

## MASS ARREST OF STUDENT PICKETS

OVER A hundred students have now been arrested at Essex University as the authorities once again called in the police onto the campus to arrest those taking part in a picket of the university. The picket had been agreed on by a mass meeting of the students.

Just as the Home Secretary Roy Jenkins sits behind his desk refusing the release the Shrewsbury pickets, so now when the University authorities play the bosses' picket-bashing game against students, Reg Prentice, the new Minister of Education, sits tight and claims he has "no powers to intervene". A telegram signed by 70 members of the University's staff, supporting the students, has been sent to him.

The pickets had been posted in the first place to protest against the expulsion of two students (members of the I.M.G.) for picketing lectures and entering them to persuade students to strike in support of the official NUS Day of Action for the Grants Campaign last November.

### Barricades

On Wednesday March 20th police arrived with 18 police wagons and halted at the makeshift barricades which had successfully stopped delivery vans from reaching the university. While workers dismantled the barricades the numbers on the picket line swelled to over 200. Then, in an obviously calculated move, a delivery van arrived and nearly 200 police marched on the pickets to clear a path for the van, dragging the students off into the police wagons. Clearly the mass arrests had been planned in advance by the police. And it is hard to resist the conclusion that the police and the university authorities were in direct collusion on this.

After about an hour and a half, two more delivery vans arrived and the same scene was re-enacted.

Last Saturday a one-day NUS conference was held at Essex to protest against the expulsions. The police and university action must be seen as an attempt to smash the student protest before it gains further outside support. This is also an open provocation to the NUS — and a challenge it must meet by fighting for national action in support of all the Essex students facing court or university charges; they must also demand the removal of the police from all campuses.

Recently, student pickets and occupations have come in for brutal police treatment, not just at Essex but also at Oxford and Kent. The parallel with the stepped-up attack by the police and the courts on workers' picket lines is obvious.

These students have consistently given aid and support to working class struggles. Essex University, for instance, was one of the main bases for the miners' flying pickets in 1972. Then, the students put up miners on the campus, as usual in the teeth of bitter opposition from Vice Chancellor Sloman. Court action was threatened against them then. Now they face the same attacks as those whose struggles they aided. Workers must now come to their aid.

Barricades at Essex



# WORKERS' fight

3p

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# Labour faces - Tory policies

BY JOHN O'MAHONY

**THE TORIES are out — but their policies are still in.**

That is the message that comes loud and clear out of the 'Great Debate' last Monday in the House of Commons on the 'Queens Speech' (Labour's programme for the next year). Militants must heed the message, or Harold Wilson will achieve by stealth and subtlety what Edward Heath couldn't achieve by blustering and bullying.

### THREAT

New Labour men and mainly old Tory policies is the formula with which the minority Labour government means to govern for a transition period. This is the prospect and the threat today facing the labour movement — which kicked Heath out and put Wilson in less than a month ago.

Militant pickets are still in jail, while the infamous trial of others on similar charges continues. A vicious police apparatus, able to win in confrontations with the trade unions, continues to be built up under Labour as under the Tories. Britain is still part of the reactionary North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The British Army is still in occupation of Northern Ireland. Housing Minister Anthony Crosland has even refused — in flat opposition to Labour Conference policy — to remove the Rent Commissioner imposed on rebel Clay Cross unless the Council there "obeys the law", that is, the Housing Finance Act.

Even Phase 3 of the Statutory Incomes Policy is, for now, to be maintained. Wilson plans to begin building a brave new 'Labour Britain' not on the ruins of Tory policies — but using those policies as his very foundations. In this case he

builds on the defeat suffered by the working class in being shackled within Phase 3 limits during a period when prices rose 12% in the last year alone.

### INSISTS

Minister of Employment Michael Foot, during the debate, committed Labour to maintaining a statutory incomes policy until it can be replaced by a voluntary one. That is, until the unions can be blackmailed into 'disciplining' themselves. Foot committed himself only to legislation to give Wilson's government the power to drop a statutory incomes policy. That means the options are being kept open. If Labour can do peacefully through a "social contract" deal with the Unions what the Tories failed to do in open class warfare, well and good for the ruling class. If not....

Foot also insists that those forced to settle under Phase 3 must now be confined to it, even though rising prices will

FOOT



still gnaw away at our living standards.

Thus Labour's first act as a government has been to breathe new life into discredited Tory policies. And they hope to sell this act of treachery to the labour movement and the working class as a wise strategy to deal with the hated Tories.

### STATUS QUO

The rout of the Tories in the Commons debate when they dropped plans to vote against the Queens Speech was only a heartening sight if we don't look too closely at what happened. Or if we have simply got drunk on the often mindless Tory-bashing over the last years and forgotten that the Tories, though they are its chief representative, are not themselves the ruling class. And forgotten also that Labour in power has never served the fundamental interests of any but the same class that the Tories have been working for.

In fact Labour 'routed' the Tories by stealing their clothes. With justification did Tories Whitelaw and Carr bitterly protest that Labour was merely sticking to the status quo — their status quo. Winning against the Tories like that is like 'victoriously' thwarting a gang of thugs out for your blood by cutting your own throat instead. Labour disorganised the Tory Party only by promising to continue fighting their war for them!

Such 'victory' is good stuff in shallow party, Parliament-based politics. That is, in the world inhabited by aging political Peter Pans like

Michael Foot — who fiercely trounced the Tories in words... while defending most of their policies. But it of no use at all to the working class.

The fact is that the working class hasn't been fighting just a bunch of hard-faced individuals around Heath — we have been fighting policies which attacked our living standards and our rights. What use to us are new faces if the policies are much the same?

Labour's retention of Phase 3 is, at least in the short term, a 'victory in defeat' for all that the Tories have stood and fought for. If the labour movement buys it, it could mean defeat in apparent victory for those whose industrial struggles made Britain ungovernable for the Tories and forced them into electoral defeat.

### CONTROL

In recent years the ruling class has shown its ability to duck, weave and spar with the labour movement very effectively, by throwing up new policies and strategies as each one is knocked down by the working class. The control of the Labour Party by the right wing and neutred 'lefts' like Foot means that the ruling class is able to utilise for its own purposes not only changes in policies, but changes in governing party. Through Wilson and others they are now using for their own ends the very real mass hatred of the Tories — which is surely one of the things Wilson is banking on to restrain the working class and keep the boat from rocking.

see back page

## Vague promises from Home Office

THE mounting campaign to force the Labour government to move the Price sisters and the other Republicans convicted in the Winchester bomb trial to the north of Ireland is obviously embarrassing the Home Office.

The biggest source of embarrassment to the Government, however, is the continuing hunger strike of Marian and Dolours Price in Brixton, Hugh Feeney in Gartree and Gerard Kelly in Wormwood Scrubs.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the Home Office is trying to buy off the hunger strikers with cynically cheap and vague promises of being "perfectly willing to consider taking into account both compassionate and security considerations whether it would be right to transfer them to Northern Ireland." But it implies that the condition for this is that the hunger strikers give up their 4-month long resistance.

All this is contained in a letter

from the Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, to Lord Brockway the Labour peer. In an attempt to split the campaign, the Home Secretary added "but I am sure you will agree that such a decision should not be taken in response to demonstrations or other pressure."

The fact that only the Price sisters are mentioned in the letter, but not the two men on hunger strike, is surely a further attempt to divide the movement of support for them.

But it is precisely 'demonstrations and other pressure' that have pushed the Home Secretary into making this statement — although it falls a long way short of a straightforward pledge to meet the hunger strikers' demands. It shows just how powerful the heroic action of the hunger strikers has been, and that the campaign in support of their demands is beginning to meet with success.



IN the last few lines of this very welcome paperback, Comrade McCann declares: "The future in Ireland lies with the small, but at last steadily growing, forces of Marxism. To make the revolution we need a revolutionary party. This book is intended as a contribution to discussion of how best to build it."

So is this review, for Comrade McCann's work raises many important issues, and ignores others which are vital to an understanding of how to build the revolutionary party.

Comrade McCann is both an able writer and an active Marxist, but generally his book is to be welcomed because at long last someone has found the time to tackle the task of setting down on paper, the ideas, tactics, and objectives of that small band of revolutionaries who had struggled in the '60s to expose and break open the contradictions of northern Irish society.

Miss Bernadette Devlin's "Price of my soul" was a major disappointment in this regard, and was based mainly on her own life rather than the experience of her class in struggle.

Comrade McCann, however, has more than made up for this failure, and has blended his own experience with its historical background and — to some extent — a view of the road which lies ahead for our working class.

His introductory chapter forcefully expresses his contempt for the reactionary attitudes which saturated and polluted the society where both he and I were born in the 1940s. These attitudes were firmly based on Catholic middle class ideas, pieties, fears, and prejudices, forming the diet and foul breath of a green Tory provincial backwater. They were communicated to the people via the street corner meeting, the pulpit, and our local green Tory rag, the Derry Journal.

## RADICAL

McCann's words show just what type of political animals, both lay and clerical, emerged from that gombeen green Tory middle class to hoodwink, manipulate the people, and dominate our local political scene, and how each element — lay and clerical — complemented the other in maintaining absolute control.

Such control lasted until the emergence, in the late '60s, of working class agitational groups which later blended with the civil rights movement. Although the middle class then lost political control of the situation for a period, it was not long before they regained the leadership of the agitational movement which they bitterly opposed at the start. They also gained enough popular support to sweep them into Parliament and, now, well-paid jobs as professional Judases for the British Empire.

It is to comrade McCann's credit that he brings to the attention of the reader just what type of people formed the early agitational movements, for these decent working class people rarely receive mention, except in an obituary column.

It is regrettable, however, that Comrade McCann devotes only 26 pages to the events prior to the first Civil Rights march in Derry on October 5th, 1968. By so doing he has failed to tackle the period of 1962-68, and without understanding that period what happened after 1968 is incomprehensible. The '62-'68 period marked a radical step to the left within the IRA following its defeat in the 1956-62 armed resistance campaign. This period is important to understand, because the IRA's military defeat then was due directly to the fact that up to 1962 they had not developed positive links with the people in struggle, and, isolated from the active support of the masses, followed the traditional path of conspiracy-style, military-action-only, politics.

The Republicans' swing to the left in the early 1960s was supported by those who had participated in the campaign, whereas many older Republicans neither embraced nor understood the need for new tactics. This is best shown by the fact that some of the people whom Comrade McCann praises for their life-long involvement in the struggle, who had regularly been imprisoned, were declaring after the '56-'62

campaign that "Unemployment and homelessness have nothing to do with Republicanism".

Indeed from the 'traditional' Fenian/Republican point of view they were correct. No social impurities and divisions should be allowed to distract the people's gaze from the single holy objective of breaking the connection with England and gaining full Irish independence. In reality, of course, such a pure and abstract posing of the question of independence cut the Republican movement off from the social explosive material that, rousing, rallying, organising, and inspiring the people, could evoke the forces for achieving independence.

## BANNER

But it is ironic indeed that the swing to the left resulted in giving the traditionalists a real role to play — contradicting all their doctrinaire rejection of involvement in social questions and of mobilising the masses. The social agitations led to batons, the batons led to guns, and the gun-style politics were the only type that the traditionalists really knew anything about. The urgently felt need of the Catholic working class for self-defence made their approach seem the only possible one.

Opposition to developing real links with the economic struggles of the people still exists to this day, despite talk of involvement in and concern with such struggles which is brought into the movement because of the real everyday interests of the masses who have flocked to the Republican banner since 1969.

The 'old guard' have changed very little in their ideology and tactics, which were dominant in 1956 and which helped lead to the defeat of the resistance campaign of that period.

## LEADERS

The same opposition of the traditionalists to class involvement and class struggle can only spell out a similar defeat in the 1970s unless it is corrected by this generation of Irish revolutionaries.

Comrade McCann has not helped to draw out these lessons.

In the context of the north, this omission on the part of the traditionalists contributes to perpetuating sectarianism, which can only aid the imperialists and continue the division of our class. The traditional-style ideology will lead to a mere extension of Free Statism rather than the creation of a socialist republic which will place the workers in complete control, for it is the working class which is engaged in the conflict and taking all that imperialism can inflict. It is their blood which will purchase freedom, and therefore it is that class which should create a social order which is in its own economic interest. Any other way forward will mean a continuation of capitalism and middle-class dominated politics based on social-democracy. Little will have changed in spite of heroic sacrifices.

There is much to be desired in McCann's treatment of the central issue of socialist leadership after October 5th, 1968. Comrade McCann pleads ignorance when it comes to laying blame on the individual s who

NEARLY 50 years after the partition of Ireland had locked them as second class citizens into the British puppet state of the Six Counties, the Catholic masses there revolted against their condition. The movement was more deep, powerful, and uncontrollable than anything known in that area of Ireland for centuries. The Republicans can now proudly point out that the present campaign of resistance against British rule has been sustained longer than any of the many Irish campaigns for freedom since the 17th century.

The present revolt began in Derry in the late '60s, not as an IRA campaign, but as an agitation for equality of civil rights, jobs, etc, for Catholics, and developed in a linked chain to the present stage.

Eamonn McCann, a Marxist

who was one of the leaders of the Derry movement that detonated the revolt, has published an important book, 'WAR IN AN IRISH TOWN', describing and analysing the experience of the workers of Derry — how a small coalition of socialists from the Northern Ireland Labour Party and the Republican movement struck blow after blow at the rotten sectarian set-up in Derry, roused the Catholics and frightened the Orange rulers into a massive overreaction which, within three years, ended in the old Stormont regime being brought down. He also describes how the socialists lost control of the situation and how a massive revival of old style republicanism emerged as the leadership of the Catholic struggle.

The author of this review, Fionnbarra O'Dochartaigh, was

one of the chief organisers of the early stages of the struggle in Derry and figures as such in McCann's account of events. A Republican, he sided with the Official wing when that movement split in 1969/70, later breaking with the Officials, in 1972, because he disagreed profoundly with their policy of supporting the continued existence of a separate Stormont 'Parliament' in Belfast. He is thus uniquely qualified to assess McCann's account of what happened in Derry.

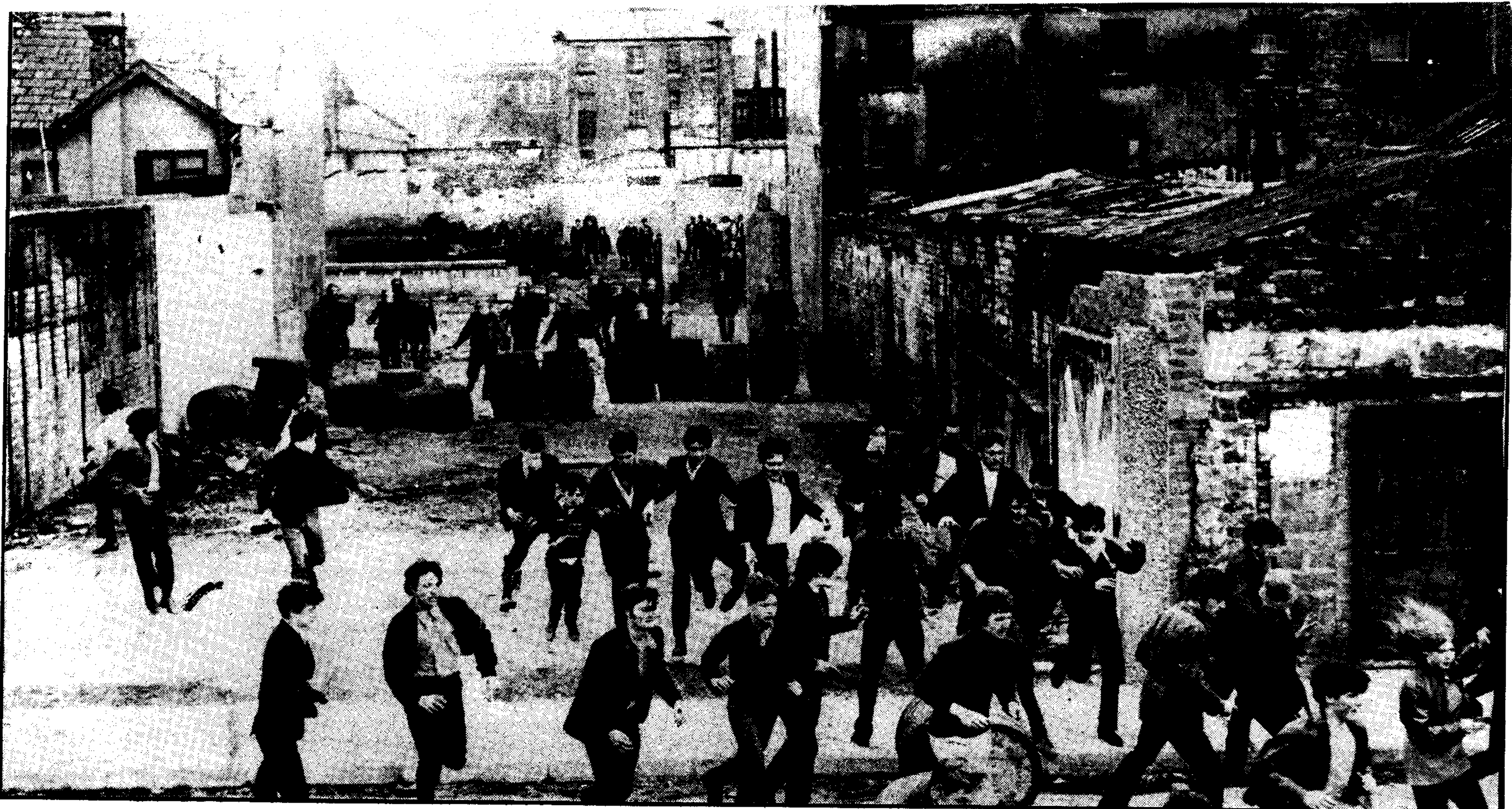
His views are his own. It is essential, however, for us to make one thing clear. Fionnbarra O'Dochartaigh emphasises the importance of fighting for a socialist republic in Ireland, and he points to certain weaknesses in the Republican movement. Of course, we agree, and we are

# YOU ARE NOW ENTERING FREE DERRY

Fionnbarra O'Dochartaigh

Eamonn McCann's

'WAR IN AN IRISH



handed the mass movement over to the middle-class elements on whom he heaps so much justified scorn in the initial 26 pages.

He doesn't answer the many questions which spring to mind, including the one which asks how a Marxist such as himself can become the chairman of a meeting which hands the leadership over to John Hume-type reactionaries on a silver platter. This happened when the people McCann aptly calls middle-class, middle-aged, and middle of the road muscled into the Civil Rights agitation once the bandwagon started rolling. A new, broader committee was set up.

This, I believe, set the scene for continued sectarianism, because those who took over used the civil rights cause for their own ends in true Catholic middle-class fashion. They had no class perspective for working people which might have created a broad unity between all sections of our class.

## MURDERS

From that point, only the politics of Hume and Co, the present SDLP, shone through the northern haze, and the revolutionaries not only played second fiddle, but were powerless within a web of events which they themselves had helped to create without being able to direct them. It is questionable how many less sectarian murders there would have been or at what stage of social awareness would the working people of both religions be today, had the middle class green Tories not gained control of the civil rights movement.

Certainly the personalities who make up the SDLP, who rode to power on the ferment generated by the left's efforts from 1962 on, would not be in a position of such influence at such a vital time as now.

Whether or not it can reasonably be argued that the left could, given the balance of forces, the social conditions in Derry, etc, have stopped the takeover of men like Hume and such as the millionaire bookie Canavan, I date the deterioration of the prospects of the left in Derry from that moment when the reactionaries effectively pushed aside the initiators of the campaign, in October 1968.

It will take many years for the left to regain the ground lost during these four historic days following October 5th.

## SOCIALIST

Comrade McCann also ignores the schemes of the southern elements in Fianna Fail who endeavoured to gain influence over those engaged in the struggle in the north. How certain elements of the Republicans and Catholic middle class collaborated with them, and how these activities helped to further divide our class and increase suspicion. The split in the IRA is not tackled effectively, nor is the part played by the southern government, and their puppets within the Catholic ghettos. He says that the 'Provos' did not become a force in Derry until the spring of 1971, but the fact that both wings of the IRA joined together to bury three former comrades who had abandoned both wings to form their own

armed group and who were blown up on the night of Miss Devlin's arrest on June 26 of the previous year, points to the contrary.

The mixed-up attitudes of the Officials are to some extent recorded, but I fear that Comrade McCann has evaded the issue in regard to that wing's attitude to Stormont (in favour of maintaining it!), their 'stages theories' (first settle with imperialism, then the socialist revolution), their parliamentary programme, the reasons for their truce in 1972. Therefore his book will give little direction to the opposition which has existed in that movement over this past few years. It is a movement which desperately requires positive direction from a Marxist point of view.

In conclusion, let me say that this book is a must in spite of the criticisms made in this review. Were the issues raised not so vital, and the book itself not so important, we would not bother to criticise it. It should be read by every socialist in Britain, and especially those engaged on the Irish question. It will certainly be an excellent source of reference long after Comrade McCann and I have passed into the dark abyss, and it will certainly help the growing forces of Marxism in Ireland during our life-time.

Finally, let us hope that Comrade McCann will continue to use his very able pen, and that all our efforts will some day merge in the building of the revolutionary party which Ireland so desperately requires in the making of our socialist revolution.

Fionnbarra O'Dochartaigh



ppy we have an Irish socialist  
so in *Workers Fight*.  
But *Workers Fight* is a British  
per. Right now the army of  
ur own" state is fighting an  
pressive imperialist war in  
land. We believe that socialists  
Britain have no right to make it  
condition of our support for the  
sh freedom fighters that they be  
cialists. That is the business of  
e Irish working class.  
While British socialists must  
ere possible help to promote  
e cause of socialism in Ireland,  
elsewhere, our main concern  
ust be to support those in fact  
ding the struggle, going on  
re and now, against our own  
overnment, Tory or Labour.  
e best thing we can do for  
cialism in Ireland is fight to  
ce the British bosses to get  
eir bloody hands out of the  
airs of the people of Ireland.

Reviews  
new book  
TOWN'

IS THE recently publicised  
case of Luke Dougherty, the  
man recently convicted and  
imprisoned by a Sunderland  
court before finally proving  
his innocence, a rare legal  
anomaly? Or is it the tip of a  
sizeable iceberg? If anyone  
is in doubt, they should go  
out and buy a copy of the  
1974 Annual Report of the  
National Council for Civil  
Liberties.

"1973", writes Martin Loney  
in his introduction to the report  
"was a year which civil  
libertarians would have been  
better off without... Today  
civil liberties are in retreat."  
The report is an exceedingly  
useful summary, collecting  
together a whole series of  
events, incidents, laws, legal  
precedents and actions to form  
a picture of a formidable attack  
on civil liberties mounted by the  
last government, by the police  
and by sections of the judicial  
machine.

Under a general heading  
'Administration of Justice' the  
report deals with police  
searches, the use of conspiracy  
charges, the attacks on the jury  
system and the attempt by the  
Government to abolish the right  
of appeal to the European  
Commission of Human Rights.

Police search activities have  
been massively stepped up,  
under three pretexts — drugs,  
"explosives" and "illegal"  
immigration. "The misuse and

# Civil Liberties report shows big increase in repression

abuse by the police of their  
powers of search continue  
unabated..."

An NCCL campaign for  
publication of figures relating to  
the stop and search powers  
given the police by the  
Dangerous Drugs Act 1967  
finally produced the  
information that a total of  
29,892 people had been  
searched, merely because a  
police officer was "reasonably  
suspicious". In the past year,  
the bombing incidents in this  
country have given the police  
further pretexts for searches,  
but, says the report "In a large  
number of cases drawn to our  
attention, police officers made  
no pretense that they were  
looking for explosives. Instead  
they questioned people whose  
houses they searched about  
their friends, political activities,  
and took away note books and  
address books and other  
documents."

## Conspiracy

The harassment of  
immigrants by searching and  
questioning is so far less well  
documented, but the report  
quotes cases in Camden and  
Tower Hamlets which "reveal a  
heavy-handed and often illegal  
approach by police officers to  
immigrants. In one search in  
October 1973 the police  
admitted questioning between  
60 and 80 people and asked for  
documents and passports to  
establish their right to reside in  
this country. Eight people were  
arrested of whom seven were  
later released."

In his capacity as Lord  
Chancellor, Lord Hailsham has  
been active in widening the  
areas where the law relating to  
conspiracy can be used. One of  
these was in conspiracy (a  
criminal offence carrying  
indefinite penalties) to  
trespass (not in itself a criminal  
offence). He has stated that  
conspiracy to trespass can be  
used "for the vast majority of  
the squatting cases, or the 'sit-  
in' cases, or many of the cases  
in which sports grounds are  
frequently occupied or  
disrupted." The report cites the  
use of conspiracy in the  
Shrewsbury trial and the  
attempted use of it in the trial of  
5 people after their occupation of  
the SOS lump agency in  
Birmingham — a case  
successfully fought by the  
NCCL.

Hailsham was at the same  
time concerned about the  
problem of the availability of  
trial by jury — so concerned that  
he set up an inquiry into "the  
distribution between the Crown  
Court and the magistrates'  
courts". "In other words" the  
NCCL comments "between  
jury trial and trial without jury."  
It seems clear that the move is  
towards restricting the area in  
which defendants have a right  
to trial by jury.

Hailsham also — this time  
without any inquiry, change in  
the law or consultation — made

a significant real change in the  
operation of the jury system,  
whereby courts would no  
longer record the occupations  
of jurors. This previously gave  
the Defence a chance of  
selecting juries with at least a  
roughly similar class  
background to that of the  
accused.

The report goes on to deal  
with the Official Secrets Act,  
which is still used to restrict  
public discussion on a wide  
variety of issues (even where  
facts have been published  
abroad) — despite  
recommendations of the Franks  
Committee for changes. It  
refers also to the activities of  
the self-appointed private  
censors, and the campaign  
against the Cinematograph and  
Indecent Displays Bill which  
provided "up to two years  
imprisonment for an offence  
which was not defined, except  
in a single word — 'indecency'  
— which has no generally  
accepted meaning... A man  
who accidentally displayed a  
nude pin-up in 'The Sun' to a  
fellow traveller on his way to  
work would have been liable to  
a successful prosecution."

Whilst the state jealously  
guards the strongroom of its  
own "secrets" from public view,  
the NCCL says that "The  
trafficking in personal  
information was, in 1973, an  
expanding business. Credit  
rating and debt collecting  
agencies are reporting record  
profits. Security companies  
have requested official access  
to police records in order to  
check prospective  
employees... And private  
detectives are being hired by  
more employers for surveillance  
of staff."

## Police

In January 1974, 4 London  
police stations started the  
practice of photographing  
people held in custody. The  
report also points out that  
"police cameramen have  
become familiar sights at  
demonstrations and now it  
seems that videotape film is  
acceptable as evidence in  
court... This clearly paves the  
way for the use of such  
equipment in charges involving  
demonstrators and pickets and  
the creation of photo-files on  
political activists."

Yet more information is to be  
collected and collated by the  
central pickets control unit set  
up under Deputy Assistant  
Commissioner John Gerrard,  
who "was also in operational  
control of the joint military and  
police operations at Heathrow  
Airport..."

An interesting section deals  
with the growth of private  
police forces, which are even  
less publicly accountable than  
the official one. A 'Protection of  
Aircraft Bill' provided for an  
extension of the operations of  
private security organisations,  
whose personnel can stop,  
search and detain people, and

use force in doing so. This is  
now law. In airports and docks  
there are over 20 semi-official  
police forces, "who have partial  
or complete police powers but  
are not subject to inspection by  
the Home Office." One of  
these, the London Transport  
Police, is rapidly building up a  
reputation for arbitrariness,  
brutality and racial prejudice.

## Ireland

The report devotes a major  
section to Northern Ireland.  
With the replacement of the  
old Special Powers Act (1922)  
by the Emergency Provisions  
Act on 8th August 1973,  
Northern Ireland saw "an  
erosion of civil liberties  
unprecedented even by  
Northern Ireland standards."

Trial by jury was suspended  
"not only for crimes committed  
for political motives but for  
many serious criminal  
offences." The Act reverses the  
burden of proof in certain cases  
too. In effect, the accused must



now prove his own innocence.  
Written confessions by a  
Defendant are admissible too,  
as is hearsay evidence.

"The NCCL is at present"  
they report "pursuing a number  
of cases of men who... are  
being acquitted only to find  
themselves arrested and  
detained without trial." The  
report also points out that  
"Northern Ireland is being used  
as a testing ground for military  
control of civil disorder."

"The past 12 months have  
produced no change in the  
depressing pattern of the  
operation of an overtly racist  
Act" says the report. The May  
1973 decision by the House of  
Lords that the 1971  
Immigration Act should be  
retrospective in respect of  
illegal immigrants had the  
effect of making liable for

summary deportation several  
thousand people who had  
hitherto been protected from  
expulsion."

Predictably the Home  
Secretary's assurances that this  
would not lead to any  
harassment of immigrants by  
police were not worth the hot  
air they were made with. "There  
is a serious risk that any black  
person who is stopped by a  
police officer for whatever  
reason is liable to be questioned  
as to his immigration status."

Whilst other European  
countries have taken in  
thousands of refugees from the  
Chilean holocaust, a mere  
seven students from Chile are  
still battling through the courts  
to be permitted to stay.

## Pickets

The section on industrial  
relations is not very substantial  
at all. It fails both to give an  
adequate account of recent  
events, and to put these in the  
context of the class struggle. It  
concentrates on the question of  
picketing, where it concludes  
that "the stage has been set for  
the total abolition of effective  
and peaceful picketing as  
understood by workers and  
trade unionists."

There is also a brief section on  
Mental Health, concentrating  
mainly on involuntary  
detention, and incredibly  
sketchy sections on women and  
on children's rights.

The report is in general far  
from a comprehensive review of  
the year on the 'civil liberties'  
front. Rather, it is a report based  
mainly on the NCCL's activities.

Its main weakness is that the  
'erosions' of civil liberties which  
it catalogues are not at any  
point placed in a social or even a  
political context. But both civil  
liberties in general and the  
rights of trade unionists and of  
oppressed sections of the  
community under capitalism  
are very much a product of  
struggle and of the relationship  
of forces at any time. The  
erosion itself has been a product  
of a concerted ruling class  
offensive to beat down the  
working class, under the  
pressure of an increasingly  
tightening world economic  
situation for British capitalism;  
and the limits of that erosion  
have been set by the strength of  
the working class in fighting  
back. This is particularly true of  
the Industrial Relations Act and  
the attempt to clamp down on  
picketing.

## Limited

The NCCL plays a useful role  
in this fight back. But its  
usefulness will be limited by its  
failure to place its activities in  
the context of the struggle.  
Rather, it sees itself as a purely  
legal and parliamentary  
pressure group, and its General  
Secretary Martin Loney seems  
to have no qualms about talking  
of "a fair immigration policy",  
about opposing the renewal of  
"a number of" the provisions of  
the Emergency Provisions Act,  
or about expressing concern  
"to ensure that individual  
policemen observe the highest  
standards and that the force as a  
whole does not adopt policies  
and practices which... jeopardise  
the civil liberties of ordinary citizens."

All well and good if we were not  
living in a class society, with the  
police, the 'immigration policy'  
and such things as the  
Emergency Provisions Act  
being instruments of the  
oppression of one class by  
another.

RON VANDY

# SPECULATION—THE PROFIT PUSHER

by Andrew Roberts

THE EXTENT of  
speculation in commodities,  
which was revealed by John  
Palmer in *The Guardian*, has  
now been confirmed by no  
less an authority than the  
*Financial Times*. On March  
1st, the FT devoted a full five  
pages to advising its readers  
on how to make a quick  
buck from rising prices —  
and of course push them up  
further in the process.

According to the FT, "Putting  
money into commodities is the 'in'  
thing at present. Funds are  
flowing into the commodity  
markets in a volume never seen  
before. With stocks and shares  
falling drastically and even  
property investment losing its  
glamour, more and more people  
have turned to raw materials to  
provide protection against  
inflation..."

And another FT writer tells us  
that "Investing in commodities  
through unit trusts can be fun and  
profitable."

The FT then goes on to explain  
the different variants of fun and  
profit that can be had.

10% deposit when he first 'buys'  
the goods, so it is not difficult to  
see how a clever operator can  
make super-profits by keeping one  
step ahead of the cycle.

For the less brave of heart there  
is even a third variant whereby the  
speculator can partially protect  
himself against his commodity  
falling in price. Under the  
'options' system the speculator  
can (for a price) have the  
safeguard of the right to buy when  
prices are favourable. The profits  
are less, but even so the FT  
reckons that a speculator can  
make a profit of £500 on an  
investment of £1250 by buying an  
option on 50 tons of sugar the  
price of which goes from £250 a  
ton to £275.

## FUN AND GAMES

Naturally the FT denies that all  
this fun and games increases  
prices. According to their  
argument, since every speculative  
buy is at a later date a sale, there is  
no overall effect on demand or  
prices.

But it is of course precisely the  
time lag between the purchase  
and the sale which means that the  
demand for commodities is  
increased artificially although the  
actual commodities may not have  
changed hands in the first  
place... or even exist!

Thus a general trend in rising  
prices is reinforced by  
speculation. Palmer quotes  
sources which indicate that up to  
30% of the increase in the "world  
price" of certain commodities can  
be attributed to speculation.

## LABOUR LEADERS

The Labour leaders have said  
that they would control  
speculation by raising the deposit  
on 'futures' from 10% to 100%.  
While this would knock the  
bottom off the 'futures' market, it  
still leaves speculative stockpiling  
untouched.

Besides holding Labour to this  
promise, workers in factories,  
docks and warehouses should  
keep a constant eye open for  
commodities being hoarded.  
Already workers at a food  
warehouse in Glasgow have  
blacked a stock of lentils which  
was being hoarded and have said  
that they won't release them until  
the price comes down to the retail  
price at the time when they were  
bought.

# IN THE NEWS

A BEA Trident One jet airliner  
crashed today on its way to Paris  
from London Airport. The crew  
and all seventy six passengers  
were killed. The names of the  
victims are being withheld until  
relatives have been informed.

"Make us a cuppa tea will yer  
Alice?"

Seventeen children and two  
teachers died in a blaze that  
engulfed a school in Brookwood,  
Berkshire, this afternoon. An  
immediate inquiry is to be held  
into the materials used in the  
construction of the school.

"Do us a cheese butty an'all  
Alice"

Pakistan was hit by some of the  
worst flooding in many years. The  
death toll is believed to be as high  
as seven to eight hundred persons

Bert Entwistle, player-  
manager of Mugsville Rovers,  
newly elected to the Third  
Division, broke a leg in a car crash  
early today. A police statement  
said Entwistle had been drinking  
heavily.

"Did you hear that Alice? Bert  
Entwistle's broke his leg"

Over forty people are believed to  
have been killed during bombing  
raids by the US Air Force on  
Cambodia.

"Bert Entwistle eh! That's him  
out for the rest of the season,  
you can bet on that"

Two men were killed on a  
building site in Watford this  
morning as scaffolding collapsed  
throwing them over a hundred  
feet to the ground. The men on  
site are demanding "an  
investigation into what they

claim are sub-standard  
scaffolding materials bought  
cheap by the firm.

On a section of the M6  
motorway near Carnforth in  
Lancashire, one man was killed  
and two others seriously injured  
as several tons of steel  
reinforcing rods slipped into the  
section in which they were  
working. A spokesman for the  
firm denied any negligence on  
the part of the company.

"He could lose his driving  
licence as well you know, Alice.  
A man in his position needs a  
driving licence. He's on ten  
thousand a year with the Rovers  
you know."

Steelworkers in Scunthorpe have  
put in a claim for an 18% increase  
on their basic rate. This would  
bring the £25 basic up to £29.50  
for a forty hour week

"Greedy bastards!"

News is just coming in from our  
Middle East correspondent of  
bombing raids into Syria by  
Israeli aircraft. One Palestinian  
refugee camp was badly hit, and  
at least fifty people are known to  
have been killed.

There have been riots in Cape  
Town and Pretoria following the  
hanging of three Africans  
yesterday convicted under the  
Terrorism Act. Four people have  
been killed and many wounded in  
clashes with the police.

And now the weather...

"Is that tea ready yet Alice?"  
"Here you are love. Was there  
anything on the news?"

"I've been telling you Alice.  
Bert Entwistle's broken his  
leg."

DAVE BRODIE



"THESE PICKETS are the conscience of the working class" Jack Hollands of Kent said at the conference on March 16th at the Joint Committee of UCATT and the T&GWU for the defence of the Shrewsbury 24. "If I was in jail as a result of picketing, I would expect, no DEMAND that the working class get me out!" Unfortunately, the rest of the day produced no such clearcut perspective on this most crucial of issues facing the labour movement today.

## SHREWSBURY 24 CONFERENCE -

as such, representatives of the interests of the ruling class. But Lucas was followed by Norman Atkinson, Tribune MP for Tottenham who, in a time-honoured parliamentary fashion, managed to knit together all sorts of conflicting approaches into a reasonable sounding argument for... doing nothing. After a useful analysis of the present state of capitalism and the effectiveness of picketing, he came to his first red herring: "The first hurdle for us all to overcome is the problem of keeping the Labour Party in power." Don't rock the boat, brothers....

Next came not so much a red herring, but a ruddy great scarlet whale; according to Atkinson, the jailing of the pickets was a "mistake" by the judiciary.

Somehow they seemed to have got their wires crossed and, instead of the usual scrupulous fairness and lack of class bias, they slipped up and jailed men for picketing. What we have to do is to persuade them they have made a mistake, and then everything will be all right again.

Eddie Marsden of the CEU rather spoilt this cosy view when he quoted from the February 1st edition of the Daily Express, which reported the formation of a vigilante group of former service chiefs, ex-M15 men, leading businessmen and some (anonymous) Labour and Tory MPs, in order to ensure that 'subversives do not gain positions of power'.

Elsa Warren spoke next. She is the wife of Des Warren, jailed for 3 years and at present on hunger strike. She was at pains to repudiate the lies of the bourgeois press, in particular the Daily

# OFFICIALS OFFER ONLY EXCUSES

Mirror, which had painted a picture of Des Warren buying and selling property, owning a large Jaguar car and generally living in style - on the dole! - and had gone on to describe him as a "vicious man".

The facts were very different, said Elsa Warren. Every time the Warrens had moved house it was not to make a profit, but to get a cheaper mortgage. Five years ago they had a good home, now they live in a semi-detached cottage. They paid £60 for the Jaguar in 1969 - and at the time when Des was jailed the car had been off the road for two years! He didn't choose not to work, but was blacklisted as a militant. Finally, this 'vicious' man kept an 81 year old neighbour's shed stocked with wood for the winter. He gave her furniture to replace what she had had to burn the previous year to keep warm.

The Warrens have had to suffer threatening phone calls since the trials began. One day Elsa was alone in the house with the five children, when somebody phoned her and said that a bomb would be thrown at the house in twenty minutes. But when she rang the police about it she was told "We are on duty for 24 hours a day, Madam. If anything happens, please let us know." In the end the Warrens had to evacuate the house and Des and some of the other pickets guarded it.

The conference took place a full year after the first court appearances of the Shrewsbury 24, and three full months after the first jailings - yet it was virtually the first official action by the unions whose members are on trial for picketing. Their joint statement recommended calls on the Government to release the pickets, support for the following

week's lobby of Parliament, discussions and meetings. No amendments were permitted.

George Smith, UCATT General Secretary, "couldn't make it" to the Conference. Just as well for him, perhaps in view of his record of action against the Shrewsbury 24, he could only expect a pretty rough reception. His place was taken by Assistant Gen Sec Les Woods; as one delegate from Edinburgh put it "I came down to hear the organ grinder, and I got the monkey instead..." Woods was howled down by the conference when he said that the "immediate reaction" of the UCATT Executive, on hearing of the jailings, was "to get the best legal advice available."

What is the Labour Government doing, besides 'cow-towing to the anti-working class judiciary'? So far, they haven't lifted a finger to free the pickets, though they could have done so in a matter of hours. As the weeks slip by, it becomes increasingly clear that the Government will do nothing without the most intense working class pressure being put on them, pressure expressed first and foremost in widespread, where possible nationwide, industrial action.

Ian Hollingsworth

## Long Kesh parole agreement is broken

Cage 18, Long Kesh. Saturday 9th March 1974. Shortly before Christmas 1972 the administration here in the 6 Counties granted the full demand of the sentenced Republican prisoners and ended their week-long total hunger strike. Those demands included that parole would be granted to all prisoners who suffered the bereavement of close relatives. An agreement to this effect was signed by the authorities.

On Friday morning, a Dublin man here in Long Kesh was informed of the death of his mother, and that the funeral was to take place the following morning at 10am. He applied for parole in the normal way, but to everyone's surprise and shock this was turned down. He made a fresh application reminding the authorities of their signed

agreement. This was again rejected and he was told this rejection had come from the highest possible authority.

We the sentenced Republican Prisoners are now forced once again to embark on a hunger strike to re-establish this broken agreement. As from 12 noon today (Saturday) 5 men are commencing the hunger strike. They are Johnny Johnston, Dublin; Tommy Mullin, Dublin; Donal Billings, Dublin; Jim Scullion, Belfast and Rod Quigley, Belfast. This will continue with 5 more men joining the strike every week until our demands are met.

The demands are that this agreement is re-established and parole granted to all the men here, regardless of what part of the country they are from and that a reasonable time is allowed for parole instead of the existing 6 to 8 hours.

These are two very basic demands and we take this opportunity to remind the establishment that no Republican has ever broken parole and that an artificial border will make no difference to this long established code.

P.R.O. Cage 18

## BRITISH SECRET AGENTS KILLED?

ACCORDING to the South Armagh battalion of the Provisional IRA, the two British soldiers killed on 20th March by their own side were members of a plain clothes squad which had been operating the area for some time - quite possibly members of the Army's elite Special Air Services (SAS) unit.

Only a few days before, the Government revealed in an official statement what, after all, was common knowledge in the north of Ireland that the "SAS are operating in the Province". Within hours the Army reacted by trying to modify the statement, claiming that there were some Intelligence units there, but that was all.

At first sight the incident seems nothing more than an underlining of the shoot-first-and-answer-the-Coroner's-questions-after-approach of the Northern Ireland police, the RUC.

But then there are further questions to be answered. What were the soldiers, in plain clothes, doing at the time? And what were the police, also in plain clothes, doing? "Returning from leave" says the Army. "Looking for IRA men" says the RUC, "and we thought the soldiers were IRA men."

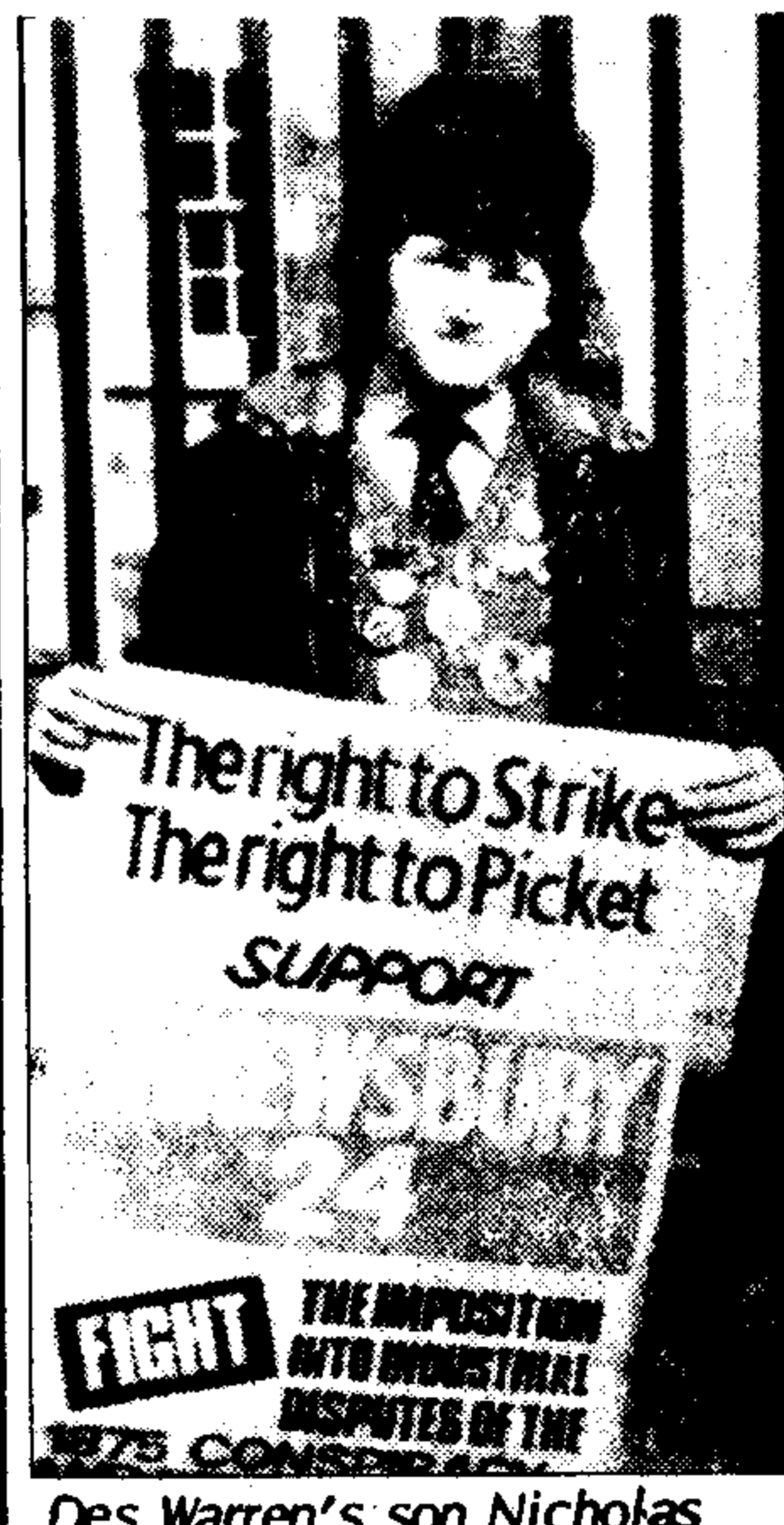
The Army's story is of course disproven by the RUC. For the police thought the soldiers were IRA men because the soldiers were armed with sub-machine guns. And sub-machine guns are hardly something you take with you on leave.

The suspicion that both groups, the Army and the Police, were under-cover assassination units is given credence by the statement of a local businessman.

"One soldier was lying near the front of their car, and his sub-machine gun was lying nearby. He had been shot through the temple. "I thought they had been ambushed by the IRA, because, although they were in civilian clothes, I knew they were soldiers. I had seen them operating in the area."

Even Mr. Gerry Fitt, SDLP leader and highest paid front man for the British Army in Northern Ireland, said that people would believe the men were members of the SAS.

For once, the truth does Fitt. Ed Farraday



Des Warren's son Nicholas

## Lobby demands "free 6"

AS ONE more Shrewsbury pickets trial was drawing to a close, 2,000 militants and trade unionists marched in support of the Shrewsbury 24. The march, organised by the T&GWU and UCATT, assembled at Tower Hill and heard speakers including Barry Scragg of the North Wales Defence Committee, Simon Fraser, secretary of Liverpool Trades Council, and Bert Smith of the UCATT General Council, before marching to Westminster for a lobby of Parliament.

As on other demonstrations, the main contingents were made up of building workers, and another contingent of over 400 building workers from Merseyside marched separately from Euston station. But some other sections of the labour movement were also represented, including a large contingent of miners from South Wales.

At the lobby inside the House of Commons, militants pressed the fact that amending the 1875 Act - one of the official organisers' stated aims - was entirely secondary to obtaining

the release of the jailed pickets, of whom two (Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson) have been on hunger strike for almost 3 weeks).

Unfortunately, the number of sites working at full blast even along the route of the march, made a depressing reminder that much more work is still needed to get the sort of response that freed the dockers in 1972.

Demonstrations such as last Wednesday's (March 20th) cannot therefore be seen as an end in themselves, but as preparations for extended industrial action which will be needed to release the pickets. Len Glover

## UNITED ACTION NEEDED ON LONDON WEIGHTING

A MEETING on the London Weighting called by London Trades Council on March 18th revealed big differences in the extra pay that people get for working in London. Most jobs give a bit extra for the Home Counties, and some give extra for other cities, but the exorbitant cost of housing and travel in Greater London has forced many unions to put in for a big increase.

The most prominent claim so far has been that of the Inner London Teachers Association for £500 (though the NUT Executive is only calling for £350). London teachers have backed up their case by refusing to cover for the shortage of teachers in the London area.

Local government workers in NALGO have put in for a £400 weighting, with sanctions such as overtime bans and non-cooperation with staff agency workers. NALGO workers in Islington were also planning strike action.

Other claims in the pipeline include £200 from AUEW/TASS and £400 from some sections of the National Health Service.

The meeting felt that there was clearly a case for co-ordination of action on these claims. Unfortunately the London Trades Council is being wound up by the TUC, otherwise it would be the logical organisation to launch a campaign. Several of the 42 delegates spoke of the need for an action committee, but the only action agreed by the platform was for a meeting of full-time officers. E.C.

## Labour faces - Tory policies

from front page

The minority Labour government must either launch a serious offensive immediately, dealing powerful blows at the ruling class and rousing and rallying the working class. Or else it is a prisoner of those who will either tolerate it or outvote it. A prisoner with some room for tactical manoeuvres aimed toward the next election, but still a prisoner and in practice a stooge.

Of course Wilson wants, now, to be such a 'prisoner'. It lets the Labour government off the left-wing hook of recent conference decisions. Being a minority provides an all-purpose alibi for the left as well, and allows the Labour leaders to play for the centre ground in politics, to exchange their recent pale pink flush for the duck-egg blue which is their real political colour.

In search of stronger government, Heath bungled toward electoral rejection and defeat. Ironically, a weak Labour government may, for a short while, be able to play the role of a strong capitalist government for the bosses, stronger certainly than was Heath's government.

### MINORITY

It will be strong to the degree that the labour movement is weak, to the degree that the union leaders will allow themselves and can persuade us to be harnessed to the Government's chariot. Jack Jones has already declared understanding and sympathy for the Government's situation, including its 'need' to maintain a statutory incomes policy. So, effectively, has Hugh Scanlon of the AUFW, though the engineers are still pushing their pay claim. Scanlon denies challenging the government "We recognise the difficulties that the Government is facing not only because it is a minority government, but

because of the almost frightening economic situation it has inherited."

The union leaders say that their priorities are the repeal of the Industrial Relations Act and a rise in pensions. Instead of demanding these as rights, they beg for them as favours.

The Industrial Relations Act could and should have been scrapped by working class action if the TUC had organised it, two years ago or at any time since. Spontaneous rank and file action made large areas of the Act unworkable for the government. The speech of CBI Secretary General Campbell Adamson just before the election is proof that even serious sections of the ruling class considered the Industrial Relations Act a piece of rusting junk legislation that had not alone failed in its main purpose but had, from their point of view, made the situation worse.

Never daring to use to use the industrial strength of the unions against the Tory government's Act, the union leaders now "purchase" its repeal at a fantastically inflated price - from a Labour government. Thus even the remnants of the Tory Industrial Relations Act are appropriated by Wilson's government along with the other Tory policies - though this particular one will be used only as a bargaining counter to get the other ones through.

An open challenge to Heath and Co. over the Act would have been a major revolutionary action that could have smashed it. An open challenge to the Labour government now to either scrap it without strings, returning money robbed from the unions, or else face the consequences - that would still be honourable. But a deal like that contemplated now is a scandalous betrayal.

This acceptance of Phase 3 even for now in its statutory form is the fruit and continuation of the

whole cowardly approach of the union leaders in the fight against the Industrial Relations Act. The last and shameful act in the farcical drama of the TUC's 'struggle' with the Industrial Relations Act is this present deal which means, at least until the Autumn, a remarkable posthumous success for Tory policy!

Labour's policy is different not in substance but in the method by which it tries to contain the working class. It will use scandalously low pensions rises and marginal punish-the-rich tax changes as cosmetics to cover part of the 'unacceptable' face of capitalism, and reconcile the working class to it. It will be able to talk more plausibly of the 'national interest' than could Heath's gang of spivs and property speculators.

### WEAKNESS

Little else, given the Labour leadership's record and the Party's history and present structure, was to be expected. We warned in Workers Fight - Vote Labour and prepare to fight!

The defeat of the Tories was a victory for the miners and railwaymen, a product of organic working class strength. The character of this so-called Labour government is a product of the political weakness of the working class, of the fact that it has to build a revolutionary party of its own. Labour in government will help the working class vanguard realise why it must work towards this. If the Tory government had continued in office, the leftist rehabilitation of the Labour Party would also have continued. But now, millions of workers will be confronted with what the Labour Party leaders really stand for.

For the government - and the ruling class - the decisive question is whether they can bridle the working class. A Labour government is either a

strong capitalist government because it can better control the workers, or it is a weak one because it can't and its working class base inhibits its carrying through of capitalist policies (as it stopped In Place of Strife in 1969).

It depends on the direct action of the militants.

Inflation is still driving upwards. We cannot afford to allow ourselves to be confined within Phase 3. We must demand that the Labour Government makes the following immediate concession, without strings and without bargains.

1. No wage freeze. Labour must grant an immediate £30 minimum wage and equal pay for women now.

2. Strict price control was Wilson's promise. This can be made reality by having every Trades Council set up local committees of workers and housewives to monitor prices and organise action to stop any increases. If the big food companies and chain stores start squealing, they should be nationalised, without compensation and under workers' control. The "wide extension of public ownership" should start right there.

3. Repeal the Industrial Relations Act and the Housing Finance Act - and then end all government regimentation of the trade unions. Free the jailed Shrewsbury pickets and drop all charges.

4. Work or full pay. 5. Repeal all racist Immigration Acts.

6. Unconditionally withdraw British troops from Ireland.