militant and chairman during the strike of the Chester and North Wales Action Committee, told how the decision to picket the Shrewsbury area was made by the Action Committee on August 31st after a request for help by the Oswestry Action Committee — which was officially recognised by both the T&GWU and UCATT. He told the Court that there was 'only one code for strike picketing and that was issued by Mr. George F. Smith, the General Secretary of UCATT'.

There was also evidence given that the only clear intimidation has come from the employers' side. Barry Scragg, a defence witness, UCATT member and secretary of the Deeside Trades Council, has testified that a site agent called Callaghan threatened that unless the pickets left the site he would phone for a squad of 300 men who would forcibly remove them. On another occasion Scragg was threatened by two policemen who told him after the strike that it "would be the worse for him" unless he went to the police station to be questioned.

## 'INTIMIDATION'

The pattern, not of intimidation, but of making decisions collectively wherever possible was repeated at the sites as well as in the planning. Defendant Des Warren confirmed that on the sites meetings were held though

on some sites it was necessary to find the site office while lads went into the partly finished houses to speak to the workers personally'. Again on the matter of intimidation, Warren was asked by the prosecuting counsel "wasn't it your technique to first intimidate other workers, then rope them into a meeting and get them to vote under duress? Warren replied that "No, that was never necessary, and I would never have done it anyway. Every worker in the building industry is a potential trade unionist and you are not going to win people round by frightening them."

## PRECEDENT

The ruling class of this country don't mount trials like this for their amusement, nor primarily for vengeance. They are doing it to create a precedent to narrow down what a worker can legally do on the picket line. This trial is a threat to every trade unionist, for these workers are on trial for normal, everyday trade union practices.

Every workplace should be informed on the issues in this trial so that they will be ready and waiting to take action if the bosses' court tries to penalise the defendants in any way at all. Arrange for a speaker to come from the North Wales 24 Defence Committee. And take a firm decision to hit back with strike action if the need arises.

Send donations to the defence fund, and requests for speakers, leaflets and information to Mike Williams, 1 Fford Pentre, Ocean View, Carmel, Holywell, Flintshire.

# STOP THIS TORTURE OF HUNGER STRIKERS!

## 'I THOUGHT I WOULD

## CHOKED...'

SEVEN of the nine defendants sentenced in the Winchester bombs trial are still on hunger strike. The Price sisters in Brixton, Hugh Feeny in Wakefield, Armstrong and Holmes on the Isle of Wight, Kelly in Wormwood Scrubs and Walsh at Wandsworth — insist by this action that they are not criminals.

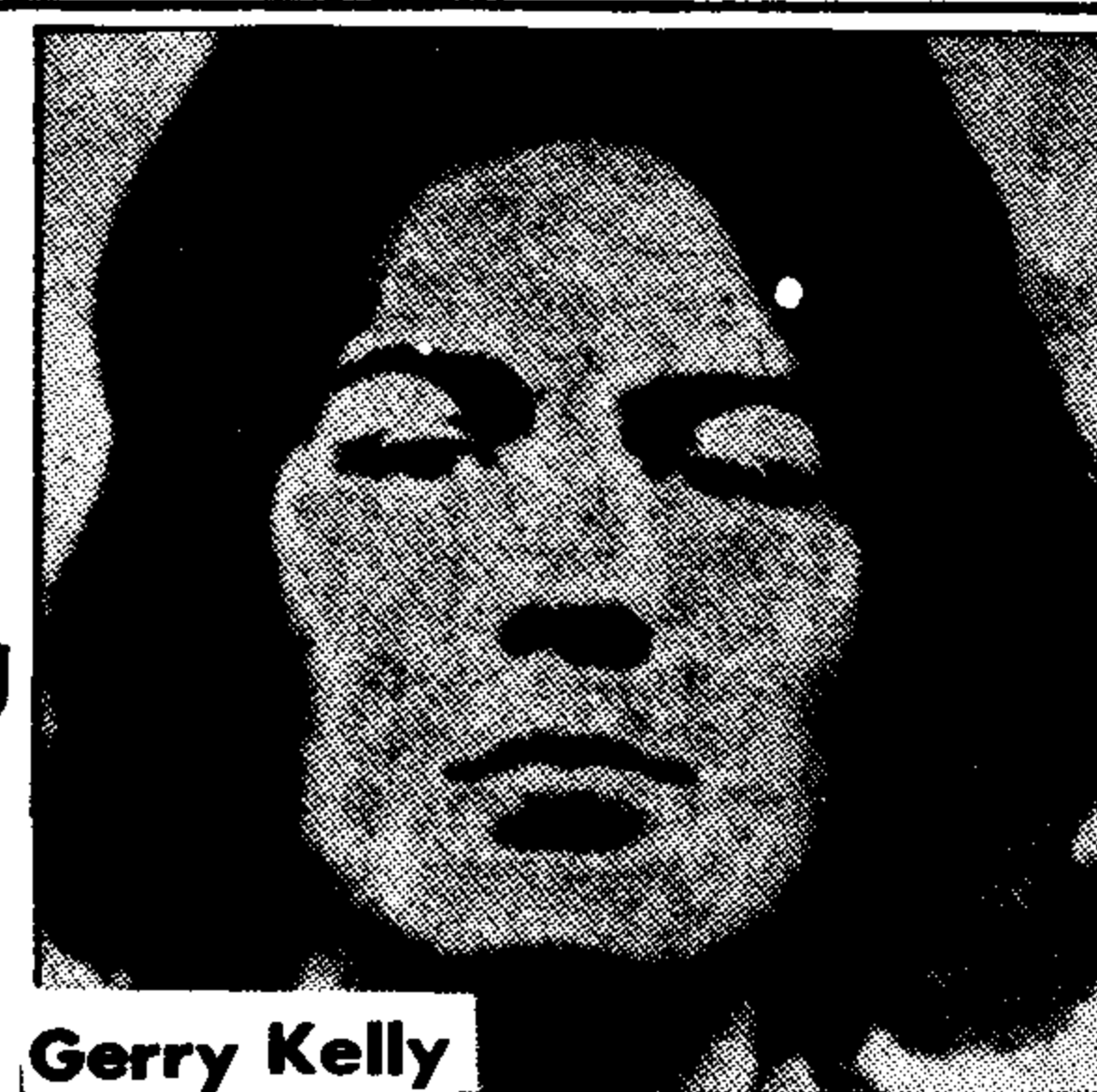
They insist — and every socialist must agree with them — that they are political prisoners, fighters for freedom, prisoners of war callously jailed by the gaolers of all

Ireland. As such they should be accorded the rights of political prisoners.

Now, it seems, the Government does not even give them that slenderest of prisoners' rights — the right to protest by hunger strike. All are being forcibly fed. What a strange concern for Irish lives this government shows: they can shoot down 13 people in Derry and call it 'unavoidable', but in order to get out of a showdown with 9 defenceless prisoners they will submit them to the torture,

danger and degradation of force feeding under the hypocritical pretence of concern for their lives!

Speaking of the horrors of force feeding, Dolours Price told a visitor "I was scared stiff when I saw the tube and the wooden clamp for my mouth. The worst



Gerry Kelly

part was when I couldn't get my breath as the tube was going down. And then I really panicked because I thought I was suffocating. Although it only takes a few minutes, it seems like an eternity. And then I brought it all back up again."

Gerry Kelly nearly did suffocate when the force feeders, not caring what pain they caused, stuffed the tube down his windpipe — by accident!

All of the nine sentenced (Martin Brady and Liam

McLarnon are not on hunger strike) are in solitary confinement. The hunger strikers additionally are not being allowed mail in or out. This means that the only source of information as to their condition comes from the monthly visits by their next of kin.

On Saturday December 15th there will be an all night vigil outside Brixton Prison organised by the Kilburn Women's Group. This should be supported by all those who understand that Britain has no right to try these republicans at all, let alone deny them their demands for political status.

We should remember the words of Sean O'Casey's "The Sacrifice of Thomas Ashe", the Irish republican who choked to death while being force fed in 1917. "Now the young republicans exert the only power of protest and opposition they have, and the Hunger Strike begins. A few brave hearts against the whole British State and Constitution." A.H.

### Teachers

# GOOD CLAIM, BUT NO REAL STRATEGY

by Clive Bane

THE economic situation of schoolteachers has changed a lot in the last few years. The story used to be: Never mind the money, feel the satisfaction at the end of the school day. But job satisfaction doesn't feed you, it doesn't pay for rents and mortgages, and you can't clothe yourself with it. In the last decade teachers' living standards have suffered a severe decline. The simple fact of the matter is that teachers are low paid workers in the education industry.

Teachers starting now will take TEN YEARS to reach the average national wage. They stand no chance at all of catching up with other, comparable non manual workers. The minimum pay of £1306 means a take home rate of little more than £20 per week. One response has been a teacher turnover of 60% with one third leaving the schools altogether. For those that remain militancy provides the only answer. It is the only answer for their living standards. It is the only answer to the increasingly hard to mouth, chaotic shambles in many schools which comes from high turnover and poor conditions.

Rank and file pressure in both major teaching unions, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the National Association of Schoolmasters, has

forced the union leaderships into some action. It is as a direct result of this pressure that the NUT has put in a 25% pay claim, which was agreed to by most of the other unions. It is a pay claim which completely ignores Phase 3.

The NUT are calling for a basic minimum of £1800 per year, an increase of nearly £500 on the present starting scale. This claim, the NUT says, will merely bring teachers into line with other non manual workers.

The presentation of the pay claim was a model of naivete. Giving the capitalist press a couple of 'hard luck' stories and a propaganda effort designed to bring home to members of the profession (as if they needed convincing!) and the public at large the justice of the case, just is not enough. No amount of hard luck stories will change the Tories' minds. As RANK AND FILE, the paper of socialists in the NUT, quite rightly put it:

"What is missing from the Executive discussions is any strategy for actually winning the claim, although it is well outside the limits laid down under

Phase 3."

There is currently a 'rolling campaign' in London over the acute teacher shortage and the meagre London allowance. Each stage of this campaign is supposed to put more and more pressure on the Government.

The present stage includes not covering for non appointed staff or staff absent for more than three days known in advance. Children are being sent home if there is no teacher.

This step is fine as far as it goes, but teachers are rapidly finding it is extremely complicated in practice, and easily fiddled by Local Authorities and headteachers.

The NUT Executive's next step will probably be a half day strike and demonstration. Yet it was these same tactics which led to the London Allowance campaign of last year just petering out.

Many teachers are now calling for an all out strike, to bring some real improvement and end the present situation of muddling through. The strike call is at present confined to the areas under the worst pressure ... but next term it is likely to spread.

The national pay claim, if fought properly, could unify the teachers. A national strike is vital.

A strike could and should take up

issues other than pay. The decline in education in London has been made easier by the ALMOST TOTAL lack of negotiated guarantees on working conditions for teachers. A modest beginning to a proper teachers' charter would be a guaranteed minimum of marking and preparation periods each week.

Phase 3 is specifically designed as a flexible weapon for the Tories. Its ultimate aim is to dampen down wage militancy and control wages. Unless we break through Phase 3 and the Tories' plans entirely, living standards for all of us will be pushed down. Teachers must realise this.

While the teachers' pay claim is coming up for consideration (it is scheduled for next April) many other bigger battalions of workers will be in the fight. To ensure victory it is important to build links with other trade unionists now. Transport workers, miners, engineers...

This is the job which falls particularly to the socialist RANK AND FILE group within the NUT. Joint campaigns, aid for other trade unionists in struggle, and strikes, must be organised. If socialist teachers do this job properly, it could ensure victory. Anything less is a recipe for defeat and disillusion.

## Docks

# PREPARE TO HELP MINERS!

Over the past year, dockers have faced an increasing number of problems. Along with Tory anti-working class laws which are confronting all workers, dockers have faced wide scale redundancies induced by the carrot of severance pay, followed by the introduction of casuals in a number of ports. With an increase in cargo passing through the ports, more and more work has piled onto fewer men.

Few dockers can pretend that, without a big fight, 1974 will be any better.

On December 3rd, over 20,000 dockers struck for the day in support of a national claim for a 20% increase on the basic pay. Dockers in Glasgow, Preston, Hull, Liverpool, Southampton and the Royal Docks, London were all out and the strike has, to a large extent, reaffirmed the National Port Shop Stewards Committee (NPSSC) as the leader of the rank and file docker.

Certainly there must be few, if any, among dockers who will ever again put their faith in Jack Jones, the man who sold them down the river with the Jones-Aldington Committee.

The failure of Manchester, Tilbury and some enclosed and riverside docks to come out had no effect on the massive wave of solidarity shown by dockers against Phase 3. In London, it was only confusion over the Green Book issue (some wanting to keep it, others to throw it out) which helped those who argued against coming out.

In Manchester, despite a fight by the militants, the right wing stewards tricked the men into staying at work — saying that they would be alone, and that an agreement on wages had already been formulated, which was a lie. Manchester, which took a strong line on the question of casuals, can in fact be expected to give fuller backing to future proposals of the NPSSC.

In the miners' strike of 1972, the miners were hard pressed to stop imported coal breaking their strike. This time, dockers must guarantee to miners that no coal will come into Britain while miners are on strike. As a first step, militants should organise mass meetings to which miners are invited to speak. The NPSSC should now be planning to mount its own pickets of small ports, non-registered ports and any other entry points to stop coal if the miners strike against Phase 3.

The other priority for the NPSSC's agenda must be the question of casuals. Dockers need to insist that this problem be overcome by opening up the register and recruiting men as registered dockers. The system of having two 'classes' of workers on the docks must be abolished as soon as possible.

TOM RAMSEY

### From p.1

unions (see pp. 4 & 5) is an added pressure on the union leaders who are afraid of a confrontation to try for a general deal.

Under the auspices of the NEDC, the CBI and TUC will start discussions with the Government before Christmas.

In the last year, prices have risen by 9.9%. It is expected that they will rise at least as much again by March with food prices going up further and faster than the general average. This means that the 7% threshold agreement given by Phase 3 will be broken through very soon — thus increasing the pressure on the government to redraft its incomes policy and probably try for a full wage freeze.

This Government which is now

# Workers and the Crisis

beginning to squeal about the 'National Interest' and the great national emergency and the Dunkirk spirit is the same one which has spat on the working class for 3 years now in the interest of the bosses, the exploiters and the profiteers. Now, using sham illusions of 'equal sacrifice', it prepares to retreat to the use of fraud where its force has so far failed and looks like failing dimly in a full scale

confrontation with large sections of the working class.

The Tory Government is nothing but the executive committee of the ruling class. The crisis is nothing but a straightforward consequence of the normal workings of the capitalist system. If they are not to be conned, workers must understand that the situation is not accidental, that the present problems flow from the very nature of the system and the policies the ruling class has pursued.

Anarchy and dislocation, needless conflict and unnecessary

crises are built into this system in which private profit is the mainspring and the workers are assigned the role of mere drudges to be bled.

The oil crisis arises from the long term policy of imperialism in exploiting the Arabs and fostering and protecting the reactionary, racist settler state of Israel.

Britain's balance of payments problems are caused by the policies of the capitalist class in restricting internal investment in British industry.

Industrial conflict arises from the fact that the working class in order just to keep its head above water has to fight every inch of the way against the capitalists and their governments, who are determined to keep parasites' profits high at the expense of wages.

In addition, Britain's capitalist system is locked into an international capitalist system ruled by the anarchy of the market and the competition of different national ruling classes, which could well spark off a mutually ruinous trade war.

The present crisis demonstrates for the umpteenth time that this system urgently needs to be replaced with a working class socialist system — a system where the existence of a government which starves retired pensioners while tenderly catering for the vampire appetites of the property speculators would be inconceivable. The working class is the only force that can bring about such a system by taking power in society and settling with the ruling class for good.

In the meantime, we need to give our full support and solidarity to those who are right now taking on the system, or preparing to, in their battles to break through Phase 3. Help them with solidarity strikes, with blacking and on the picket lines where they will be confronting Carr's strengthened police squads.

force the Tories to call an election.

In the circumstances this is all it can mean concretely. Thus, the call for a general strike to force the Tories out is really just another, mystified, way of calling for a general election. But in a general election, the last thing revolutionaries would call for would be a general election, which would just be a trick to get the strike called off (as happened in France in May 1968).

This slogan, then, faced with the real alternatives of an unfolding general strike, would reveal its real, right wing meaning. Its advocates, if consistent, would actually help the government to get off the hook as soon as it was prepared to offer an election.

To link the general strike call, then, and the question of kicking out the Tories, inevitably prepares such a muddle and in actuality helps prepare a weapon for those who would want to sabotage the strike before it had reached its highest potential of working class self mobilisation.

To kick out the Tories and replace them with a Labour government is of major importance now. But if a general strike, however it started, began to reach even some of its revolutionary potential, not least the mobilisation of millions of workers in direct action, then kicking out one

capitalist government to be replaced by a slightly less obnoxious one would become relatively trivial, compared with the possibilities that would exist for overthrowing capitalism.

Those who advocate this slogan have learned nothing from the international working class experience, especially that of France in 1968. By separating the question of general strike from the question of getting rid of the Tories, an understanding of the open endedness of the strike can be preserved, together with the possibility of fighting those who would cry for an election to demobilise the strike. It also preserves the possibility of rationally relating to the electoral process as well, right now, without implicitly seeing the mass mobilisation of a general strike as subordinate to these processes.

A general strike very probably would at least force the government to go to the country. But it has other — revolutionary — possibilities too. It is to these that revolutionaries relate, resisting the cheap pseudo radicalism of the call for a general strike to bring down the government. (See for example *Red Weekly*). This call, which projects one of today's tasks onto a possible mass upsurge of direct action of the class tomorrow in the most crippling way is anything but radical. JACKIE CLEARY

A general strike is far more important than a General Election in terms of flexing the real strength of the working class and dealing a body blow to capitalism. While militants need a policy for normal electoral politics, even in a situation when a general strike is a real possibility — in the event of such a general strike breaking out militants would do all in their power to prevent it being sidetracked with proposals for a general election. We would argue against any arbitration of the issue except arbitration by the strength of the working class.

Why not link the call for a general strike with the question of government, by calling for a general strike to force the Tories out? This sounds very radical. But it is actually a snare. No government would simply resign in the middle of a general strike — it would fight and manoeuvre and scheme, in the interest of the continuation of the capitalist system, to demobilise the strike.