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5p

# libertarian struggle



FOR WORKERS' POWER

## THE CRISIS...



## THE SOLUTION...

# WORKERS' COUNCILS

## INSIDE: THE GERMAN & SPANISH REVOLUTIONS

paper of the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists



## EDITORIAL

# WORKERS' UNITY THE KEY

For all those who mistakenly expected a fighting lead against the Wage Freeze from the TUC conference, the final decisions will come as a grave shock. The message from the bureaucrats is loud and clear - there will be no fight if we can help it. Not only did the TUC studiously avoid any mention of the defeat of workers during Phase Two, but they decided that they would have to do the 'responsible' thing and continue to meet Heath.

Basnett of the GMWU, notorious for his sell-out of the gasworkers earlier this year unashamedly put the line that since there was likely to be an election fairly soon, "we must not, in a petulant fashion, embarrass ourselves, we must embarrass the government" - in other words, keep chatting with Heath, sell the workers down the river, and vote Labour next time. This "respectable" front has to be maintained despite the fact that everybody at the TUC knows the talks will break down. Quite clearly, the trade union leaders are giving the Heath government a breathing space to prepare for the inevitable confrontation this autumn or winter, a bit more time to sell their package deal - a deal which can only mean a further vicious attack on working class living standards.

Nevertheless, if the bureaucrats aren't worried about Phase Three, rank and file trade unionists are. As the cut into real wages accelerates with price rises being announced every day, bank and mortgage

rates going through the roof and further council house rent rises this month, workers have no choice but to fight back.

Heath is in a vulnerable position. He is facing a vast explosion of working class resentment and anger against the freeze. Electricians, railwaymen, public service employees and, in particular, the engineers and the miners have lodged freeze-busting claims, but militants must face up to the fact that the major activity of the bureaucracy will consist of limiting, inhibiting, and attempting to defuse the situation. The only guarantee of success is unity of all workers in struggle against the freeze. A militant, united movement of rank and file trade unionists to fight against the government and, where necessary, the trade union bureaucrats is an absolute necessity. This movement must be organised at both a national and local level to co-ordinate activity and launch concerted action against the government and the forces of repression.

This coming battle will lead to calls for a General Strike to unify the struggles. This is necessary, since isolated struggles against a united enemy can only lead to defeats. But there are great dangers in a General Strike.

The General Strike poses the question of workers' power. The 1926 General Strike failed because the class-collaborators on the TUC General Council realised this and opted for defeat rather than shatter the capitalist system. A General Strike led by

the present General Council, limited to demands for piecemeal reforms (ie. repeal of I.R. Act, for a wage rise or against a cut or even for a Labour government) is certain to be defeated unless it outgrows those demands and its leadership.

Preparing for this is the most urgent task at the moment. This must be done by the organisation of rank and file bodies within the unions and the creation of efficient links between them.

### THE BOMBINGS

Those responsible for the present wave of bombings in Britain are consciously or unconsciously acting in the interests of the British ruling class. Neither wing of the IRA has claimed responsibility, yet it is clear that at least a section of the Provisionals acting independently caused some of the attacks. It is also clear that the Special Branch or its agents have planted bombs.

A bombing campaign of this type in Britain is politically disastrous for the Republican movement. Its military value is non-existent, and as a propaganda exercise its effect will be to increase British working class support for more repression in Ireland. This is precisely why the State secret police have been active in adding to the number of bombings. The Littlejohn affair

and the Dublin car bombings show that the ruling class has no qualms about who it kills and maims so long as its policies are furthered.

It also provides the Tories with the excuse they need to "crack-down" on Republicans and sympathisers in this country. Already the right wing Press and reactionary MPs are screaming for the banning of the Republican and left-wing organisations. The State will not hesitate to frame anybody for these bombings to keep the hysteria going and show that the forces of 'law and order' are on the ball. It creates the right atmosphere for the introduction of further repressive legislation aimed at the working class movement in this country. In their own interests British socialists and trade unionists must demand :-

RELEASE IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS

END INTERNMENT NOW

BRITISH TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND

MANCHESTER ORA. & LANCASTER ORA.

## ENGINEERS' CLAIM

### MILITANT ACTION IS NOW VITAL

The fight for a living wage continues. The AUEW have put in a claim for a £10 increase in basic rates - £35 for 35 hours. There must be no backing down on this demand. The Trade Union bureaucracy have allowed Phase 2 of the Tory wage freeze to bite into the standards of living of working people. They are quite prepared to accept Phase 3, unless the rank and file force their hand.

Scanlon's 'left' face is a fraud. Under his direction the last engineers' dispute was allowed to degenerate into a localised, disunited and fragmented campaign, which gave the engineering workers few concrete gains. The lessons of the last dispute must be well learned - no repetition of this fiasco. In this situation, isolated local strikes can win little.

The AUEW bureaucracy is attempting to keep its options open. They demand a reply to the claim this month or they will "consider" industrial action. This could mean anything: overtime bans, selective strikes, work to rule - in other words, a recipe for yet another defeat of the engineering workers.

Scanlon cannot be trusted: witness the situation at Chrysler, where the AUEW instructed members to work with blackleg labour, scabbing in the electricians' dispute.

We demand the full claim: £35 for 35 hours. Extra holidays and better holiday pay. Equal pay for women. Immediate national strike action if either the bosses or the government refuse the claim. Rank and file engineers must organise united action with miners and all other workers in dispute. The bureaucrats let them win Phase 2. The rank and file must smash Phase 3.

35 for 35 now.

United front of all workers in dispute.

Smash the wage freeze.



SCANLON

Led the engineers to defeat last year

## LIBERAL REVIVAL ?

At a time of growing demands among the middle classes for law and order, it may seem surprising that there is an increased vote for the Liberal Party, the traditional 'moderate' party in British politics. The recent successes in by-elections and opinion polls - together with Dick Taveme's victory as a 'democratic' Labour candidate at the Lincoln by-election - have led many newspaper editors to talk of the emergence of a powerful 'centre' grouping to moderate the 'extremities' of Labour and Tory politics.

Not that Liberal leaders are anything more than unashamed capitalists who know which side they are on in the struggle between bosses and workers. Jeremy Thorpe is involved in an extortionate second mortgage racket in London, conflicting with the howls of Liberal outrage against Heath for allowing mortgage rates to rise. Clement Freud is a director of the Hugh Hefner 'Playboy' Club, so he should know all about the equal status of women approved by Liberals. Clearly, in spite of all their talk about protecting the little man from the vast inhuman bureaucracies of trade unions and monopolies, they are no alternative to the Tories. They voted for the Industrial Relations Act, and support a permanent prices and incomes policy (which everyone knows means a wage freeze), support the Housing Finance Act, and are in favour of entry into that monopolists' paradise, the Common Market.

However, despite appearances, the Liberal Party is not important. There has been no upsurge of liberalism in this country. The middle classes are prepared to vote for anybody who is not styled 'Conservative' or 'Labour'. It is not the Liberal Party, but the Liberal vote, which is important. The Tory party is rapidly losing the main body of its supporters - the lower middle class. They detest Heath's entry into the Common Market, are hurt by inflation which wipes out their savings, and are disgusted by his 'soft' policy towards the unions. He is not

seen as a 'real' Tory, but as some sort of 'socialist'.

The opposition to Heath is expressed in support for Powell and extreme right wing group like the National Front, and by the protest vote for the Liberals, which is mainly middle class. This vote represents a highly volatile force, which under certain conditions (like intensified class war, a crumbling economy, and growing inflation) could easily turn to the extreme right. It is a potentially fascist vote. It is almost certain that Britain is going to enter such conditions, and revolutionaries must realise that there is a real possibility of a large fascist movement, based on the middle classes and backward sections of workers, rising in this country in the next few years.

### PRESS FUND

HELP 'LIBERTARIAN STRUGGLE' TO GROW.

- criticise and suggest ways to improve the paper.
- write for the paper.
- sell the paper.
- give a donation to the Press Fund.

All donations will be acknowledged. Cheques and POs should be made out to 'ORA General Fund' Send to Press Fund, 29 Cardigan Rd. Leeds 6.



# DEFEND THE BLACKBURN 3!

On May 23rd this year, three prominent members of the Republican movement in Blackburn were arrested by members of the CID and Special Branch - Britain's political police.

Sean Colley, Patrick John McCabe, and Michael Kneafsey were arraigned on Section 1 Committal Proceedings under Section 1 of the Public Order Act, that "on days unknown between 1st January and 22nd May, they conspired with others unknown to damage and destroy buildings unknown contrary to common law." Kneafsey was also charged under the Public Order Act 1936 that between 1st March and 13th April he was intelligence officer in charge of the Lancashire unit of the IRA.

Before being sent to the notorious Risley Remand Centre, the three prisoners were detained at Great Harwood Police Station, near Blackburn and were subjected to various forms of torture. One of them was covered in cigarette burns, another was badly beaten up. Michael Kneafsey should have had an operation on his hip shortly after he was arrested - instead of this the police made him stand up for long periods, causing acute pain. At Risley there is no adequate medical treatment for him and of course he still awaits the operation.

The committal proceedings took place at Blackburn Magistrates Court on Wednesday 25th July. The Blackburn Three Prisoners Aid Cttee composed of Republican and socialist groups, organised a token picket of the court. The atmosphere of hysteria resembled that prevailing at present in Winchester where the Belfast 10 are being tried. Armed Branch men surrounded the court and the local yellow press managed to misquote and mis-represent practically everyone it interviewed on the picket.

All three were committed for trial at Preston Crown Court, which will in fact take place in Lancaster as Her Majesty's Judges don't care for their lodgings in Preston. The trial should begin towards the end of October. The evidence revolves around a saucepan, candles, plastic trough, a map of Preston, and a wiring diagram. This odd selection is alleged to suggest the manufacture of explosives.

The trial should last a fortnight, and a mass picket will be mounted on the court every day. Also a march will be held during the course of the trial, which it is hoped will draw national support.

The arrest of the three in Blackburn is not an isolated incident. Seven arrests have been made in Coventry, three in Luton, others in Birmingham and Northampton. Houses and offices of socialist groups sympathetic to the Irish struggle have been raided and people harassed. The ruling class hope to create a climate of fear and of repression which will intimidate people away from the solidarity movement in Britain. Any movement to withdraw British troops from Ireland they want to quickly nip in the bud. One weapon of the ruling class is the court system. They know they can get who they want on what they want - the case of Noel Jenkinson getting 30 years on hearsay evidence for the Aldershot explosion shows this, as well as the case of the Stoke Newington group. The struggle won't be won by clever lawyers and the weight of evidence - the dice is always loaded against revolutionaries. The surest way to release political prisoners is by launching a massive campaign of the sort that freed the dockers imprisoned in Pentonville.

British imperialism has not the slightest interest in "justice" - it uses the courts, police, and army to prop up its rule, and those who challenge it get the justice of being murdered and tortured, as well as being locked up without a trial at all if you're Irish. It is only a matter of time before British workers get their first sniff of CS gas.

All members of the revolutionary movement should demand the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoners in Britain and in Ireland. Try to join the picket in Lancaster during the trial, if you can't send messages of support and donations to

**Blackburn PAC**  
c/o 22 Richmond Crescent,  
Intack,  
Blackburn.

Blackburn 3 defence committees have now been set up in Liverpool, Bolton, Manchester and Lancaster.

## RELEASE OUR COMRADE

When a young German Estonian escaped into Finland, and there was a suggestion (which turned out to be false) that the Finnish govt. would hand him back to the Russians, there was a demand by many people, including Tory MP Airey Neave, that the Fins should "stand up to the Russians", and not hand the man back to tyranny. Excellent sentiments. But when pressed, Mr Neave was not prepared to stand up to the party whip in a similar case.

The suggestion was made by a Spaniard that if he felt that way - and he agreed with his view on the matter entirely - he should see that Andre Martinez, now in Pentonville Prison, is not handed back to General Franco.

Protests made by the Anarchist Black Cross, and relayed through Amnesty and other organisations have halted the deportation of Martinez. He is a young Spaniard who objected to doing his military service and came to England to study. Whilst in Spain he also formed "illegal associations" which would make a prison sentence certain if he went back ie. he mixed in libertarian circles. He got permission to work in England, and did so.

After two years in the country without complaint - though he had tried to organise catering workers, which is something not particularly welcome - he decided to go to Sweden. He could not get in through a technicality (now overcome) and was sent back. The Home Office which could not find any reason to deport him before, now would not let him in. But as he was in, they decided to send him to Spain. He was held in jail. He has been there for over six

months now because the Home Office have halted the deportation to Spain.

The Labour Party became interested in the case. But they did not want to do anything until Martinez was deported to Spain as a conscientious objector - then they would do something that would make the Tories sit up. Other than as a political pawn, they did not want to know about Martinez (any more than the Tories cared the Estonian other than as a stick to beat the Russians).

Meanwhile he stays in jail...the Swedes will let him in but the Home Office will not let him go unless the Swedes also give firm guarantee he will not come back. No western govt. can give such guarantees unless they intend to put a man in jail (Franco will be happy to oblige).

Andres remains in jail - dependent for his wants on friends from outside - unable to leave the country except to Spain - with permission to go to Sweden - knowing that had he only gone two weeks later than he did go, all would have been well.

He is not the only prisoner in Pentonville who has been jailed because of Home Office bureaucracy. Quite apart from the would-be immigrants who come in with the intention to settle - now a criminal offence - there are dozens of people from all over the world, who have inadvertently filled up the wrong form, or allowed an official document to get out of date. They can be there for weeks...even months...and it might be years.



MANCHESTER DEMONSTRATION CALLS FOR BRITISH TROOPS OUT  
- END INTERNMENT NOW

## ORA Publication

Tyranny of Structurelessness by Jo Freeman  
Obtainable from Leeds Womens ORA, 29 Cardigan Road, Leeds 6. 5p. plus 3p. post.  
'Libertarians in all movements should study this pamphlet because it contains the core of the argument that ORGANISED libertarians have stated'. review in April L.S.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS AND EVENTS

MANCHESTER PROP DEMONSTRATION -  
Against the degrading conditions of prisoners and their wives, and the lack of jobs for ex-prisoners.  
Saturday 20th October. Meet 1.30pm. Crown Square, Manchester. March through City centre to Strangeways.

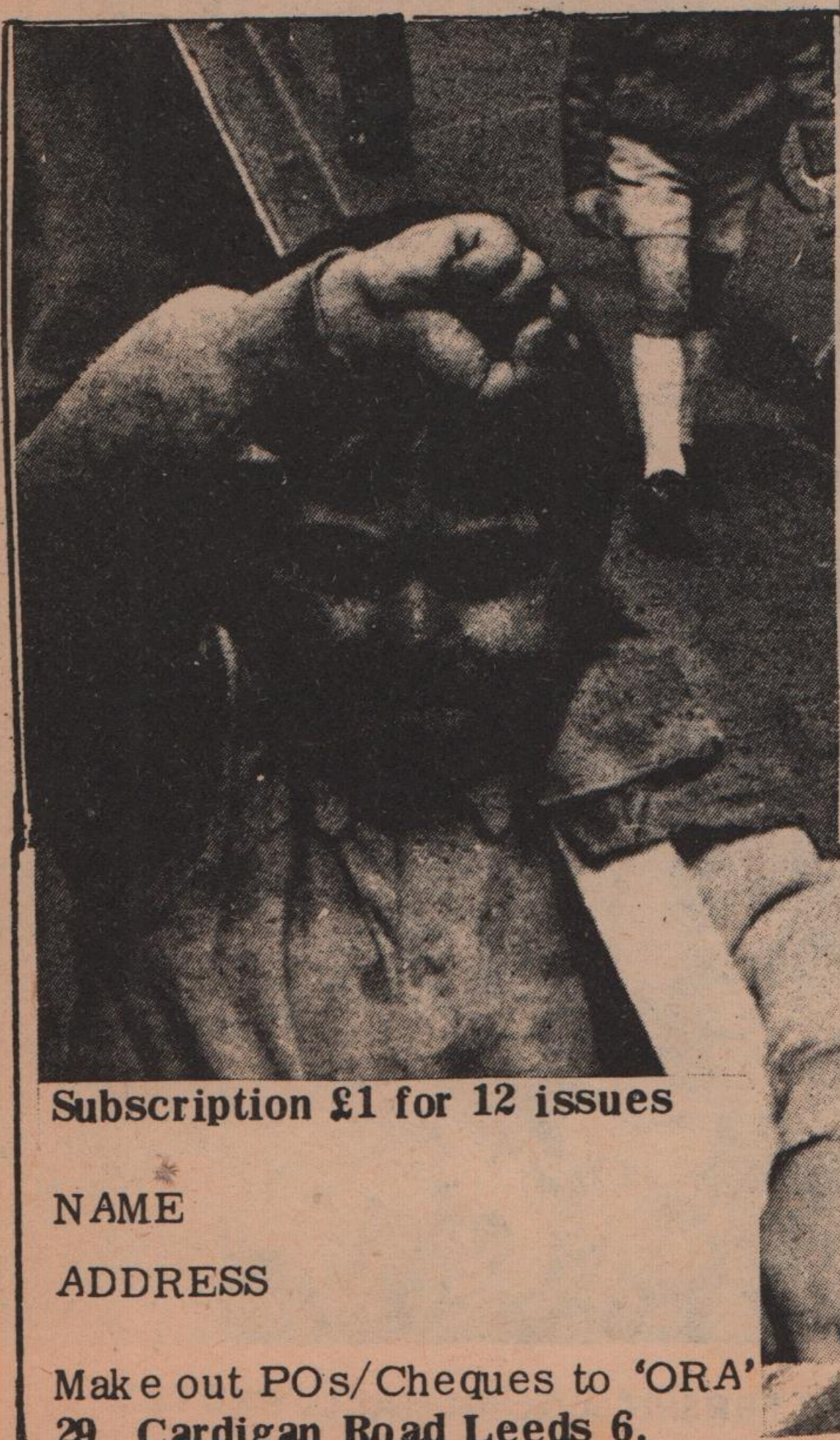
MANCHESTER AREA REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISTS  
Fortnightly public meetings  
Thursdays, 8.00 p.m.  
Lass O'Gowrie, Charles Street

GLASGOW ORA meet wednesdays 8pm  
at the Iona Community, 144 Clyde St.

## LIBERTARIAN STUDENTS' FEDERATION?

Anyone interested in "a Student Federation within ORA, mainly those involved in Union work" ?  
Write to Larry Law, Berks Coll. of Ed. Students' Union, Bulmershe Court, Woodlands Avenue, Earley, Reading, Berkshire. READING 666506.

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Make out POs/Cheques to 'ORA'  
29, Cardigan Road Leeds 6.

## ORA

## groups & contact addresses

If you think that the direct control by working people over all aspects of their lives is worth fighting for.

If you think that what's needed now is independent rank and file organisation linking all aspects of working class struggle - in housing, schools, womens' rights, in work, and all others.

If you think that the independence of these organisations must be defended from takeover by the Labour traitors, union bureaucracies, and the 'NEW leaderships'

If you think that an organisation is needed which fights for revolutionary politics in everyday struggles but has no intention of seizing power for itself.

THEN, JOIN THE ORA!

## LOCAL GROUPS.

Glasgow: Gordon Sykes, 32 Queen Elisabeth Square, Glasgow C3. Manchester: Ron Marsden, 277 Kingsway Park, Davyhulme, Urmston, M/c

Hull: Marion McCartney, 13 Colman Street, Hull. North London: Doug Durrant, 68a Chingford Road, London E.17

Lancaster: Joe Thornberry, 56 Norfolk St. York: Neil Hunt, 24 Moss Street, York.

Leeds: Trevor Bavage, flat 3, 35 Richmond Road, Leeds 6

There are also contacts in Birmingham, Colchester, Dundee, Edinburgh, Harlech, Liverpool, West, East and South London, Norwich, Oxford, Poole, Reading, and Swansea. If you want to be put in touch, write to the North London group.



# HOMELESSNESS: IS SQUATTING THE ANSWER?

Squatting, in Britain, has gone through three distinct phases since the Second World War.

In the immediate post-war era (1945-7), it arose as a more-or-less spontaneous response to a chronic housing shortage and usually took the form of occupations of disused military camps. The reasons for the shortage are not hard to find. Large numbers of servicemen recently demobbed, trying to settle down and set up homes, finding a housing supply reduced by bombing and a building industry stagnant after six years of war.

But lacking any strong political self-awareness, the movement drifted into reformism and control by the Communist Party. Although in many cases the Party hacks made little headway among the squatters themselves, the C.P. was able to present itself without fear of contradiction, as the squatters' Champion, since the squatters did not have their own independent voice.

## AMATEUR SOCIAL WORKERS

Around 1969 a new wave of squatting arose which was far from spontaneous. Rather it was from the start a deliberate campaign, most of whose leading activists were ex-CND, or Committee of 100, or the more recent Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. Their tactics generally were to occupy empty property — and then to move a homeless family in. At best this procedure left the 'activists' playing the role of amateur social workers; at worst it was manipulative politicking at its most cynical. Homeless and desperate families were the pawns in power struggles between the self-styled revolutionaries and local councils.

## SUPERSTARS

Several of these 'revolutionaries' achieved fame as political 'superstars'. 'Anarchists' Ron Bailey and Jim Radford rapidly came to front respectable squatting bodies dedicated to negotiations with local authorities for empty property. Four years of rapid political degeneration has seen these groups taking on the job of collecting rents and, inevitably, of carrying out evictions. Looking back, the direction of this squatting campaign was becoming visible even at the time of the 'Hippy' occupation at 144 Piccadilly. Bailey and Co. were quick to con-

demn an action which, although carried out by people on the fringe of society, was a far more conscious political act than the advanced liberalism of the 'respectable' groups. Bourgeois press coverage at the time reflected the same distinction. While the 'Family Squatting' groups received on the whole a favourable, or at least non-committal Press, always ready for a sob-story about homelessness and heartless councils /landlords, nothing but hysteria — with vague allegations of foreign anarchist influence, as well as the usual drugs/sex rubbish — on the several 'Hippy' squats.

The end of that year of squatting, with some of its leading ideologists recognising their true vocation as liberal good guys. Bailey eventually joining Shelter, from which he has just been sacked by CIA-stooge Geoff Martin; Radford now working for the Blackfriars Settlement in South London.) And a few diehard urban guerrillas — as in Brighton — in jail for allegedly stocking up petrol bombs to drop on the heads of bailiffs, did not mean the end of the conditions which had inspired the campaign.

## SPECULATION

In fact the 'problem' has become significantly worse. Tory government policies encouraging owner-occupation and penalising tenants, both municipal and private, have raised rents beyond the means of many people. even with the (means-tested) rebates. Council-house building has been cut back in favour of private development. Meanwhile municipal demolition programmes and speculative developers together are chewing up the remaining areas of old housing (terraces and sub-divided detached houses.) which can provide cheap accommodation. They are being replaced by sterile offices, urban motorways, barrack-like new estates for the workers and elegant little flats for the trendy and rich.

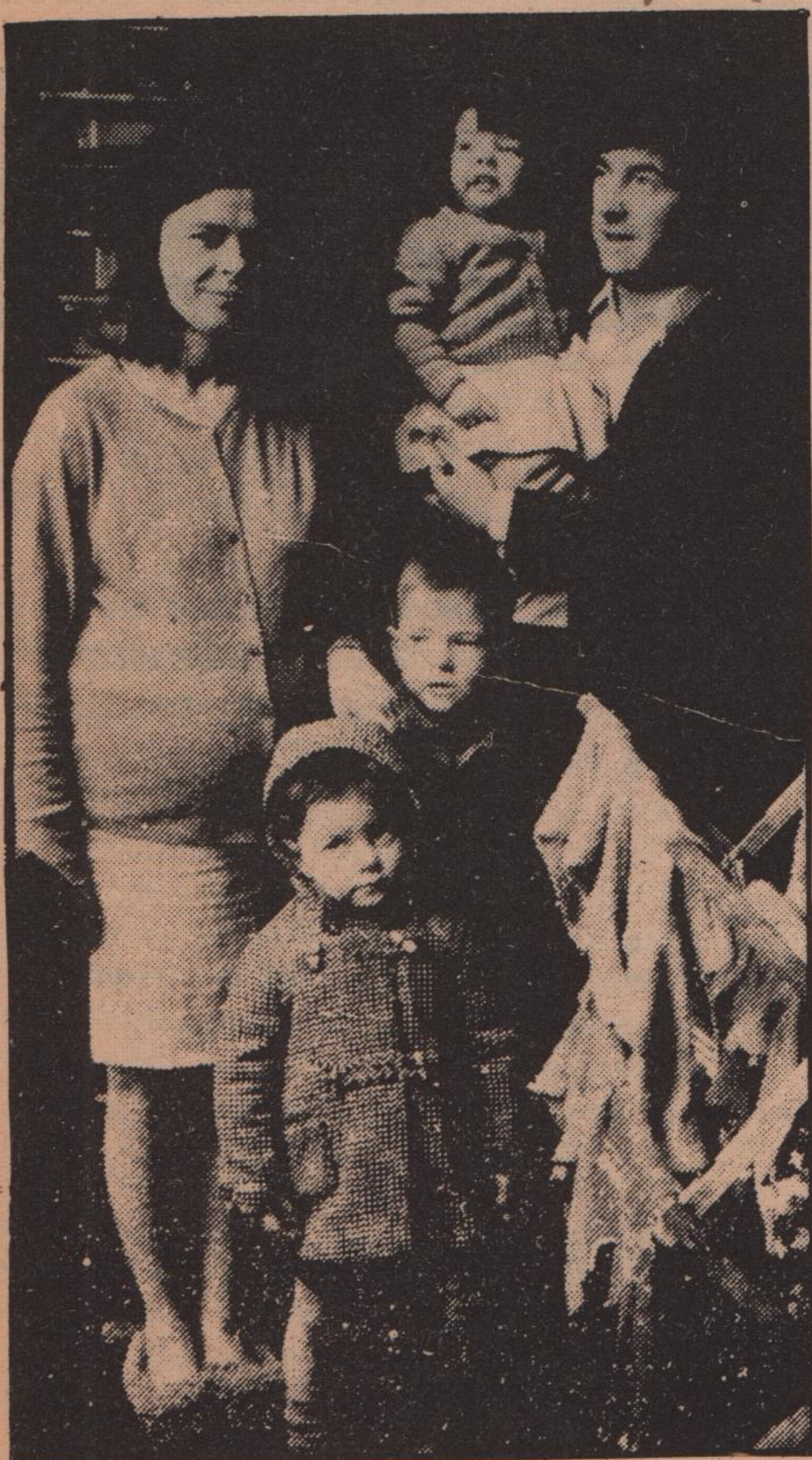
Now the bogey of homelessness has become familiar not only to the 'lumpen' (dropouts, run-aways, ex-cons, long-term unemployed, the disabled, etc) but to many lowerpaid workers. Squatting in property being deliberately held empty has returned as a more-or-less spontaneous response; as in 1946, groups of people are taking direct action to put a roof over their heads. Instead of 'revolutionaries' becoming liberal social workers, we've now seen official social workers, demonstrating with squatters, as in Islington not too long ago.

## REVOLUTIONARY ?

But is squatting, even spontaneous squatting revolutionary? It can be, but only if it is linked with other groups in struggle against the same enemy. Tenants, for example, who are still fighting the Unfair Rents Bill. Private tenants, (and owner-occupiers!), in old areas threatened with redevelopment. Rank-and-file groups among the various 'professionals', such as social workers and council officials, with whom squatters will come in contact. And, of course, organised workers; a strong mass picket would deter the most determined bailiffs. Squatting without a policy of making these links, even if successful in the short term, will always be in danger of being co-opted by 'liberal' reforms.

The Italian housing struggles since 1969, documented in 'Take Over the City', (available from Rising Free, 197 Kings Cross Road, London WC1, for 20p.) show some of the possibilities open when mass squatting movements start to link up with tenants in working-class housing areas, (which, as in Britain, include a relatively high proportion of immigrant workers) and with the factories.

In fact the separation between 'workers', 'tenants' and 'squatters' becomes an irrelevant and bourgeois system of labelling, of attempting to divide the autonomous organisations erected by the class in struggle, one struggle. Even then there is no guarantee that the demands made will not be such as to be satisfied by reforms.



EAST END FAMILY SQUATTING  
IN ARBOUR SQUARE

# ECONOMIC

The nightmare of the ruling Russian bureaucracy is that Russian workers fighting to maintain their standards of living will strike against the authorities and mount an insurrection — the Soviet bureaucracy will never forget the workers' revolts in East Berlin in 1953, Hungary in 1956 and Gdansk and Gdynia in 1970. Evidence suggests that the Russian ruling class has less and less room for manoeuvre in performing its task of extracting the maximum surplus possible from the Russian workers without provoking major opposition..

Russian growth is quickly slowing down. In 1972 the increase in Gross National Product (GNP) dropped to 4% whilst Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by less than 2%. The specific difficulties of the different sectors of the economy are reinforcing each other and are highlighting the trend to stagnation. If nothing is done quickly, the Russian economy will slowly but surely grind to a halt.

Last year's bad harvest, when grain production was about 170m tons as compared to the target of 197m tons, emphasises how backward the agricultural sector really is. This natural disaster precipitated such a grain crisis in both bread and animal fodder that the bureaucracy was forced to dip into its gold reserves to the tune of an estimated \$2,000m. However this bad harvest, although the immediate cause of the cause of the crisis, is not the real cause: the real cause lies in the backwardness of Russian agriculture, after all the targets for grain production have never been reached.

Commentators blinded by the astonishing development of heavy industry under Stalin, have more often than not failed to understand that the corollary of rapid industrialisation was the underdevelopment of agriculture. The point is that industrialisation was based on the expropriation of peasant capital, the extermination of the kulaks (rich peasants) and the herding of the peasants into so-called 'collectives'. The agricultural sector has never really recovered. Though successive politburos have recognised the agricultural problems, the main thrust of Soviet economic policy — arms expenditure and the necessary base of heavy industry — means that investment in agriculture is both inadequate and inefficient.

Russia is years behind the West in the efficiency of her farming. Tractors, harvesters, lorries, and fertilisers are in short supply as are skilled operatives. A large proportion of Russia's population works on the land but it is an ageing work force. The land holds little attraction for the young. Moreover, Russian agriculture still has not recovered from the disasters of the second world war. Inadequate investment also leads to inefficient investment. Even the most comprehensive economic plan cannot succeed if the interdependence of the various parts is not recognised: tractors and

lorries may arrive at collectives but it is useless if there are no spare parts: grandiose plans for developing Russian livestock begin before it is discovered that animal fodder is being produced in insufficient quantities.

After exceptionally good harvests in the next few years may conceal this basic weakness in the agricultural sector. But the unwillingness and, more important, the inability of Brezhnev to make the massive long-term investment in agriculture which is necessary, indicates that the problems are only beginning.

## SOVIET INDUSTRY FAILURE

Soviet industry, too, did poorly last year. Lots of products failed to reach their targets for the year. They included natural gas (3.5% below target), oilfield equipment (15.4%), light industry equipment (11.0%) grain harvesting combines (7.1%), turbines (11.1%), washing machines (15.4%), refrigerators (2.6%), and glass (4.4%). Of course this is partly the result of 1972's special circumstances and the need to divert resources to purchase grain in the West, but more important are the long term trends that these figures illustrate.

Again the problem is one of capital investment — or rather, the lack of investment. The problem of diminishing returns on investment is exacerbated by Brezhnev's decision — in response to pressures from below — to increase the supply of consumer goods which inevitably lead to a diversion of resources from basic industry such as mining, petrochemicals, steelmaking, and heavy engineering. Moreover the Russian worker is nowhere near as productive as his western counterpart — the consequence of low wages and bad conditions is low productivity and sabotage. Matching the tight supply of capital is the equally tight supply of labour.

The level of technological development is also in many sectors extremely backward. A further consideration is that the paranoia and rigidity characteristic of the Russian ruling class is particularly strong in industrial management, where the forces tending towards inertia are tremendous. Managers are so terrified that production targets will go up that they hoard labour and raw materials. An article in the Soviet Builders gazette demonstrates some of the absurdities which result from the concentration on targets and quotas. Russia, it appears, produces twice as much glass as the US though it builds only half as many houses — where does it all go, you might wonder? Well 46% of it gets broken before or during installation. Why? Because the targets for glass production are based in terms of square metres and managers tend to produce thin glass which, of course, breaks easily!



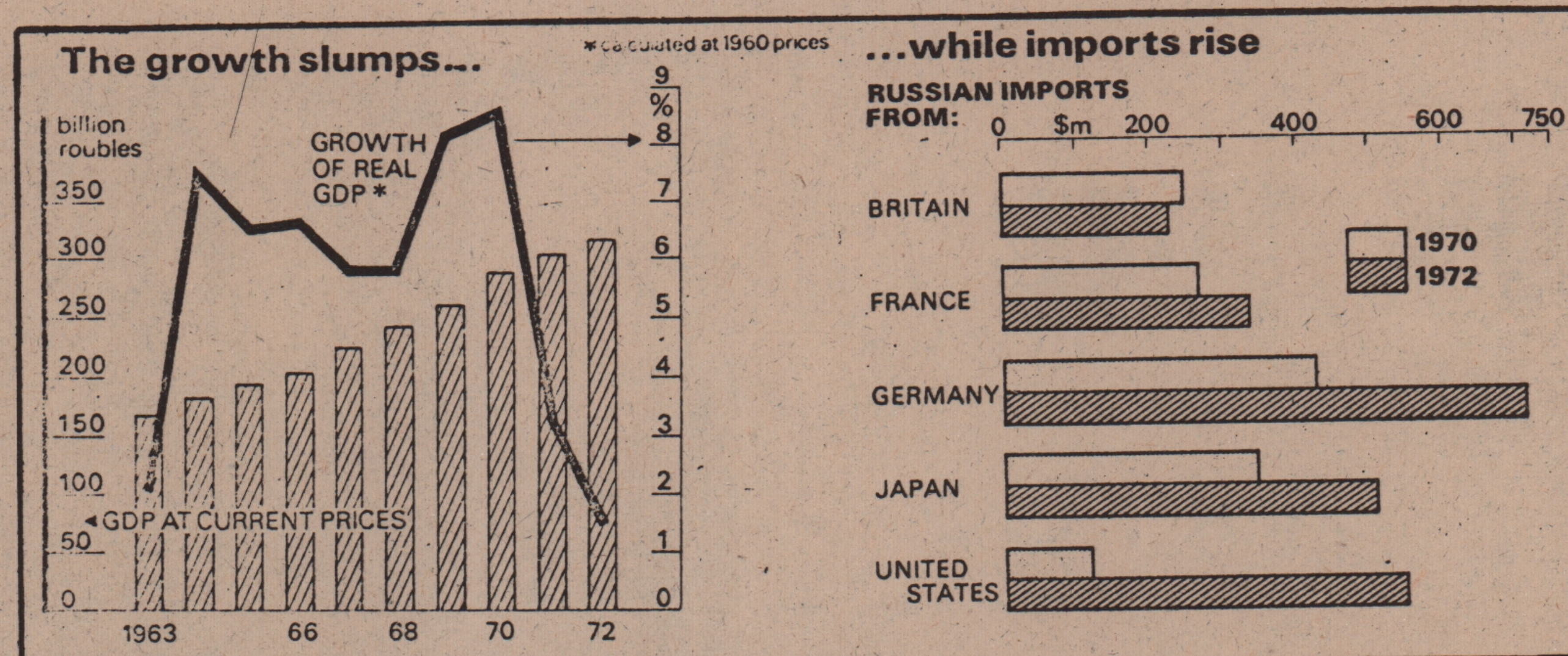
ISLINGTON SOCIAL WORKERS JOIN SQUATTERS IN A TOWN HALL PROTEST.



# CRISIS HITS U.S.S.R.

Brezhnev is quite clearly in an impossible situation, if he is to increase the level of consumer goods, put necessary development capital into agriculture, modernise industry and continue to outlay huge resources to armaments expenditure and heavy industry, given the fact that capital in Russia is in short supply. In the present condition in Russia all these aims have to be fulfilled. Any cutback in consumer goods will anger the Russian workers. Russia can't afford to lurch from grain crisis to grain crisis. To neglect the modernisation of industry would mean that Russia would have to take permanent second place to the US in industrial production, and that there would be the danger of being overtaken by Japan. A major reversal in arms expenditure would provoke a bitter wrangle with in the leading circles of the bureaucracy and threaten Brezhnev's own position.

Brezhnev seems to have decided that the only way out of this impasse is to import capital and technical expertise from the West. This is the real reason for 'detente'. Russia has its attraction for western monopoly capitalism as the Guardian (16/6/73) comments, "Although



most western businessmen have been turning their thoughts towards the USSR as a source for long term supplies of raw materials and energy, a growing number is also beginning to see the Soviet Union as a potentially valuable source of low cost labour". In other words, a cheap, disciplined, labour force with no nonsense like trade unions, shop stewards or

strikes is what they hope for.

Already there have been deals and negotiations with West Germany, Japan, and principally the US. Negotiations with the US over natural gas in Siberia - it is proposed that the US invest \$11,000m and sell gas in the US - are well advanced although it appears that Brezhnev wants to hold out for more.

However, far from solving Russia's economic difficulties, these deals with the west could well bring further, more complex problems for the Soviet bureaucracy. Russia's balance of payments deficit is already increasing (the deficit of \$700m in 1972 is expected to jump to about \$2000m this year and go even higher in 1974). Any substantial increase in the volume of trade and movements of capital is likely to accelerate this trend. Furthermore, close links with the money markets of the West would mean that Russia's relative immunity to things like international monetary crises and minor recessions in the west would disappear. A factor which is particularly important in the light of the re-emergence of the expansion-recession international trade cycle. Inflation, too, would hit the USSR.

These economic trends are danger signals to the Russian bureaucracy. Cracks are beginning to appear in the monolith that is Russia. Sooner or later the strains of the Soviet economy must lead to an explosion of resentment against the regime. The nightmare of the paranoid Stalinists in the Kremlin could well become reality.



## SOVIET WORKERS FIGHT BACK

In reporting the current wave of opposition to the policies of the bureaucracy in the USSR, the Western press has created the impression that the movement is confined to intellectuals who are demanding nothing more than the civil liberties guaranteed by the 1936 Constitution (the Constitution named after Stalin, the draft-ees of which disappeared during the purges).

This is not so. Not only are more and more workers openly demonstrating their discontent with the rule of the commissars, chekists and apparatchiks (loosely translated as 'organisation men'), but in doing so are evolving a critique of Soviet society which can have but one end - revolution.

In the words of an ex-inmate of a labour camp "Russia is more than ever full of revolutionaries"

Over the last four years this revolutionary tendency amongst the working class has manifested itself in increasingly militant strikes and demonstrations.

Workers at the Kiev hydro-electric station held a meeting to protest bad housing, not only did they draft a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, but also held a demonstration with banners demanding "All power to

the Soviets" (in 1917 this was the slogan of the Bolsheviks, however, what they meant was all power to the Party - thus beginning a process of substitution which ended in Stalin's dictatorship). The demonstration was attacked by the KGB (secret police).

The Kiev workers sent a delegation, headed by a pensioner, Ivan Hryshchuk, to Moscow to present their letter with 600 signatures to the bureaucracy. Hryshchuk was arrested and is still in jail.

Earlier, three young workers had been sent to a strict regime camp for distributing leaflets calling for opposition to russification (ie banning the native Ukrainian language and courses dealing with local history and culture and replacing them with Russian courses) at the Shevchenko University.

In Kaunas, Lithuania's second largest city, thousands fought the KGB and Red Army troops for two days after a young man had burnt himself to death as a political protest. Over 200 are currently in prison awaiting trial.

In Dnipropetrovsk thousands struck in support of demands for improved living conditions. The strikers marched on the local CP office where the police opened fire on them.

Over 10,000 workers in Dniprodzerzhinsk, in the Ukraine, rioted for two days destroying the offices of the KGB and the Komsomol (Young Communist League). The police opened fire, killing 7 and wounding 80. Mass arrests were made.

4,000 copies of a leaflet, published by the clandestine Citizen's Committee, were distributed in Moscow. The leaflet pointed out that the promises made at the 22nd Congress in 1961 had not been fulfilled. Denouncing the privileged and luxurious life of the bureaucrats, it drew attention to the low standard of living of the working class and their lack of democratic rights.

Describing the USSR as state-capitalist (so much for the Trotskyists myth of the workers' state) it stated: "Socialism doesn't exist in our country! It is not socialism, when there are within the country 20 times more parasites and chiefs than there were in Czarist Russia. It is not socialism when the average wage of a worker is 100 rubles, while the income of prominent leaders is several thousand per month".

Citing the examples of strikes in Leningrad, Moscow, Temir-Ta, Cherchik, Novochoerkask, and in Poland, the leaflet called on the workers to fight for their rights, for, "only through struggle can we make changes for the better".

Even in the labour camps there have been strikes and demonstrations. In one camp prisoners flew the Anarchist Black Flag over the huts for three days - (The Russian Anarchists were the first victims of the Bolshevik Chek after World War 2 Stalinism waged a blood of repression against the Anarchists of Bia). The reaction of the bureaucracy to strikes has been to shoot down the strike the spot or to condemn them to death after Workers have been imprisoned for helping inmates.

In the official press appear echos of the workers' discontent. In the journal *Party* a worker wrote: "We work overtime, lose rest day, expend unnecessary labour, time nervous energy, and men guilty of all the prizes for fulfilling the programme". In *I skoye Znamya* a carpenter complained of forced to work 18 hours a day for two weeks.

These events like the East German riots of 1953, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, Czechoslovak Spring, the Polish riots and Yugoslav demonstrations show that the class struggle in the Soviet bloc is as bitter and fought as in the west, for in industrialising these once backward areas the bureaucracy created its own grave-digger - the working class.



special feature

# workers'

## GERMANY 1918

With the growing interest in workers' control over the last few years, many militants are looking back in history to times when workers took over their factories and set up councils to govern society in their own interests instead of the interests of the bosses. This is a far cry from the mild suggestion of worker participation with the bosses or (in the case of nationalised industries) with the State's representatives.

One such revolution which has usually been obscured until recently took place in Germany in November 1918 and much can be learned by examining it.

Before the 1st World War the German working class was the most powerful and well-organised in Europe, and the Social Democratic Party, the SPD, was the strongest party in the Second International. But while its leaders were full of empty chatter about class war, the party was committed to a reformist, non-revolutionary practice. A sterile party bureaucracy had grown up, living off the party and unconcerned about socialism. The leader of the SPD right wing, Bernstein (similar to Roy Jenkins) actually said that the party was everything and socialism nothing. Unlike the Labour Party, however, the SPD contained a significant revolutionary wing led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, who argued that the party should be revolutionary in practice as well as theory.

However, all the Social Democrats were committed to parliamentary democracy, and even the revolutionaries in the party did not realise that a socialist society would need new, more democratic institutions. The appearance of workers and peasants councils (soviets) in Russia in the 1905 rebellion should have shown the revolutionaries that they must argue and agitate against the fake democracy of a parliament where a few rule with the occasional consent of 'the people'. It should also have convinced them that it was necessary to break completely with the reformist SPD. Instead they continued with the vain hope of changing the SPD's policies, and allowed the illusions in Parliament that many workers held, to continue unchallenged.

The First World War showed the consequences of this. The majority of the SPD supported the war completely and (like the Labour Party in Britain) their leaders went on recruiting parties to urge workers to kill British and French

workers and be killed themselves in the interest of the ruling class. Some Social Democrats, appalled by the butchery of the trenches, finally broke with the SPD to form an Independent SPD under Kautsky (similar to Michael Foot in the British Labour Party) and called for a negotiated peace - an abstract view laying the fate of the working class in the hands of the beneficial ruling class at that moment slaughtering millions of workers in the interests of their profits. Only a small group around Rosa Luxemburg - the Spartacists - argued for a realistic solution - the revolutionary overthrow of the ruling class by the workers. The Spartacists were still committed to fighting for parliament rather than the direct democracy of a society run by workers councils until near the end of the war. The complete lack of agitation and propaganda for council communism among the working class was soon to be seen.

### THE REVOLUTION

In November 1918 the working class took matters into their own hands. A naval mutiny at Kiel led to the seizure of power in the cities and towns of Germany.

Workers and Soldiers set up councils to run the area and called for the end of the war and the setting up of a Republic. On November 9, a general strike led by revolutionary shop stewards paralysed Berlin and thousands of workers marched through the capital, occupying public buildings. Many were armed, and the sight of the red flags frightened the SPD leaders as much as it did the ruling class. Prince Max of Baden, the Chancellor (Prime Minister) said: "To combat the revolution we must conjure up the democratic idea" (or parliament) and appointed the SPD leader Ebert as Chancellor. Ebert said "I hate revolution like social sin". The SPD then proclaimed a Republic to forestall the revolutionaries.

The power of the State was non-existent however. Germany was in practice ruled by workers and soldiers councils, the result of a spontaneous mass movement. However, it was only the beginning of a revolution. To be successful, there had to be a complete break with reformism of the SPD (just as there must be a complete break with the Labour Party in Britain). The councils had to turn into permanent institutions - a democratic substitute for the illus-



AN ARMED LORRY OF THE WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' COUNCIL AT THE BRANDENBURG GATE DURING THE REVOLUTION.

ions of parliament - and take over industry from the capitalists. If this did not happen, then the revolution would be defeated and capitalism and the ruling class would recover.

The majority of workers, still holding to the illusions of parliamentary reformism failed to carry the revolution through to its logical conclusion. They saw the councils as effective instruments for obtaining peace, without realising that only socialist revolution could guarantee lasting peace. The councils were dominated by the SPD, who were hostile to them and wanted to reverse the revolution. The SPD took part in the councils to bring the mass movement under their control. No attempt was made to smash the Civil Service. No attempt was made to replace the army with a democratic militia. No attempt was made to take over the factories. In many areas, councils tried to introduce the eight-hour day - good enough in itself in ordinary circumstances but pathetic in a revolutionary situation. Only the workers councils in Saxony called for the 'taking over of production' by the working class, abolition of unearned income, arming of the people to safeguard the revolution, and abolition of the existing courts of law. The election of a new Saxon workers council which followed, elected a majority of SPD deputies who immediately became much more 'moderate'.

The day after the revolution succeeded on November 10 the Berlin Workers and Soldiers Council met and agreed to the formation of a cabinet under Ebert, composed of SPD and Independent SPD members. Liebknecht's call to break with the SPD met with a cold reception. It was seen as breaking workers unity. But Liebknecht was right. Ebert was unconcerned with workers unity. His policy was to divide the working class, and was to lead to workers turning machine guns on other workers. Workers unity in such a situation is always revolutionary unity and a total break with the policy of Ebert's and their politics. That very day Ebert was negotiating with General Groener, the head of the Imperial Army, with the intention of crushing the revolution.

This is not simply a matter of Ebert being a scoundrel. As with Ramsey MacDonald's decision to split with the British Labour Party in 1931, it was not a question of making mistakes or of picking the wrong men to lead. The decision arose from Ebert's politics. His belief in 'the national interest' and his fear of a mass movement led directly to policies of repression. In exactly the same way Reg Prentice, Shadow Minister of Labour, attacked workers who came out on strike to release the five dockers imprisoned by the Industrial Relations Court last summer. He called on the workers to obey the law rather than go on a political strike. His position was the result of his politics - the politics of the Labour Party.

Ebert now devoted himself to destroying the revolution. He set up 'commissions' to 'study'

the question of nationalisation, and when the moderate commissions finally reported, they were, predictably, in favour of capitalism. Spartacist demonstrations were broken with force, and at one demonstration troops machine gunned the crowd, killing 16 and wounding 12.

In December 1918 a National Congress of Workers and Soldiers Councils met in Berlin. Instead of becoming the permanent body governing Germany, as the Spartacists demanded, the Congress committed suicide by calling for a Constituent Assembly to set up a parliament. It was the death of the revolution. The Spartacist rising which followed the Congress was bungled, and had little chance of success. The civil war between revolutionary and reformist workers (the latter aided by the army and the fascist Free Corps), in which the best socialist militants like Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were butchered, was part of the tragic aftermath of this failure by the workers to break with reformism. The failure to create a socialist Germany ruled by workers councils paved the way for the victory of Hitler and the destruction of the German working class movement. As Marx pointed out, the final choice is between socialism and barbarism.

The working class must never ignore its own history. Mistakes have been made at the cost of much misery and suffering, and must not be repeated. There must be a total break with those like the Labour Party and the Communist Party who continue to agitate for reformism and a parliamentary road to socialism. But workers must not rely on any other leadership, "Revolutionary" or otherwise, to take power on its behalf. The result of that, as shown by Russia, has been to destroy the workers councils and create a state capitalist society. Workers must take power into their own hands and smash the State machinery, governing society in their own interests through workers councils. Above all we must learn from the mistakes of the German working class in 1918, that, those who make a revolution by halves dig their own graves.

#### FURTHER READING ON THE GERMAN REVOLUTION :-

The German Revolution of 1918 - A.J. Ryder  
Cambridge University Press.  
Rosa Luxemburg - P. Frohlich. Pluto Press.

#### FURTHER READING ON THE SPANISH REVOLUTION :-

The Revolution and the Civil War in Spain - Broue and Temime. Faber.  
Revolution and Counter Revolution in Spain - F. Morrow. New Park.  
Lessons of the Spanish Revolution - V. Richards. Freedom Press.  
Homage to Catalonia - G. Orwell. Penguin.  
Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship - N. Chomsky. in American Power and The New Mandarins. Penguin.  
Penguin.



COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY FREIKORPS IN MUNICH, 1919.



# councils

## SPAIN 1936

In July 1936 the Spanish military, in alliance with the Catholic Church, the Fascists, and the monarchists rose in revolt against the Left Republican government that had been elected a few months previously. They were resisted, not by that government, but by the Spanish working class, who set in motion one of the most fundamental revolutions of the 20th. Century. Within days of the rebellion the mass organisations of the Spanish workers had inflicted severe defeat on the Fascists and their supporters in most of Spain, and especially in the major industrial areas. The bourgeois government of José Giral and Azana was powerless to resist either Franco or the workers' revolution. Wherever the Fascists were defeated, effective power passed from the middle class institutions to countless workers' committees, factory committees and peasant collectives. The Spanish working class began to organise itself for the fundamental tasks of defeating Fascism and consolidating and extending the social revolution.

The Civil War that ensued lasted nearly three years. By the time the Fascist victory was complete the social revolution was long dead. Within the Republican zone, the bourgeoisie, reduced to irrelevance in July 1936, slowly but inexorably reasserted its power. The working class suffered defeat after defeat. By 1939 'law and order' had been restored in Republican Spain. The workers' committees had been disbanded, revolutionary parties had been outlawed and thousands of working class militants had been gaoled, tortured and murdered. The Spanish revolution was defeated long before the final victory of Franco.

### WHAT HAPPENED ?

In 1936 the Republican State lost well over half its army and police force to the Fascist rebels. Faced with the rebellion, the government at first tried to negotiate, thus losing valuable time. In Madrid and Barcelona thousands of workers gathered outside government buildings demanding arms - and when it became obvious that they had to fight, the Spanish government at last issued arms to the working class organisations. Once the workers were armed, the best the State could hope for was a paper survival. Power was in the streets and in the factories, in the hands of the common people.



WORKERS' MILITIA DEFEND MADRID. NOVEMBER 1936.

In Spain's major industrial region, Catalonia, lay the centre of working class Anarchism. Industry was expropriated and factory committees set up to provide the essentials necessary for the struggle against Fascism. The Catalan government was powerless. This was admitted by Companys, the Catalan president, who said to the Anarchist militants, Durruti and Oliver: "Today you are masters of the City. If you do not need me, or do not wish me to remain President of Catalonia, tell me now and I shall become one more soldier in the struggle against Fascism." His offer was not taken up. The first in a long chain of errors. The Catalan government was considered irrelevant. Economic power was in the hands of the workers, the police had been disarmed and police functions undertaken by armed workers' patrols. The Anarchist unions organised untrained and poorly armed militia to replace the now extinct Republican army and the long military struggle was begun without help from a government that was powerless to do anything but continue a shadowy existence. In Catalonia, and to a lesser extent throughout the rest of anti-Fascist Spain a regime of dual power was established.

In Madrid, Valencia and Malaga power lay with the joint Socialist-Anarchist committees. In Asturias, where the Communist Party had some influence, a system of workers' supervision was established, though the mines were rarely expropriated wholesale. Only in the Basque provinces did the capitalists retain control of the factories: and here, significantly resistance to Franco was short-lived and halfhearted.

### THE COUNTRY SIDE

The social revolution in industrial Spain had its counterpart in the agricultural regions. The crying need for land reform had been consistently ignored by both Left and Right in the Republican governments of 1931-36. Now the peasants were willing to wait no longer. The fields were expropriated, and those landlords that were not ordinarily absent were forced to flee or were executed. Village committees took over the administrative functions of the area, and hundreds of thousands of acres were collectivised. For the first time the Spanish peasantry felt in control of its own destiny and the results were remarkable. Production was actually increased, and this at a time when all the special difficul-



"LAND FOR THOSE WHO WORK IT."

ties of Civil War were present. With the help of the militias the last vestiges of the old regime were destroyed, and the peasantry declared in words and deeds their desire to aid the defeat of Fascism. How could a movement as widespread as this be defeated ?

### THE ANARCHISTS

The responsibility of the Anarchist movement in launching the social revolution was enormous. Even in areas where Anarchism had little organised expression, the influence of Anarchist doctrine was incontestable. Over half of Spain's industrial workers belonged to the major Anarchist union, the CNT (National Confederation of Labour.) Given this situation it must be admitted that the responsibility for the eventual defeat of the social revolution rests heavily on the shoulders of the Anarchist movement. There were two fundamental failures, the failure to transform the workers' committees which were running industry, into workers' councils that would present a political challenge to the continued existence of the bourgeois State. And the failure to seize the financial institutions of the State; for when the middle class gathered courage to re-emerge, it found itself still in possession of the purse strings. The CNT-FAI leaders, with a naivete that indicates an ill acquaintance with Anarchist theory, propounded the notion that the industrial power of the workers had reduced and destroyed the bourgeois State. Juan Lopez, a CNT leader declared in September 1936, that the establishment of workers' committees "...has resulted in the disappearance of government delegates in the provinces we control... the local organs of administration of the old bourgeois regime have become mere skeletons because their life force has been replaced by the revolutionary vitality of the workers' unions."

But this was far from the case - the skeletons were soon fattened up, life was breathed into them. Prominent Anarchists of the CNT, with neither sanction or approval of the movement, entered the Republican government. This was done, it was said, to safeguard the revolutionary gains, and to contribute to anti-fascist unity. What nonsense ! The best way to safeguard a revolution is to destroy the State, not become part of it. And 'anti-Fascist' unity is not possible with people whose initial concern is to destroy the revolutionary movement. Certain Anarchist leaders sacrificed the Spanish revolution for a suitcase full of ministerial portfolios.

### THE DESTRUCTION OF THE REVOLUTION

Regimes of dual power are inherently unstable. A struggle must take place between the working class and the old system, until one or other is victorious. The Spanish Anarchists, along with the revolutionary anti-Stalinist party, the POUM, had consistently rejected calls for the establishment of workers' councils. A facile identification of the workers' aspirations with those of the trade unions, both socialist and Anarchist, had meant the establishment of union committees,

rather than rank and file committees. There had even been bargaining for representation on committees for groups and parties with little or no influence in the area. For instance in Catalonia, the Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias, which was for many months the most important body in Catalonia, had fifteen members. Five were from the CNT-FAI, three from the Socialist UGT, one from the POUM, one from the Peasants Union, one from the Communists, and four from the bourgeois parties. Clearly, this is a deformed manifestation of workers' power, and the committee, formed by such a disparate group of people representing organisations rather than groups of workers in field and factory, was subject to 'politics' in the worst sense. It was divorced from the masses and beyond their immediate control.

The effect of this kind of organisation rapidly manifested itself after the entry of the Anarchists into government. Bourgeois authority and institutions were rapidly re-established. Sometimes at gunpoint. The last fling of the Spanish workers took place in Barcelona in May 1937. The story of that struggle has been told elsewhere in this paper see May Day issue of *Libertarian Struggle*. The workers of Barcelona, abandoned by the Anarchist officialdom attempted to prevent the State seizure of the collectivised telephone exchange. In the armed conflict that followed, a dissident Anarchist group, the *Friends of Durruti* issued the following demands: Form revolutionary juntas disarm the Civil Guard, shoot those responsible for attacks on workers. Dissolve all political parties that have turned against the workers. But the time for the formation of workers councils was passed. The members and supporters of this group were imprisoned and executed. The CNT leadership - the Anarchist ministers - remained silent and allowed it to happen.

### CONCLUSION

Many Anarchist histories have concentrated on the counter-revolutionary role of the Communist Party. Yet this is to be expected from the Stalinists, whose policy of unity with the middle class means inevitable defeat for the masses, witness the events in Chile. The failure of Anarchism is far more disturbing. Essentially it is the failure of the Anarcho-syndicalists who make a far too ready identification of their union with the working class as a whole. The way forward in a revolutionary situation is the rapid building of workers councils composed of delegates directly responsible to the workers who elected them. Union committees are no substitute for direct workers power. Spain marks the death knell of Anarcho-syndicalism as a movement, and should be its final discrediting as a theory. Revolutionary Anarchists call for 'All Power to Workers Councils' the failure of Spanish Anarcho-syndicalism to heed that call has subjected the Spanish working class to over three decades of Fascist tyranny. That is a lesson that must be learnt and learnt well.



# NEW BUREAUCRACY STEAMROLLERS TRADES COUNCILS



LONDON TRADES COUNCIL DEMONSTRATION - They may get 100,000 on the streets but their future is 'doubtful' under TUC reorganisation policy.

The 1973 Trades Union Congress accepted a document from the General Council on the reorganisation of Trades Councils and their regional bodies. The acceptance of this document means the death of Trades Councils as we know them and their transformation into pressure group mouthpieces for the General Council and the full-time officials of regional union bodies.

At present the Trades Councils and the regional Federations of Trades Councils are all elected by the membership. There are also bodies called Regional Advisory Committees (R.A.C.s) which were set up during the war to liaise between Government and industry. These relics from Dad's Army exist in a sort of limbo at the moment, but their beauty is the fact that they are totally inactive and bother no-one. They are chaired by a G.C. member resident in the area and probably other full time officials. Nobody really knows exactly who they are or how they are made up.

The T.U.C. plans to change this, however and create streamlined Regional Councils (based on the Government's Economic Planning Regions). They will be composed of 75% trade union officials and only 25% of people elected from the Trades Councils. Together with this, the chairman is to be whatever General Council member lives in the area and its secretary is to be appointed after consultation with 'local trade unionists'. This man is responsible to those who appointed him - the General Council.

The old federations are to be abolished to make way for County Associations based on the new County Councils. In doing this no account is taken of the long history of these bodies. The fact that agricultural and industrial areas with different objectives are being lumped together. Nor any account is taken of the fact that present-day co-operation between different sections of workers works well.

It was the RACs not the Trades Councils that the TUC sent questionnaires on reorganisation. And funnily enough, the report came out too late for the Stockport Trades Councils Conference. And so was seen too late by the Trades Councils themselves for effective action at the Trades Union Congress.

The reasons that the TUC gives for its moves are interesting in themselves. The timing is linked to the Tories local government reorganisation. They are to be bodies to service local government sewage committees and present the trade union point of view. Given

this it follows that they have the same area structures and are bureaucratically structured so as the TUCs corporatism can be channelled down to the local committee member.

The introduction to the document states democracy is not just casting votes but making our point of view known to the appropriate powers that be. The TUC we are told is doing this at national level, in fact so successfully that sometimes it's difficult to know whose advice is being given to whom, but at local level the guidance and wisdom of the General Council is sadly lacking.

The Trades Councils, far from being local pressure groups, have traditionally given an outlet for the active politically-minded rank & file unionist, and if they have pressured anybody it is the TUC. Feather is still smarting after the mauling he was given by agricultural delegates at the Hastings Conference the year before last over a tied cottage that he owns. It is much easier for rank and file unionists to get to the Trades Council Conference than to the Trades Union Congress and a more militant position usually emerges. This year the Stockport Conference rejected the tripartite talks.

The Trades Councils have had a militant history that has often brought them into conflict with the General Council before. They did at one time send delegates to the TU Congress but this was stopped because of the calibre of militant that was getting through the net to expose the collaborationist policies of the TUC. Similarly many Trades Councils were disaffiliated for belonging to the Minority Movement, a rank and file movement with enormous prestige in the 20s.

At present the Trades Councils have engaged themselves in support for strike activities as well as in local struggles around issues like the Unfair Rent Act. If it were not for the activities of Trades Councils many of the May Day demonstrations would not have occurred.

This is the role the Trades Councils should play, not the lap dog of the General Council to be stroked by local government committees. Whereas before, the inertia of the old RACs made them harmless, the TUC's new structure could put Trades Councils under the permanent domination of full-timers and the General Council. This would further cut back its role in presenting an opportunity for rank and file opposition to TUC policy and for providing solidarity action for local unionists in dispute.

## letters

Dear Libertarian Struggle,

For some unknown reason the editing group of issue No. 7 printed a letter from a comrade criticising an article on Free Speech (Libertarian Struggle) No. 6. The whole tone of the letter is symptomatic of the ideas of 'radical liberalism' as attacked in the article on Free Speech, and the letter was unaccompanied, surprisingly by any editorial comment. Why?

Comrade G. has managed to misquote the article so as to lead into a small but shabby tirade calling for Free Speech as a moral principle. He said: 'It was stated that the action of CPE-ML was understandable but technically wrong.' The article in No. 6 actually said: 'The attack on Eysenck at LSE was tactically inept but not morally wrong.' The article never said that the attack was 'understandable'. In fact it went into great detail to show otherwise. Why does comrade G deliberately misquote?

The rest of comrade G's letter contained some of the worst anti-working class rhetoric that has been printed outside of the bourgeois press. Why did the editors let such drivel pass uncriticised? Free Speech in the working class movement becomes for comrade G: 'falling for the old ploy that whatever a member of the working class does is right and everyone else is wrong. The working class contains the bulk of reactionary elements albeit caused by oppressive conditioning.'

This line also claims that workers are 'partial to the persecution of hippies, homosexuals and revolutionaries' showing G's complete lack of trust that the working class is capable of making any revolutionary progress. Who will make the revolution comrade G?

Comrade G also states: 'Everyone has the right to Free Speech even racists and bigots. People should be encouraged to respect free speech in this society otherwise we cannot expect toleration after the revolution.'

G misses the point that a revolution is a most 'intolerant' act. It is when the masses no longer 'tolerate' those who express certain ideas and decide to dispose of them in a most intolerant manner. If the working class have preserved free speech in their own ranks (excluding racists and bigots) a free society will be made.

Comrade G finally completes his idiocy with the statement: 'If we are not to create a sympathetic atmosphere towards fascists we must treat them, not as a political danger, but as cranks in the same class as flat earth believers and the moon is green cheese believers.'

Perhaps comrade G should explain to the Italian, Spanish and German and Chilean working class that fascism is not 'a political danger'. Perhaps when the British equivalent of Grossdeutschland SS divisions after a weekend practice in Northern Ireland, trundles past his door he will find that the readers of Libertarian Struggle have not taken his advice. Perhaps he will find that they have consigned comrade G to the realms of cranks whose position he has most ably outlined in his stupid and anti-working class letter.

Yours,  
Trevor Bavage.



## Revelations

Following the revelation that the Guru Maharaj Ji's paper 'Divine Times' is printed by the International Socialists, comes the as yet unsubstantiated rumour that I.S. is to set up a preachers, healers and missionaries' rank and file paper called 'Miracle Worker'.

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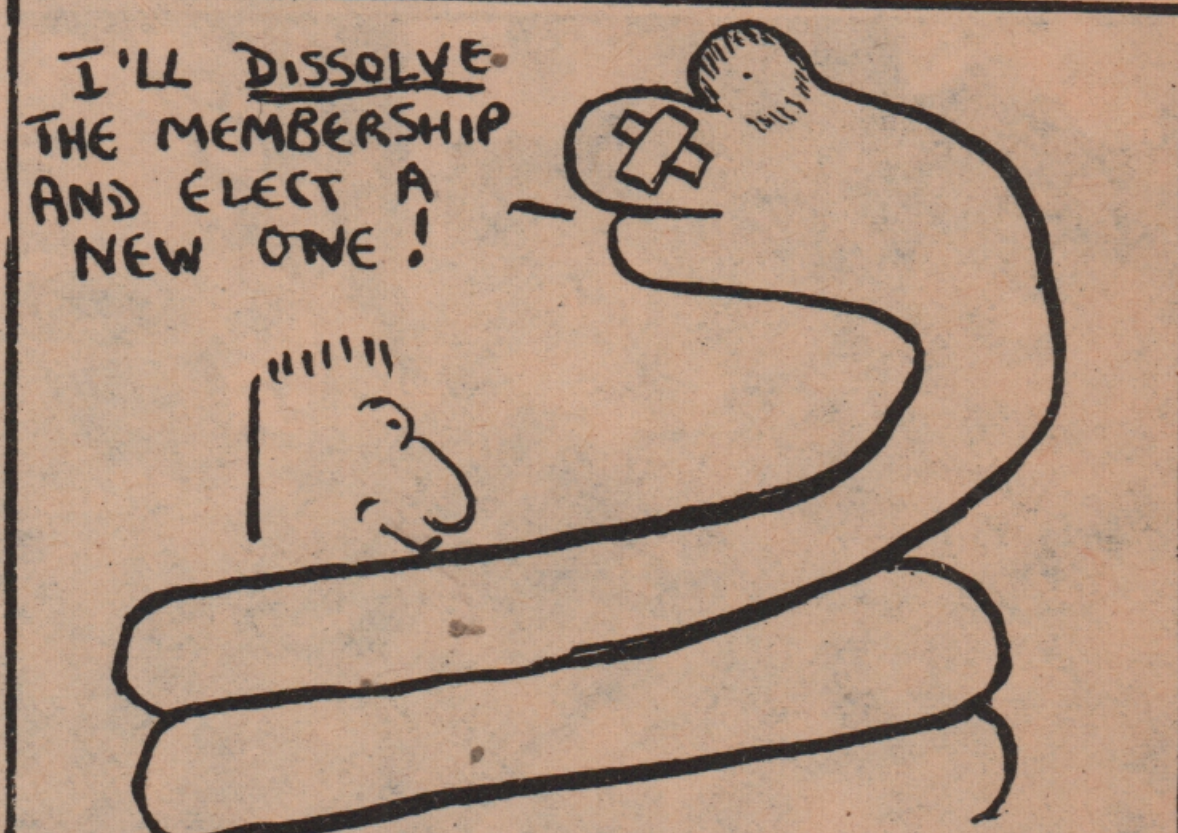
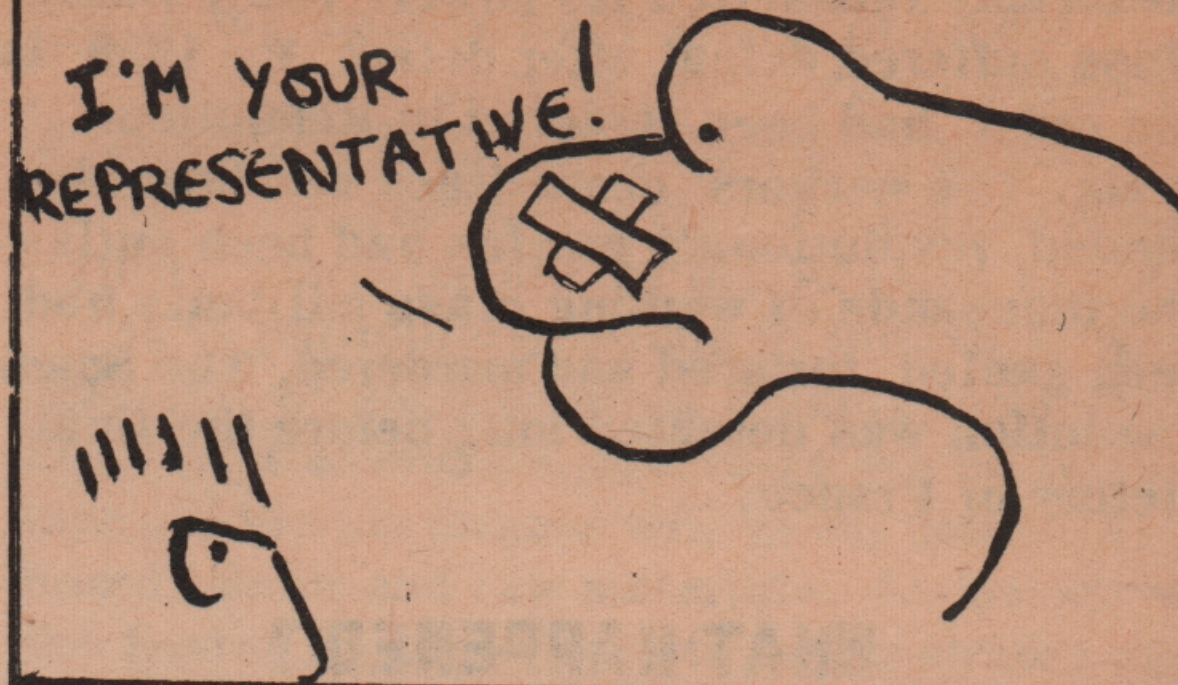
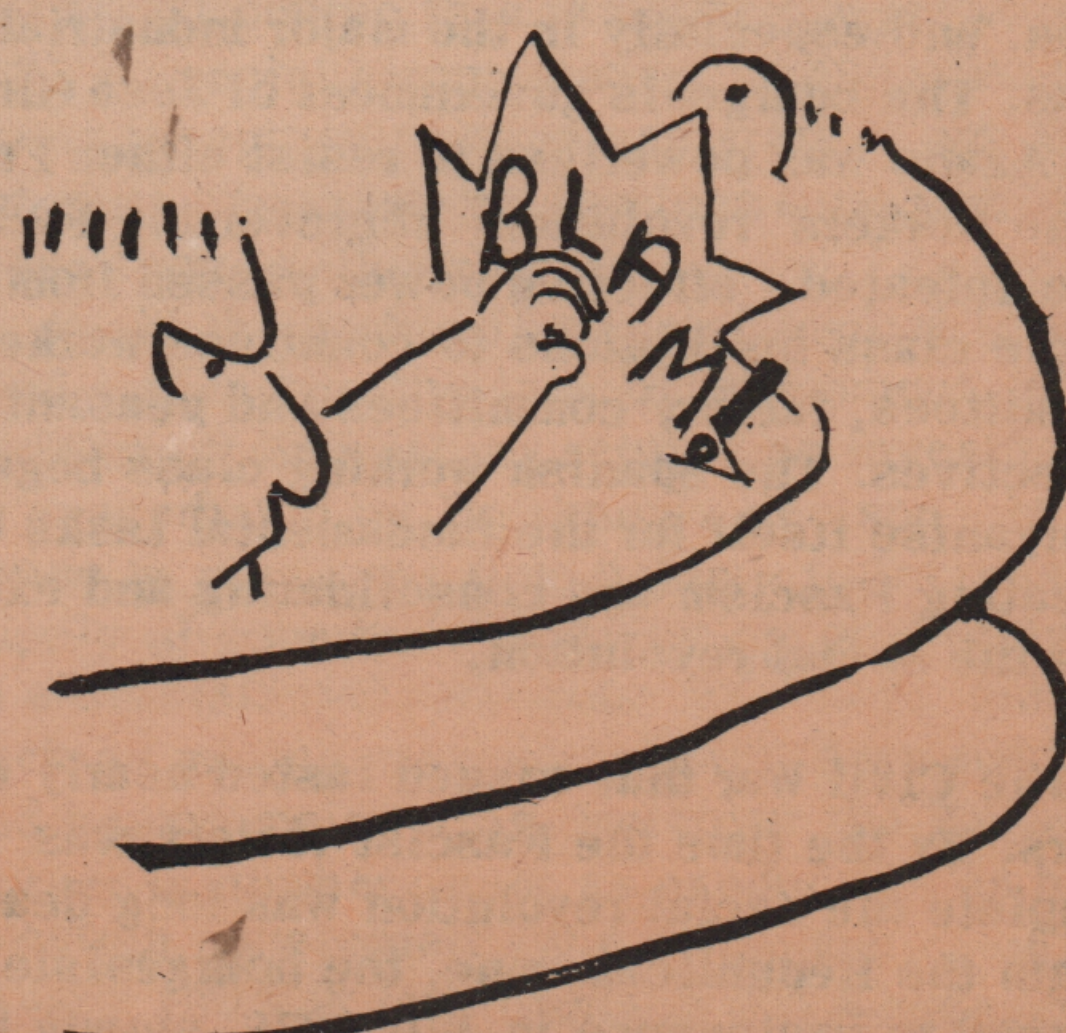
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## snake





# REVIEWS: IT HAPPENED HERE

Old readers of 'Freedom' will probably remember John McGuffin better as the "Rev. Augustus Berke", whose reports from Northern Ireland a few years ago did much to inform us of the situation there, besides considerably brightening that otherwise uninteresting publication. He has just produced this excellent history of internment and its use in Britain and Ireland over the last 60 years. As such it is a valuable contribution to the growing understanding of revolutionaries in this country of what the Irish people are up against in their struggle against imperialism. In other respects, the book is seriously lacking.

McGuffin has clearly shown that internment is primarily a political weapon, which has been consistently used by the London, Dublin and Stormont governments to crush opposition to British control of Ireland, and not to 'protect the public against a handful of gunmen', as ruling-class propaganda would have us believe. He himself has had first-hand experience of internment, having been lifted in the "sweep" of 9th August 1971, and it is not surprising that he concentrates a large part of this book on the personal experiences of those who have been interned over different periods. It is remarkable that despite the appalling conditions in the camps and prisons the tortures, beatings, and humiliations, so many internees remained unbroken in spirit, and carried on their resistance to oppression even while in captivity.

Internment succeeded in Ireland in the 20's, 40's, and late 50's, but failed in 1971 McGuffin points out that the IRA campaign of 1957-62 failed because it was concentrated on the border areas and recieved little rural support. The Belfast IRA was not directly involved in the campaign, so their internment made little difference to the final outcome. Faulkner believed that it was primarily due to internment that the campaign had been defeated, and was convinced that its introduction in 1971 would end IRA military activities. It failed miserably. The IRA knew in advance that it was coming. Not only did the vast majority of its membership escape, but the brutality and crass stupidity of the military in carrying out the operation, acted to unite the majority of the Catholic population in solid support of the Provisionals.

The subsequent torture and 'ill-treatment' of internees has been well documented, and this book gives a useful summary of the large number of cases which came to light. Internees had been brutally treated before, but this time torture was used systematically and in the express orders of the government. As a means of obtaining intelligence, torture is about as inefficient method as you can get, as the British military (with its long experience in these matters) must have known. The reason why it was used so widely and on such unlikely people was because it was seen as a means to intimidate the whole Catholic population. Most of the people initially lifted were trades unionists, tenants and squatters leaders, civil rights workers, Peoples' Democracy socialists, like John McGuffin - in other words, those who were active in organising civil resistance to the Orange regime. The government hoped that a good dose of "the treatment" would deter these people and others in the community from continuing their militant opposition. Instead, Faulkner and Co. got the massive rents and rates strike, a concerted campaign of civil disobedience, the establishment of the "no-go" areas, and a huge influx of new volunteers into the ranks of the Provos. The government took increasingly more desperate measures to stem the tide, culminating in the infamous Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry. Two months after, Stormont was abolished.

The main weakness of the book lies in the fact that its author steers clear of any real political analysis of the Irish struggle. We get no inkling of his attitude to the political aims of the Republicans or to the Provisionals' campaign. Those who had hoped that this book would give a libertarian perspective on the Irish situation (assuming one is possible), will be disappointed.

The confusion of the British Left about Ireland, and its reluctance to come to grips with the situation, has led one Republican newspaper to remark bitterly: "When it comes to Ireland, internationalism stops at Hollyhead."

It is all very well for revolutionaries in this country to state that the activities of the IRA alienate potential support from the British working class movement. Republicans can reply, with some justification, that the British workers have never been conspicuously active in support of struggles other than their own. Anarchists have traditionally taken a sceptical view of "national liberation struggles", posing Utopian solutions which bear no relationship to situations as they exist. In the case of Ireland, Britain is the oppressing power however, and for anarchists in this country to adopt such a purist position is a complete abdication of libertarian principles. This is not to suggest that we give uncritical support to the IRA, but that the least we can do is take active part in a campaign based on the demands of ending internment and withdrawing British troops.

In recent times we have seen in this country the increasing use of State repression against Republicans, blacks, strikers, and dissidents of all kinds on the left. The hysteria that is



British troops arresting a youth in Coalisland, County Tyrone, in December 1971.

being whipped up as a result of the present bombings in Britain, and the increasing number of 'conspiracy' trials are grim portents of what is to come. Those who believe that "it could never happen here" would do well to read this

book, 'Internment', paying particular attention to the following passage:

"William Burroughs has said, "a paranoid is someone who has some small idea of what is really going on" I began to see his point."

## ORWELL RECONSIDERED

For many years George Orwell's writings have been used by right-wingers to discredit all socialist and revolutionary movements. 'Animal Farm' and '1984' show that socialism is inevitably linked with a totalitarian nightmare, and that any attempt to change society in a revolutionary manner will always fail. Raymond Williams shows that Orwell was not the decent, plain-living anti-revolutionary that he is usually seen to be, and that the right-wing interpretation of Orwell is completely false.

Williams points out that Orwell was born and educated into the ruling class of an imperialist Britain. His experience of imperialism, while serving in Burma, drove him to reject his class and turn towards the working class. "I wanted to submerge myself, to get right down among the oppressed," he once wrote. But, Williams points out, Orwell could never understand the working class. He was never able to fully reject his class position, and saw himself as an outsider come to help the dumb oppressed. They were "people who had never learned to think, but who were storing up in their hearts and bellies and muscles, the power that would one day overturn the world", he wrote in '1984'. He has his own definition of what the working class is like. He is embarrassed when he meets working people who call him 'comrade' and sees a local trade union official living in an "entirely middle-class atmosphere". If workers are not visibly oppressed, then they are really middle-class to Orwell.

This shows the extent of Orwell's socialism until the late 1930's. It is a negative response to imperialism, privilege and poverty. There is no thought of revolutionary struggle to end these conditions. There is just a possible protest. This view arises from his middle-class attitude towards working people. Orwell's socialism was very English. He sees class privilege in terms of accents, clothes, styles of eating, and furnishing - a view of class held by most English social democrats right through the last labour government. England is merely "a family with the wrong members in control". But why are the wrong members in control? Is it merely a deference to 'better' accents or 'better' clothes? Such a view disguises the

fact that class is a powerful economic relationship between the owners of property and capital on the one hand, and the owners only of labour and skill, on the other.

Orwell's very English, undoctinal socialism was shaken when he went to Spain during the Civil War. He joined the militia of the semi-Trotskyist P.O.U.M. (Unified Marxist Workers' Party). In Catalonia, where a socialist revolution had taken place. Workers had seized factories, which they ran themselves. Peasants had seized the estates. When Orwell went to Barcelona he said, "It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle. Practically every building of any size had been seized by the workers and was draped with red flags or with the red and black flag of the anarchists. Every one wore rough working-class clothes, or blue overalls, or some variant of the militia uniform." This, and the experience of fighting in a revolutionary army, where officers were elected and drew the same pay as the soldiers, had a deep effect on Orwell. "I have seen wonderful things and at last believe in Socialism, which I never did before," he wrote in a letter.

Orwell wanted to join the International Brigade (under Communist control), so that he could fight in Madrid, but changed his mind when the Communists attacked the Anarchists and the P.O.U.M. in Barcelona in May, 1937. This was followed by the suppression of the P.O.U.M., and the crushing of the revolution in Catalonia. Orwell became aware of the importance of differences between the different parties fighting for the Republic. Whereas the P.O.U.M. and the Anarchists were fighting for a revolutionary Spain, the Communists wished to destroy the revolution to make the republic respectable in the eyes of capitalist Britain and France. Orwell, seeing his friends arrested and shot, escaped Spain just ahead of Communist police. The effect of Spain was not to turn him into an anti-Communist, but an anti-Stalinist, (the two should not be confused.) He became a revolutionary socialist. This is why 'Homage to Catalonia', where he describes his Spanish experience was not popular with the English Left in the 1930's, nor with those who were to draw comfort from his later novels. It is written by a revolutionary hostile both to orthodox Communism and

to capitalist democracy.

But in the England of the 1930's and 1940's, there was no revolutionary movement to turn towards. The outbreak of war showed Orwell that he had not broken away completely from his class origins. He had "the emotion of the middle class man, brought up in the military tradition, who finds in the moment of crisis that he is a patriot after all". Orwell became a reluctant supporter of the Labour Party, hoping against hope that somehow the war would defeat Hitler and the English class system at the same time. The hope was not fulfilled, and Orwell moved into a deeply pessimistic view of life. 'Animal Farm' is about the betrayal of a revolution, and the pigs who become the new rulers of the animals, are the same as the men who used to exploit them. There is no apology for those who had been the previous rulers. '1984' is about the nightmarish society where there is no more opposition to the government - no strikes, no revolutionary movement - and where the state controls everything and everybody. Williams criticises Orwell for identifying this society with Stalinism. He knew perfectly well that political police, censorship and propaganda were not a socialist or communist invention. Williams correctly writes, "By assigning all modern forms of repression and authoritarian control to a single political tendency, he cut short the kind of analysis of these inhuman and destructive forces wherever they appeared, under whatever names and masked by whatever ideology." Our experience of an affluent and militaristic capitalism shows the strength and weakness of '1984' as a political novel. However, what was for Orwell a nightmare has become for many a comfortable view of the world; those hostile to change and blind to oppression and suffering in capitalism.

However, as Williams ends this excellent book, "the thing to do with his work, his history is to read it, not imitate it. He is still there. But as we reach out to touch him we catch some thing of his hardness, a necessary hardness. We are acknowledging a presence and a distance; other names, other years; a history to respect, to remember, to move on from."



# CHILE - PARLIAMENTARY ROAD TO DISASTER

The world's press has described Salvador Allende as "the world's first democratically elected Marxist leader". The social democrat and Stalinist parties in particular have seen this as a vindication of the belief that socialism could be achieved through the ballot box.

Chile was looked upon as the model which would eventually be copied by the rest of Latin America. Working class revolution and armed struggle were held to be things of the past. What was their necessity, now that the State (or at least part of it) was in the hands of the workers "representatives"?

The recent events in Chile have shown once again the criminal folly of such beliefs. Allende's "peaceful road" has been far from peaceful, and has led not to socialism but to fascist military rule.

## CHILE'S PROBLEMS

The 1960's saw the deepening of Chile's social crisis. Rising unemployment and continuing inflation (at a rate of 30% a year), combined with the perennial Latin American problems of rural poverty and illiteracy, produced an explosive situation. Urban workers demanded higher wages and widespread nationalisation. In the countryside, the landless peasants living in virtual serfdom on the big estates demanded a massive redistribution of land and the establishment of adequate medical facilities and services.

In 1964 the Christian Democrat Party under the leadership of Frei came to power on the promise of implementing large scale reforms. Frei proved to be a miserable failure. Unemployment rose even higher and the rate of inflation increased. Nothing was done to combat illiteracy or provide medical services in the rural areas. The Chilean peasantry gained the dubious distinction of having one of the highest infant mortality rates in Latin America. The promised land reforms came to nothing. Only a tiny proportion of land was redistributed so that by 1969 over 60% of all arable land was owned by less than 600 people.

What the Chilean workers did get in plenty from Frei was repression. Militants were imprisoned and left wing papers banned. Protest was met with brute force. In the November 1967 General Strike six people were killed by the police. Other massacres followed. Mass discontent reached boiling point, and this period saw the beginning of the peasant expropriations

in the countryside which were to continue throughout Allende's rule. In the cities, strikes reached record numbers, and a mass squatting movement by the homeless was in full swing.

Allende won the 1970 Presidential election simply because the right-wing parties could not form a common front against him. Many disillusioned PDC supporters switched their votes to the ultra-conservative National Party. The result was that Allende got in with only 36.3% of the vote - not much higher than he received when he stood against Frei in 1964.

The programme of Allende's UP (Unidad Popular) - the coalition whose main elements were the Chilean Communist Party and Allende's own Socialist Party, was unashamedly state capitalist. Allende planned to nationalise the banking, insurance and trading companies, as well as the main industrial and mining concerns. Small and medium industries would remain in private hands. The nationalised sector would be run by state appointees, not by the workers.

Nevertheless, such a programme could never be accepted by the Chilean bourgeoisie. The right wing parties controlled congress, so Allende found it necessary to compromise on the programme in order to stay in power. The nationalisation of most companies was 'postponed' - Allende hoped that the Congressional elections of 1973 would give the UP a majority.

## THE WORKERS FIGHT BACK

Despite Allende's compromises the working class pressed ahead with its demands. His promise to "lay the foundations of socialism" had opened up a Pandora's box which no amount of bargaining with the ruling class and half-hearted concessions to the workers could close. Workers and peasants began to arm themselves in preparation for the struggle they knew was bound to come. Factory occupations and rural expropriations continued unabated. Allende was caught in an impossible situation. He could not legally carry through his programme because of the forces arranged against him in Congress. If he was to attempt extra-legal measures, this would obviously lead to a right wing coup. On the other hand, if he did not fulfil his promises, the workers would take decisions into their own hands and sweep aside Allende and his reformist coalition for good.

## THE SWING TO THE RIGHT

As support for Allende dwindled among the workers, he became increasingly reliant on the Army. UP propaganda consistently extolled the 'democratic' traditions of the Chilean Army, which unlike most others in Latin America, did not have a history of intervention into politics. The military budget was increased. All ranks received handsome pay increases. Officers were given cheap housing and extra 'fringe benefits'. Most important of all, the military was given a virtually free hand to disarm the workers.

In the meantime the Chilean bourgeoisie had been active in making life as difficult as possible for the government. Investment was taken out of the country (in the first week after Allende's victory, over \$20m left Chile). Their strategy was to create an economic crisis which would give the army an excuse to intervene to 'restore order'. In this they were directly aided by international capitalism which made sure that it would be impossible for Chile to obtain desperately needed credits from foreign banks and governments. The Nixon government put pressure on international aid agencies to cut down on their aid programmes for Chile. The CIA was directly involved in numerous plots to overthrow Allende, as the recent revelations about the ITT affair have shown. All this, combined with the falling world prices of copper (which constitute 70% of Chilean exports) produced inflation and commodity scarcity of staggering proportions. The position was made worse by the recent 'bosses strike' of lorry owners, shopkeepers and the professional classes, when the Government had to use the Army to transport vital supplies.

In such a desperate situation the only way out for Allende would have been to appeal to the working class to seize power for themselves to forestall the inevitable coup. Some members of the coalition were in favour of this, but the Communist Party, which throughout has been the most right-wing element in the UP, bitterly opposed it. The CP strategy was to "win over the middle classes", and to do this it was prepared to abandon every radical aspect of the UP programme. In 1972, the Party proposed more concessions to the Christian Democrats, including cutting down drastically on the num-



ber of companies to be nationalised, compensating their former owners, halting the land reform programme, sacking the more radical members of the government and abandoning the long-term policy of replacing Congress with a Popular Assembly. Since then Allende has conceded most of these points, as well as agreeing to de-nationalise those companies that had previously been expropriated without congressional assent.

The CP has also proved to be the most diligent in repressing the left. In Concepcion, in Southern Chile, an anti-fascist demonstration was brutally broken up by the police on the orders of Chavez, the mayor of the town and a member of the CP central committee. A week later, the CP governor of the province of Cautin ordered the riot squad to "use maximum force" to smash a peasants' demonstration protesting about the lack of medical facilities in the area. The Communists have also been the most forthright in demanding the use of the Army against "the armed groups of the ultra-left" i.e. the workers. It is certainly no thanks to the CP that, when the coup came, at least some workers were sufficiently armed to defend themselves no matter how much it may claim that it was stockpiling its own arms for such an eventual-ity.

## POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE

The only major grouping on the left that has consistently advocated revolutionary action has been the MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria - or Movement of the Revolutionary Left). In 1970 it had no real mass base, though its militants numbered several thousand. With the disillusionment of many Allende-istas it has since gained significant support among certain sections of the working class, notably in Concepcion and among the thousands of squatters in Santiago. By supporting the mass actions of the peasantry and the workers' occupations of the factories, it has provided a revolutionary alternative to the reformism of the UP. While some workers have been demoralised by the treachery of the CP, many others have at last seen through the illusions of "the peaceful road". The growing strength of the recently formed Revolutionary Workers Front (which unites the MIR with the small trotskyist and maoist groups) among hitherto loyal UP supporters is part of the explanation for the increasingly hysterical attacks on the "ultra-left" by the UP. The other part of the explanation is that the government was prepared to do anything to show the ruling class how 'respectable' and 'constitutional' it really was. Allende went so far as to bring the military chiefs into his government in order to placate the army and be seen as the upholder of "law and order".

The programme of the MIR, though essentially revolutionary, should be criticised. There is no firm commitment to direct workers' control of all industry and no guarantee that political power will rest in the hands of the working class through democratic worker's councils. What seems to be envisaged is a kind of dual power of a centralised state and worker's and peasants assemblies, and history has shown the contradiction of such a position. Nevertheless this statist element should not blind libertarians to the fact that the MIR is not a bolshevik type organisation. Its social composition has been fast changing with the entry of large numbers of highly politicised workers whose spontaneous actions over the last year show that they have the willingness and the capacity to take control into their own hands. Some points of the programme are clearly out of date and others may be rendered irrelevant as the revolutionary events set in motion take their course.

The present military junta may have achieved temporary control of the situation, but given the polarisation of the classes and the present relationship of forces in Chile, it cannot hope to last long. The parallels with the Spanish Revolution of 1936 are obvious. Let us hope that the Chilean workers have learnt the lessons of their own recent history and reject once and for all the blind alley of reformism. It may be too much to hope also that the advocates of the "parliamentary road" in this country and elsewhere will have also learnt from the Chile experience that no ruling class will ever give up its power peacefully.



PEASANTS GUARDING OCCUPIED FARM IN CAUTÍN PROVINCE WITH SHOTGUNS