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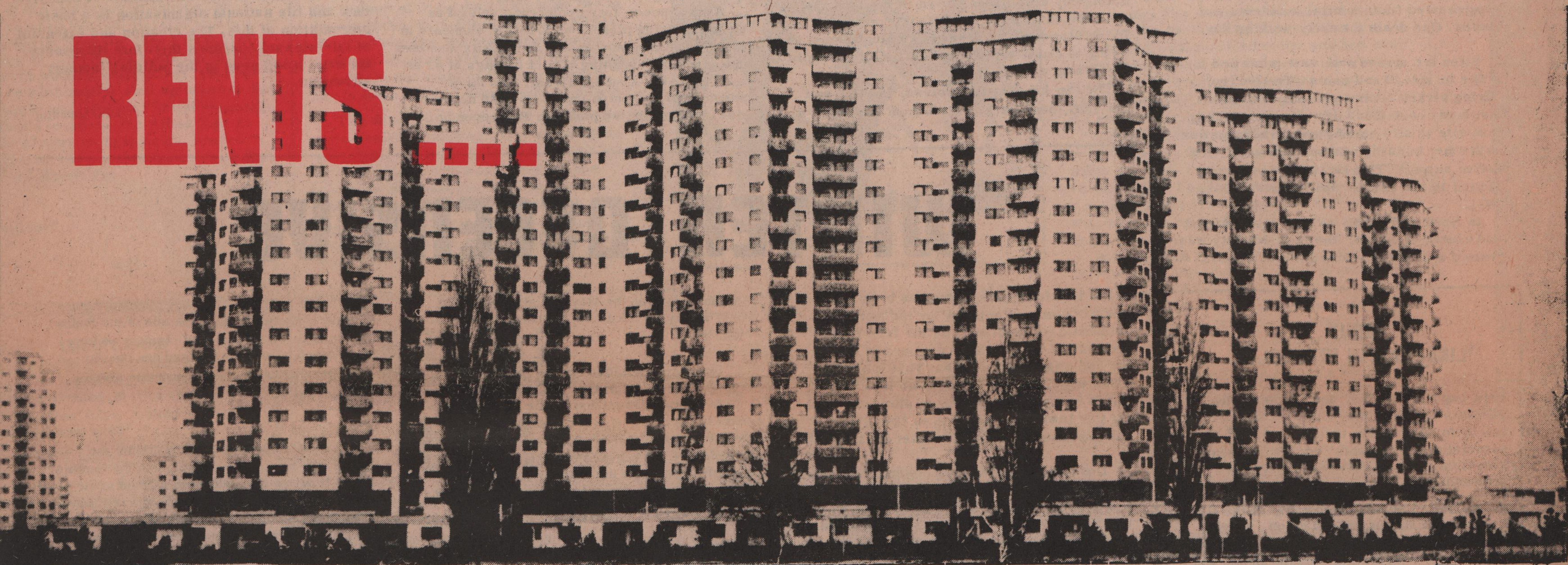
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libertarian struggle



FOR WORKERS POWER

RENTS



THE RIGHT TO STEAL LEGALLY

INSIDE: CHRYSLER • LABOUR PARTY •

PHASE THREE • SHREWSBURY 24 •

LONDON TEACHERS • ETC •

paper of the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists

DEFEND THE 24!

August 1972 saw the culmination of years of negotiations and minor disputes between building workers and bosses over pay demands, conditions (toilets, canteens etc.) and the use of lump labour on building sites.

For years the employers have encouraged individual workers to register as self-employed casual labour. Under this system workers have no stamps and avoid being taxed. This in turn enables the employer to pay less to the worker and avoid paying insurance contributions himself. This policy makes the worker illegal and forces him to move from site to site. He is paid by the day and any sign of militancy means he's sacked on the spot.

Lump labour is used by the bosses to break any attempt to organise and fight for better conditions. Also these workers are not compensated for industrial accidents and deaths. One death for every working day.

Sites are spread over vast areas and for the strike to spread and prove effective the 'flying picket' tactic was adopted. This involved coach loads of strikers travelling from site to site arguing about the situation with other building workers and mobilising active support. This tactic was originally started by the miners during their strike in 1971.

In North Wales the workers also adopted this course of action. The main activity was centred around Shrewsbury, North Wales district, and Telford, where the new town development run by the giant McAlpine building contractors were signing up lump labour.

The police continually followed the pickets and commended their behaviour. Six months after the campaign to stop lump labour began, 24 workers were arrested by the same body of policemen and charged with causing an affray, intimidation and damage to property. The jury obviously found the men not guilty on the charge of causing an affray - the courts have substituted a charge of unlawful assembly - A charge of far-reaching implications.

Altogether 243 charges have been brought against the 24. It will cost the state an estimated £250,000 to proceed with the trial. In spite of this the state is trying to cover up the trial because, with the worsening economic crisis, capitalism has little room in which to manoeuvre. It has been shown in the past that the capitalist class will attack working class living standards by severely cutting wages, and trying to crush any attempts of working people organising against it.

The two big unions involved, UCATT and the T&G, have backed down from the fight and are guiding their own members into court on the grounds that these are criminal charges and they are offering no legal aid. The union leaderships have shown themselves incapable of any foresight into the coming struggles of their members.

The Communist Party dominated 'rank and file' Charter group have been concentrating only on pressurising the union leadership. They have advocated a purely defensive struggle. They have avoided the political nature of the trial like the plague. During the building workers strike their paper did not appear once. They were scared of antagonising the union bureaucracy.

During the recent public meetings, called to build support for the Shrewsbury 24, they have constantly avoided criticism of the union bureaucrats. However, many workers are voicing their contempt for the union's role.

At the recent Tory conference delegates attacked flying pickets as criminal elements in the Trade Union movement. Some party members demanded the banning of picket lines at sites and factories. A moderate call was for a maximum of two trade unionists (and no-one else) to man limited pickets. The second of

the two right wing demands is the one most likely to become law in the near future.

The TUC has continued to cooperate with the Tories in spite of the series of attacks that began with the Industrial Relations Act through to Phase 3. The UCATT and T&G failure to defend the Shrewsbury 24 is part of the TUC's overall policy.

It is the building workers and hospital workers, and the other low-paid, who the Tories have tried to goad. They hope after their bloody nose with the Pentonville 5 that this is the weak point of the working class movement.

The defence of the 24 will only succeed if workers take the kind of mass action they did to release the Pentonville 5. Success will not mean the end of the bosses attacks. A cohesive rank and file national organisation is a basic precondition of this. The creation and extension of site steward combines therefore represents the most basic need in the building industry at present.

John Manning

ABOUT 'LIBERTARIAN STRUGGLE'

This paper is written and produced by militants all over the country, who are active in their trade unions, tenants' associations, claimants' unions, womens' liberation groups, schools, colleges and universities.

We are united by our membership of the ORA a democratically organised group, which fights for a libertarian communist revolution. This means a revolution brought about, and firmly controlled by, the working class. This is the only foundation for a society in which production is for need, not profit, free from exploitation and oppression.

The only way working class power can express itself, is through workers' councils in the factories and through neighbourhood councils in the communities. Demands for improvement in workers' living standards, whether wages, better housing, etc. are not purely economic demands. The working class must make each demand a move towards the control of production and the control of their own lives. Therefore every organisation and struggle of the working class must be directly and democratically controlled by the workers involved. Consequently we oppose all groups and parties who take the initiative and control from the working class.

As part of our attempt to put this kind of politics into practice, we have rotating editorship of each issue of this paper. We produce the paper (none of us are professional journalists) to provide one means of spreading some hidden facts, of publicising what workers are thinking and doing, to workers in other industries, and other parts of the country, to talk about what claimants, women, immigrants, pensioners and school-kids are doing, and to show how these battles can be united.

We won't give you the familiar shit about, 'this is your paper'. What we do say is :
-USE this paper,
-pass on what you've learnt,
-contact others in a similar situation.

We know that lots of people have no practice at writing articles - but who needs literary genius? An essential factor in the development of the working class movement is the communication of details and the lessons of its various struggles.

WORKERS' POWER - NO SUBSTITUTE!

In the last few years, there has been much talk of 'winter offensives' by the more optimistic (or utopian?) on the left. Large sections of workers have engaged in lengthy and often bitter strikes. This situation looks very likely to occur again this winter. But to imagine that militancy alone can beat the pay laws and Phase 3 is to ignore what has happened in the last 'winter offensives'.

The struggles involving postmen, miners, railwaymen, gas workers, hospital workers, power-workers, civil servants and London teachers have had varying results depending on how far the rank and file were able to organise to take the running of their strikes into their own hands. In this way the miners were able to win, whereas the hospital workers and postmen who, by and large, let their leaders dictate the course of the strike were totally beaten.

It is also vital that not only should the rank and file take over the running of their struggles, but that workers in different industries form co-ordinated linking bodies. This has happened in the last two years. The solidarity that the miners could call on from all sections of the working class was seen in the mass picket of Saltley Coke Depot. Many workers struck in support of the hospital workers. Public service workers formed cross-industry alliances of hospital workers, civil servants and teachers. The extension of this kind of co-ordination with the rank and file firmly in control is the only way that the working class can use its strength in what, this winter, will be an open confrontation between the class and the government.

To expect the trade union bureaucrats and the TUC to help in this struggle is to ignore the historic 'buffer role' that they play. In contrast to the beginnings of co-ordinated activity that the working class started to develop last year the TUC :-

- Delayed calling a special congress until 5th March against Phase One (which the government introduced in November).
- Tried to prevent (unsuccessfully) that conference taking decisions.
- Blocked moves for a general strike with the Jones-Scanlon motion for a one-day protest.
- Delayed calling that strike until May 1st by which time it hoped (rightly) that by stalling, the hospital workers and others would have been defeated.

WINTER OFFENSIVE

-Made sure that the May 1st strikes would only really be token by 'inviting' unions to take part.

Gormley, President of the NUM, stated quite correctly that the TUC had either to wage all-out opposition to the Tory government or not bother at all. As usual the TUC took the course of 'left' rhetoric combined with compromise and behind the scenes collaboration. It is matching the words with consistent action that wins struggles, i.e. the content and not just the form.

All kinds of tactics have been discovered or re-discovered by the working class in the last two years that have helped to strengthen self-confidence. The flying picket used by the miners and building workers proved very successful in the car-worker's fight at Chrysler. The occupations, sit-ins and work-ins that have taken place at BSA, Brierley, the Manchester engineering works, UCS, Fakenham, Plessey, Fisher-Bendix etc have brought into the open not just the question of which tactics to use, but of the ownership and control of the means of production.

This is not to dismiss the very reformist nature of some of the work-ins or the role of the Stalinists in them. At each step of struggle we have to assess how each tactic used has brought forward opportunities for autonomous working class activity..

This winter sees trouble looming for the government from several sections of the working class. It seems likely that the engineers, the power-workers, the miners, the dockers, civil servants, postal workers and others will be taking industrial action. If none of the lessons that the working class has painfully learnt in the last couple of years is applied; if each group of workers is content to let the leadership run the strikes; and is happy to let each union go down separately then the ruling class will have the go-ahead to take further steps to the corporate state and to cut the wages and living standards of the working class. This is the reality of the 'winter offensive'.

A T.G.W.U. MEMBER



PHASE 3

THE LATEST ATTACK

ON THE WORKING CLASS

Phase Three is now being introduced by the Tories. The TUC go scuttling to beg a few crumbs and at the same time give Heath's legislation an air of respectability. On each occasion the TUC meets Heath to negotiate, the proposals that afterwards leave Downing Street appear to the working class to be 'approved' by the workers' representatives. The representatives being the delegates from the General Council of the TUC, as led by ex-Oxford General Secretary Len Murray, the new replacement for Vic Feather.

What does this 'negotiation' produce? What gains have the TUC delegates made for the members of the labour movement, of which a large number have demanded that the sham talks cease?

Heath's Phase Three is a tougher control of all wages and a licence for employers to reap bigger and better profits at the cost of the living standards of the working class. All of Heath's proposals are embroidered with minor 'concessions' to give the impression of 'fairness' and 'generosity' to the anti-working class proposals. A £10 'gift' to the pensioners and the possibility of subsidised mortgages, plus the talk about 'assistance' to lower paid workers, act as a cover for £100 cutbacks in school and hospital building expenditure, and little change in the general pay proposals and an end to nearly every restriction on profits.

BOSSSES' CHARTER

Phase Three is no more than a charter for the bosses. A charter of that one and only freedom that is dear to every Tory heart - the right to Free Enterprise - the freedom to exploit. A close inspection of the proposals clearly shows that restrictions on the employers and investors are to be kept to a minimum:

- (1) The reduction of the number of profit margins that were limited to 10%

- (2) Dividend increases of 5% to be allowed, all restrictions on dividends for 'new' investments to be lifted
- (3) Rent on business premises to be frozen
- (4) Depreciation of machinery to be considered a production cost and used in application for price rises
- (5) Medium-sized firms only need to notify the Prices and Incomes Board of price rises, and do not need to gain the permission of the Board

What 'fairness' and 'generosity' are there in these measures? Business premise rents are frozen to cut overheads and raise profits while the rest of the working class suffers from the 'Fair Rents' act and the results of the interest war between banks and building societies, and widespread speculation on land and buildings. Profits are given every chance to increase while negligible 'restrictions' are placed on dividends to give the appearance of a balance between the control of prices and wages.

"FAIRNESS"

This Tory legislation package contains an even more cynical effort in its announcements of 'fairness' over the section of Phase Three concerning wages. Using the traditional lie that severe cuts in the rises of higher wage earners assist the lower paid, the Tories have offered the unions a meagre lump sum and are encouraging the membership of these unions to fight amongst themselves for the crumbs. This has been done not by offering the wage rise ceiling in the form of 7% or £2.25 per head, but by pointing out that the wage rises can be calculated as a total for a workforce and then spread out 'unevenly' to offset the lower paid in that workforce. The maximum wage rise under this 'uneven' system is to be £350.

The total of 7% is in some cases less than the £1 plus 4% of Phase Two. The cheapest Tory attempt to allay the workers' fears of inflation is the 40p a week rise for the 1% rise in the retail price index (calculated by the Tories of course). This only comes into effect when the 7% has already been neutralised by inflation. The most important fact that has had little emphasis placed on it in the bourgeois press is that the workers have to fight the employers to even gain the wage levels in Phase Three. The employers are in no way encouraged to pay up to Heath's rulings on wage ceilings.

PAY CUT

Phase three is to be enforced for the next twelve months by the Tory government with restrictions on profits cut, and controls on wages tightened. The massive inflation during the coming year will annihilate the effects of any wage rises that have been obtained within the limits set down by the Tories. Phase 3 amounts to no more than a large cut in wages when seen in this perspective.

The final offer of Tory 'generosity' was the decree that New Year's Day be a public holiday. The New Year's Day holiday has been in unofficial operation for years. The Tories were just conforming a fact and dressing it up as an act of benevolence.

There is nothing benevolent about Phase Three - it is a direct attack on the working class and it is a preparation for the major offensive to come.

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BOB CAMPBELL

JAPANESE

ABORTION

The Japanese Government is now attempting to revise a liberal abortion law that has been on the statute books since 1949, because they are worried by "the severe labour shortage and its effects on the nation's industrial growth". The bill was originally passed in the lean years after the second world war, when few Japanese could afford to have many children. The attempt to revise the bill, by deleting "economic reasons" as grounds for abortion, and replacing it with "Mother's mental and physical health" - which is far harder to define - demonstrates, only too clearly the 'unpleasant face of capitalism' in yet another guise. Abortions are granted, or not, on economic grounds, whatever the clauses in the laws state. The State manipulates people to provide them with more industrial fodder, or with less, depending on its economic requirements.

The removal of widely available abortion facilities in a country where the pill is very difficult to obtain and where abortion is the main method of contraception, will have disastrous consequences for many unwilling mothers forced into producing the nation's workers. That abortion is practised as the main form of contraception is wholly wrong, but to deny women even this method of preventing unwanted motherhood is just another example of the control that capitalism has over our lives.

A similar situation has already developed

in some East European countries. For example Rumania has increased the birth rate from 15 to 27 births per thousand of the population by banning abortion, ceasing to import the pill, (which is not manufactured in Rumania despite the highly developed state of the pharmaceutical industry) and by virtually banning divorce. These draconian measures have been used to satisfy an estimated 80% increase in the demand for labour.

Whilst the major part of the burden of such State manipulation naturally falls on the women (who in Rumania are still expected to increase their percentage of the work force beyond the present 61%), such action oppresses the husbands and fathers too. For if children are conceived unwillingly they present a financial and emotional burden to the rest of the family. Fathers must give their time to their children, they must work more to pay for their needs; sisters and brothers must share their parents' love and time with the extra ones, and so on. Unwanted children are like stones in a pond - the ripples spread right across the water. In fact, the whole society is made subservient to the greedy demands of the State and is kept cowed by the reliance on State aid that nuclear families bring. Keeping a population on the 'straight and narrow' is done by the use of the power of the State - controlling and manipulating family size is just another way of doing this.

FATAL

STATISTICS

- * Over 2000 people are killed at work or die of industrial disease annually
- * 70,000 workers are injured by cutting instruments
- * Approximately 34,000 people are injured just falling over at work
- * There are 19,563 fractures
- * 16,000 are burnt at work
- * 14,445 suffer lacerations
- * 14,000 had a foreign body in an eye
- * 13,000 fall from ladders and scaffolding
- * 7,920 are crushed
- * There are 1,799 concussions
- * There are 1,489 amputations
- * There are 1,096 dislocations
- * 796,000 workers are injured in Britain annually

(From the British Clinical Journal, July 1973)

FOOTNOTE TO THE COD WAR

British trawlers off Iceland have made good returns during the past year in spite of the fishing limit dispute. Two ships made more than £38,000 for single voyages to Iceland and many have made £27,000. (Times, 24th September.)

RATS IN

THE

EAST-END

Despite constant attacks on the living standards of the working class, HEATH insists that the working class is better off now than ever before. Whilst beef and fresh food is disappearing from many working class families' dinner tables, living conditions get rapidly worse. One example of the bad housing conditions of the working class came to light recently - but was of course played down by the national press. Recently a block of flats in East London has been invaded by rats.

The rats - many over two feet long - have taken over in Wentworth Street, Stepney, and play among the young children in the playground area of the flats. A woman resident said "The place is absolutely infested with them. They roam around the playground, even during the day while the kids are there. They just trot around with their babies and are not frightened of anything. It makes me feel awful just to see them. Many of the people in the block are terrified to go outside by themselves and the kids bunch up together as they play because of the fear of the rats."

A dentist living in the block is worried about the health situation and has warned of a serious risk of typhoid. Dental surgeon Neil McLeod said, "I'm very concerned about it. I have seen at least ten or twenty rats running about in the playground. There is a serious medical risk here. If one of the rats bites a child or enters his flat after treading where the rats have been, there is a big risk of typhoid - it could contaminate the whole area."

Residents pointed out, that although they have complained to Tower Hamlets Council and officers have come and looked around the flats, nothing has been done to get rid of the rats. The council when asked were officially "Looking into it."



TED HEATH - CYNICAL EFFORT
IN HIS ANNOUNCEMENTS OF
GENEROSITY

RENT: LEGALISED

When the Housing Finance Act came into force last October, 1972, many thousands of tenants across Britain organised to withhold the rent increases it imposed. particularly in the North West and Midlands, new Tenants Action Groups were set up, and on several estates on Merseyside, tenants went on total rent strike. The present housing strategy of the State represents an attack intended to fundamentally sweep away all the gains made in housing by the working class since the First World War.

THE LAST FIFTY YEARS - CLASS BACKGROUND, STATE BACKLOG

In 1915, working class resistance to paying rapidly rising rents to private landlords, who were profiteering from the wartime housing shortage, threatened to become a mass political struggle and to halt munitions production on Clydeside.

The State intervened and froze rents to pre-war levels, promising "homes for heroes" after the War. Ever since, the State has remained the sole producer of working class housing for rent.

For fifty years housing policy has been locally administered, and Labour councils have been able to keep rents low by adding subsidies from the rates to subsidies from Central Government. This has been one of the enduring bases for electoral support for Labour councils, but it has also meant that struggles against rent levels have been localised by the ruling class, and that sectional working class interests of private tenants, council tenants and owner occupiers have been encouraged to develop.

However one effect of 50 years of municipal housing has been the steadily increasing indebtedness of local councils. For, as the costs of land, capital and labour rose, the resistance to paying higher rents has remained, particularly among working class council tenants of State housing. As a result rents ceased to represent an adequate return on capital for the capitalist State and increasingly money was borrowed to pay debts on debts.

THE GLC RENT STRIKE

In 1967, the Tories gained control of the Greater London Council, the biggest public landlord in Europe, and introduced a "Fair Rents" scheme - a big rent increase offset by means tested rent rebates. GLC tenants in estates in East London mainly, sent the rebate forms back to County Hall in coffins and burnt them on the steps, and they withheld the increase from October 1968.

The tenants waged a militant, defensive struggle; excluding Labour and Communist Party influence to contain the struggle to pressure politics. The strike reached a decisive point in early 1969. A massive march on the Hampstead home of the then Minister of Housing, Greenwood, was met by brutal police attacks. Having bypassed the GLC, tenants were confronted with the State, police and courts. For the first time, they drew the support of organised workers, who recognised the class violence of the police, and helped form anti-eviction squads to defeat further direct attacks on the tenants. The State took the initiative of freezing further rent rises nationally. The respectable elements within the tenants movement turned to the courts, to protest the 'illegality' of the rent rises, rather than going on total rent strike. This retreat to 'legalistic' struggle enabled the Labour Party and Communist Party to get a foot back in the door of the tenants movement.

Without a class perspective to identify these developments, tenants rapidly withdrew from the strike-half victorious and half defeated. The State drew its own lessons. The Housing Finance Act contains some of these. The result of this defeat has made London tenants, GLC and Borough alike, unwilling to fight again on the limited demands

of that struggle, although this has not affected the refusal to pay increased rents, as evidenced by soaring arrears levels in East London. It is the conscious, adequate political expression of that refusal that is missing.

LIFE UNDER THE WARFARE STATE

In 1970, the decline of British capital's international position was accelerating into crisis. The solution resorted to by the ruling class, through the Tory government, has been an all out offensive against the standard of living of the working class. The main form of support the State has given to this policy is to cut back State spending, through dismantling altogether some areas of the welfare state - school milk, prescriptions, etc. They also introduced legislation to force working people to pay more and more of the rest of the social bill. The Housing Finance Act is one of the main planks in this policy.



AT A TIME OF WAGE CUTS AND ATTACKS ON WORKERS LIVING STANDARDS
LOBBYING IS NO ANSWER. TOTAL RENT STRIKES ARE THE ONLY WAY FORWARD

CAPITALIST PRIORITIES

The capitalist priorities underlying this Act are many sided. Driving up rent levels nationally, it puts the entire cost of working class housing on the backs of working class tenants, rather than offset by general taxation. In the past, local authorities had the ability to secure working class support through low rents. This made it worth while for tenants to stay in low cost housing, even if there were no jobs in their area. Central government aims to increase the mobility of labour, driving workers out of areas of declining and unprofitable industry to areas where Capital prefers to invest. This being predominantly in the South East, near transport links, on cheap land outside the cities, at low rates. The means tested rebate system is aimed to subsidise the rents of lower paid workers, out of the rents of the higher paid workers. The poor must remain in the inner city. They are essential to the running of the rapidly declining city services, like transport, and hospitals. In London, the government estimate that eventually 80% of London council tenants will need rebates.

WHEN YOUR LANDLORD'S YOUR BOSS - MUNICIPAL WORKERS & THE RENT

The rebates are intended as wage subsidies, keeping low paid public and private sector workers down; the other side of making state housing 'profitable' is to use rents to serve as an extra subsidy to local services - garbage collection, transport, road maintenance, etc - in the face of local government workers' wage demands, and soaring inflation which threatens to eat up the same local government funds - drawn from state grants, (general taxation), rates and rents. Councils are forced to put their rent surpluses into their rate account, as well as recently increasing the proportion of rates paid by working class tenants. Either way it comes out of workers' pockets. This is accompanied by the rationalisation of maintenance workers. In 1968 as well as putting up the rents, the GLC cut its maintenance workers by 1,500 pressing ahead with work-study, speed up and bonus and productivity schemes. This

country are owner-occupied, and the State is prepared to subsidise this through low-start mortgages, option mortgages, 100% mortgages and tax concessions. For the low paid, who are being made increasingly dependant on the rebates, the prospect is council estate ghettos, graded and starved of maintenance according to the wages of the tenants.

In recent months the credit crisis has forced the State to push up interest rates, pushing up mortgage rates in turn. They leave owner occupiers with a choice between £2 or £4 a week rise in mortgage payments, or indefinite repayments - more than ever mortgages become a form of glorified rent. Since higher paid tenants have compared their rent increases with the rising cost of mortgages, and found staying put a better deal, the strategy of replacing them with tenants off the waiting lists has collapsed. The planned cutbacks in council house building have simply accelerated the shortage of working class housing, while private estates are empty of buyers.

THE LABOUR PARTY - YOUR LIFE IN THEIR HANDS CLAY CROSS ON THEIR ROSETTES

The Labour Party, which has traditionally relied on local social issues, particularly housing, to gain working class support, has been thrown into crisis as it can no longer act as the political intermediary between the working class and ruling class interests.

For many tenants who have been fighting the increased rents, the collapse of the local Labour councils after all their election promises has come as a profound political disillusion. In many places the local Labour Council has actively opposed 'illegal' actions by tenants, and are in the forefront of serving notices to quit and attachment of earnings orders (which avoid mobilisations around evictions), while telling tenants to put their faith in a future Labour government. The exception, Clay Cross, despite the pro-working class policies of its council, has served to maintain left Labour illusions nationally. Kirkby Council sent cash to Clay Cross, while serving eviction notices on the tenants of Tower Hill estate. What Clay Cross represents is the rapidly disappearing possibility of Councils being closely enough in the control of the working class of a town to become a means to enact working class policies. The Reorganisation of Local Government Act operative from 1974, centralising all social policies, like housing, while decentralising administrative functions, reducing councils to statutorily controlled landlords, will remove such exceptional situations. Opposition from Labour councillors to this reorganisation of the role of local councils, the first this century, has been even more non-existent than resistance to the Housing Finance Act. It is not entirely unconnected with the fact that in future councillors will be paid upwards of £5 a meeting by their masters in Westminster, out of our rent and rates.

TRADES UNIONS OF TENANTS - A JACK JONES ON EVERY ESTATE ? A BRANCH OFFICIAL IN EVERY HOME ?

As we have seen, the rising rents and deteriorating conditions on council estates are different sides of the same 50p coin. There is no likelihood that conditions will improve with the rising rents, and this is cause for political concern to the State. After the GLC rent strike they realised that annual garden competitions were not enough, and the numerous voluntary and official State agencies in London began rapidly pressing for more 'effective channels of communication' between tenants and the authorities. Within three years, nearly every borough, as well as the GLC, has set up assorted Consultative arrangements with officially recognised Tenants Associations, to attempt to

OWNER OCCUPATION - A STAKE IN THE SYSTEM OR A STAKE ON THE H.P. THE SCREW TIGHTENS

This Act is not just a question of rent rises. The rebate system also keeps low paid workers and higher paid workers split up. The higher rents are intended to drive higher paid workers into owner-occupation: "A fairer choice between owning a house and renting one". Every government aims to extend the 'Property owning democracy', especially into the working class. Regular mortgage payments and a vested interest in your 'own' castle, tends to undermine class solidarity. The threat to the individual worker and his family, of defaulting on mortgage repayments acts as a disincentive to collective strike action. Now over half the homes in this

THEFT

damp down the explosive effects generated by the State's class housing policy, and divert tenants' attention away from the class nature of their housing situation, in particular to split apart the question of rents and conditions. Official support for Tenants Associations as the "Trades Unions of council tenants" demonstrates that what the State most fears is the generalised class solidarity that comes when council tenants look beyond the immediate situation as council tenants to squatters, private tenants and homeless, as sharing a common class struggle around housing and rents. The development of Neighbourhood Councils, Parish Councils, etc, has the same purpose; to fill a dangerous political vacuum created by the reorganisation of the State structure.

SECTIONAL INTEREST

OR CLASSWIDE PERSPECTIVES?

So long as council tenants oppose the Act from the point of view of defending their position as council tenants, when the ruling class, through the Act, is attacking the wage and rent situation of the entire working class whether paying rent to private landlords, councils or building societies, there will be little possibility of attack being beaten back. The State is prepared for sectional struggles, turning workers against non-wage workers, tenants against owner-occupiers, rent payers against non-rent payers (tenants in arrears, rent striking, squatting), aiming to exploit these divisions through its policies, particularly the rebate system. Rather than abandoning such a radical offensive as the Housing Finance Act in the face of Official Trades Union demands for a rent freeze, the State has increased the means tested allowance three times already since the Act was introduced.

On a class wide social issue such as housing and rents, there is great potential for breaking through the divisions that keep the working class fragmented. But only by fighting to include all working class people in this struggle - children, old age pensioners, claimants, housewives, as well as trade unionists, and extending the fight from the estates to private tenants, squatters and even owner occupiers, entering the factories and municipal depots, and demanding support and industrial action at shopfloor level - as a defence of working class living standards as a whole - can the class-wide basis of the struggle be developed. We are not talking about the 'broad unity of the Labour Movement', including its political parasites and trades union bureaucracies, but the basis of an independent working class politics. When tenants in Hackney, whose rent arrears have doubled since last October, turned to support local squatters, encouraging them to occupy empty council flats, the Labour council immediately attempted to split such an alliance by voting to hold back the October rent increase for council tenants, while simultaneously declaring "all-out war on the squatters". This demonstrates that behind the militant left wing 'stand' of Hackney council, is a strategy of divide and rule over the working class, to maintain its political power. Last week it meekly reversed this 'fighting

stand', after two months of militant posturing, but their war against the squatters, mostly homeless working class families, goes on.

12 MONTHS LATER, FIFTY YEAR OLD QUESTIONS STILL TO BE ANSWERED

A year after the last conference, another national tenants conference was held in Manchester, in September. It was called by tenants Action Groups, with the support of the International Socialists. Although more tenants were joining in withholding the new increases, the rent strikes have been sustained by a hard core of active tenants rather than the thousands who took action at the beginning.

While there is no doubting the militancy of those who have been fighting, nor their determination to smash the Act, the struggles have been fought on a narrow basis of defence against the increases, organised within the estates, and expecting support from the working class "outside" the estate through the Trades Unions. Tenants who have been able to sustain a total rent strike - on Tower Hill in Kirkby, Merseyside - have been able to overcome some of the divisive effects of the Act by refusing rebates and withholding all rent (and rates), and significantly, they were the only tenants to raise the demand of Rent Free Housing at the conference. However, if total rent strike remains the necessary form of struggle, the reason for this is less that it 'hits the Tories in the pocket', than that it is the only demand that can unite all sections of working class tenants, whatever their landlord, around a revolutionary perspective of class struggle. For it attacks the sanctity of the rent relationship, one of the pillars of the private ownership of the means of production, of capitalist society.

The difficulties tenants were expressing were less that they had been sold out by the Labour council or that they did not know that a 'rent rise is a wage cut', than in finding the political direction of the rent struggles. Some took it back to the Labour Party, despite all its weaknesses, others called for more militancy.

The answer of the I.S. is to combine tenants action groups and shop stewards committees, and set up a national action committee to co-ordinate separate struggles through the bulletin, to fight a broad front campaign for lower rents. As this article has indicated, since the question is not just one of lower rents, but who will exercise power over the standard of living and social needs of the working class, such proposals cannot answer the political questions posed by the rent struggle to the working class.

I.S. is fighting to restore the set-up before the Fair Rents Act came in. At a time when the ruling class simply doesn't have the money to do this, even such a demand directly challenges its power. The bosses understand this clearly. Unless workers do also, we will be defeated. The development of the total rent strike has the potential for a much more conscious confrontation, as a statement that the working class refuses to acknowledge the right of the bosses to organise housing. Without this consciousness it still represents more than the partial rent strike: but it is not enough.

It is only around tenants action groups and shop steward committees that such a battle can be rallied, because these are the organs of workers' struggle at this stage. It is they that develop through struggle and historically confront the power of the bosses

For further information, or copies of the pamphlet - 'From the GLC Rent Strike to the Housing Finance Act', (at 2p each plus 3p post) - write to:

East London Anti-Rent Group,
7, Queensgate Villas,
Victoria Park Rd., London E.9.

HOSPITAL WORK—

the struggle goes on

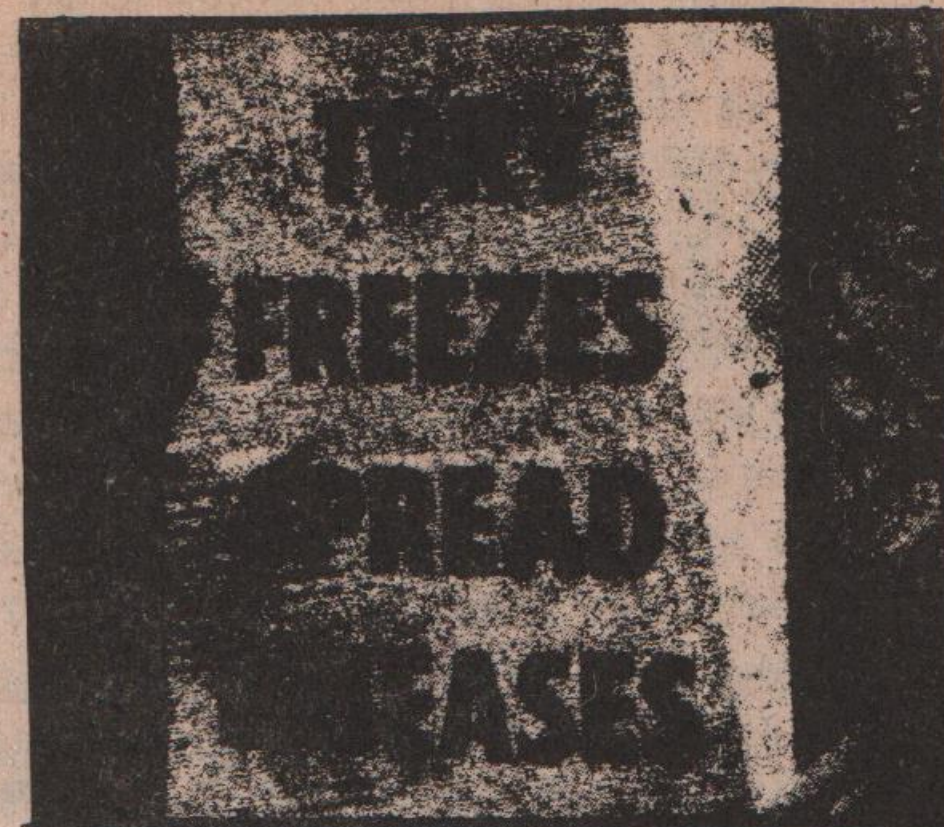
Throughout the hospital workers' strike the Union bureaucracies played their usual role of stooges of the bosses within the working class movement. Most important of all was NUPE (National Union of Public Employees) - the main union involved. Faced with spreading action, a rising tide of militancy and the growing understanding that the strike was a power struggle with the government, government and Unions came together and produced a 'solution' - a referral to the Pay Board.

As far as the press, television and radio are concerned, this was the end of it. In fact the struggle continued in a large hospital region - Wessex - which covers Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire. It also continued at a hospital in London - the Brook in South East London.

In Wessex the Joint Shop Stewards ban on private patients was brought into action on the first day of the strike, during March 1973. The private patients were conveniently in their own wards. So the ban was carried out by simply closing the wards for 10 weeks. For unclear reasons, the wards were reopened on the understanding that they would be run by non-union labour (negotiated scabbing?). Later other unions, like COHSE (Confederation of Health Service Employees), helped provide the wards with staff. NUPE members were left to carry on the ban by themselves, although their union refused to make the strike official. In spite of the fact that the union conference has voted for the abolition of treatment of private patients on the National Health, NUPE has refused to support actions aimed at this. The bureaucracy says its a political decision and must therefore be fought for in the Labour Party.

The struggle came to a head in mid-July. Theatre porters at a hospital in Portsmouth were issued with threats of dismissal. By the end of the day over 200 workers from three hospitals in the city had come out in support. The strike ended when the notices were withdrawn.

A week later, the Joint Shop Stewards Committee withdrew the ban on private patients. It claimed that it was impossible to



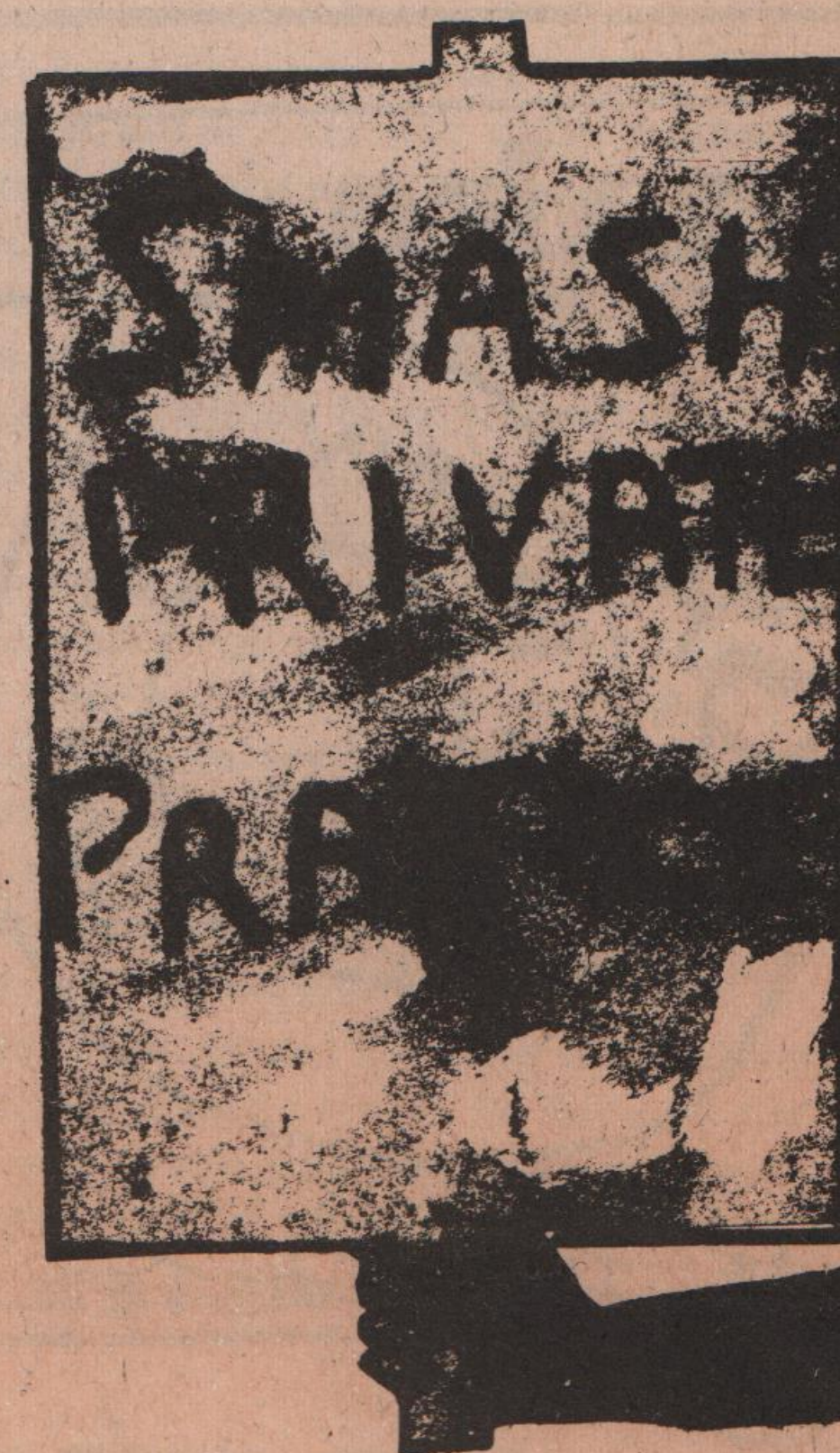
carry on, with the lack of support from the rest of the country. Numerous workers had received disciplinary warnings during the ban. One of the conditions for a return to 'normal' working was the official withdrawal of these notices. This was done - with the exception of Ron Pearson, a very active CP steward. Bro. Pearson now faces dismissal if he is even ten minutes late.

The determination of the Wessex JSSC to carry on with the struggle contrasted with the demoralisation of the rest of Britain, but there are still questions to be asked. If only 200 workers in Portsmouth came out, how much did the Committee draw in the membership? It sounds as if the rank-and-file simply got their marching orders, rather than running it. The Committee meets once a month. All types of resolutions are dealt with and policies adopted. The stewards return to their hospitals and implement. Where do the ordinary porters, panteen workers and the others fit into this?

Why too, was the ban ended when it was? Surely, just after a move by the management, to attack the ban had been defeated, was the worst time to give in? Or did the JSSC feel too weak to beat the developing bosses' offensive? Not only did they go back, but no action has resulted from the management's breach of the agreement in keeping the disciplinary notice on Bro. Pearson. Why too did they initially allow non-Union workers to open up the private patient wards, enabling scabs from other Unions to creep back?

One person alone apparently knew that both bans were going on at the same time - a member of the IMG. Why did he not pass the information on and put the workers in touch with each other?

At the Brook Hospital, the official strike itself only lasted a week. Feeling was solid in any case against private practice on the National Health. The two Branch Secretaries involved introduced the ban as a way of continuing action after the strike itself had ended. They have kept it on ever since, though the bureaucrats are working hard to end it, by actions including manipulating Union meetings. Combined with the now complete isolation of the Brook, it is all too likely the union bureaucrats will succeed. Again a steward committee was set up, as in Portsmouth. But unlike there, the ban only removed the special privileges of private patients within hospital - special food, unlimited phone calls, special domestic services etc. - It did not in any sense stop them jumping the queue.



The lessons at Brook were more profound. The attack on private patients in the NHS was linked to a call for a socialist government. However illusory this aim, it represents a step forward from an analysis which opposes private patients but offers nothing. At the same time it deflects the struggle, mirroring in its own way the NUPE leadership opting for working through the Labour Party. Just as the call to pressure the Union Executive into action deflects from the only available form of successful struggle - the building of shop steward combines across the health service.

Private patient bans have not been raised only as a principled move. Given the anxiety of consultants for the extra pay-offs, they also represent a very good tactic which divides the bosses and enables gains to be made. Unless during these tactical uses, the questions of principle are raised, however, they can lead nowhere.

The private patient ban begins the assault on the myth, in the health services, that the bosses can decide everything that happens. The NHS was created to benefit workers. Instead we are being pushed back by queue-jumping private patients. Even defending gains is a question of power. Are we prepared to give up what we have won? We only begin to secure our gains when we administrate them ourselves. Banning private patients, stating that the NHS should belong to the workers, is a clear start to this.

We as taxpayers churn out £15 million a year to support a rapid, cushy service for the fat bastards who live off our labour every day of our lives. And to subsidise the growth of schemes advertised as giving workers an interest in capitalism, and bridging bosses and workers - another of the illusions they throw up to fool us; which we pay for. (Like the junkie paying for his heroin.) Since the war only four new hospitals have been built. The newest of these cost £16 million. The saving on school milk, which resulted in the outbreak of rickets after years of its supposed disappearance, was a mere £9 million.

There is evidently only one way of finally preventing these absurd priorities. It is when the working class takes over society.

NUPE Member



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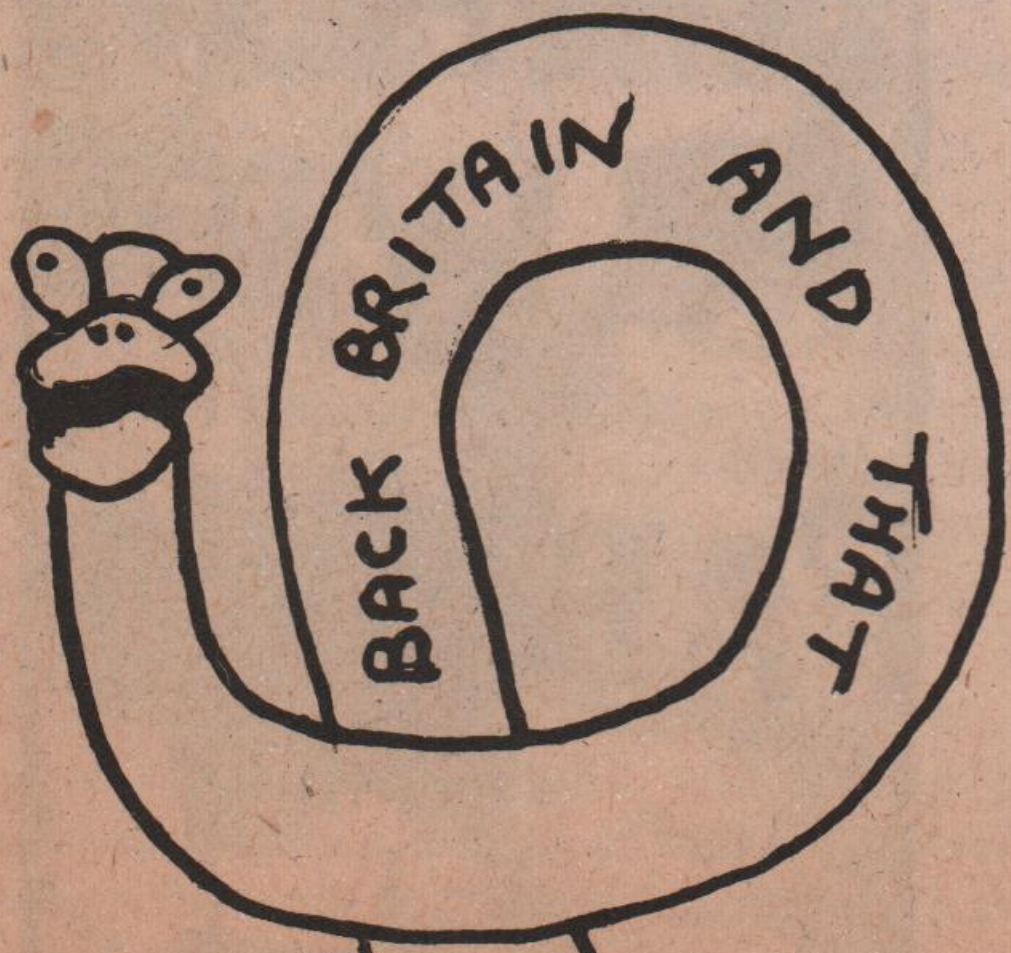
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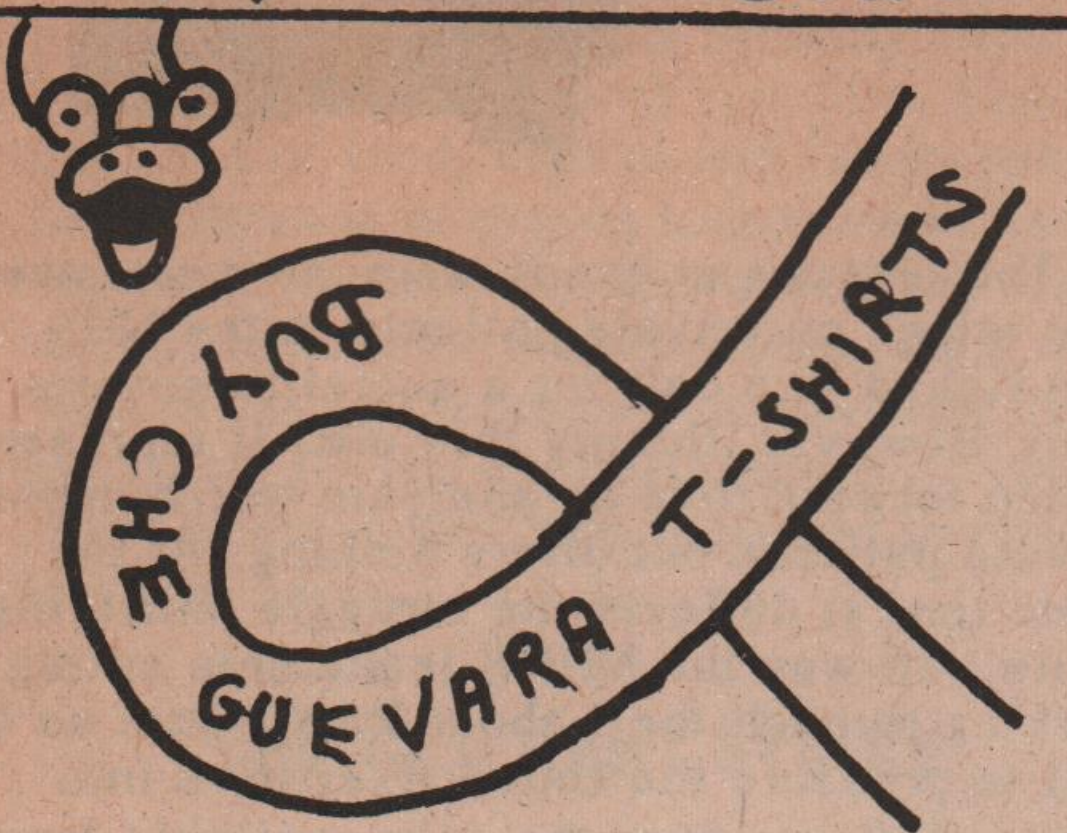
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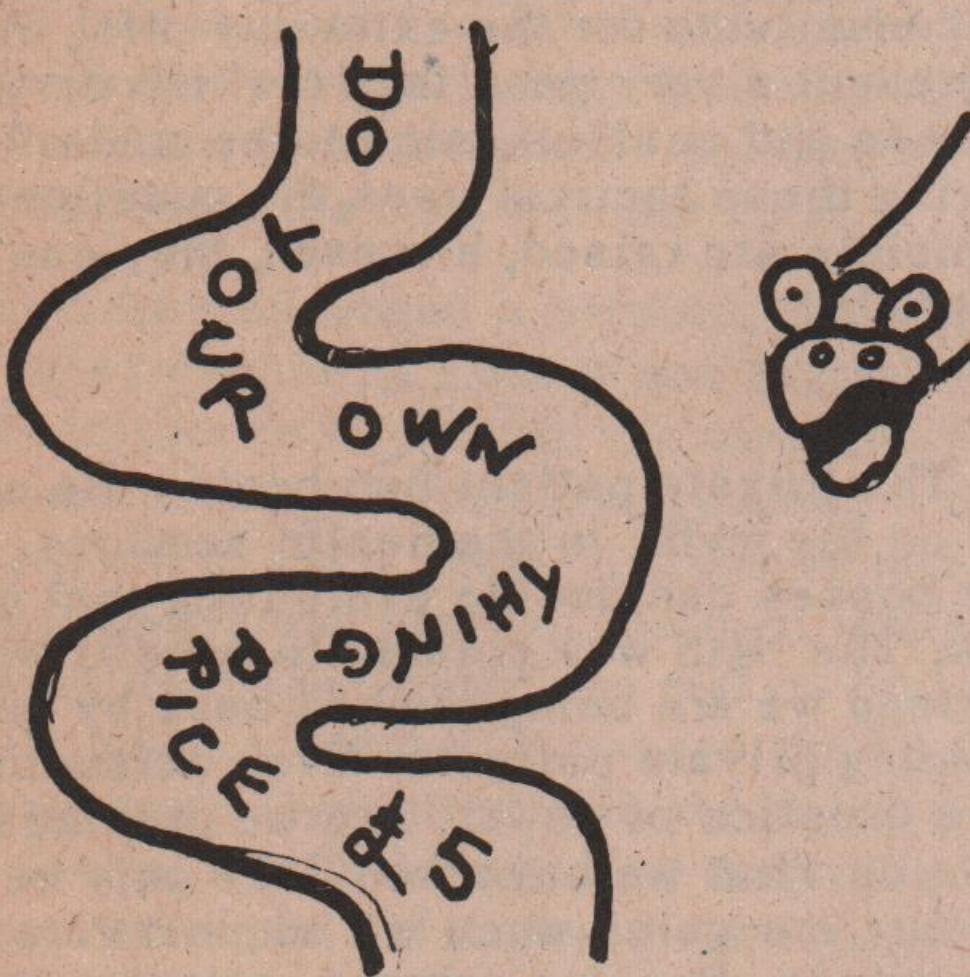
snake



AH ME, I'VE TWISTED...



I'VE TURNED....



BUT WHAT EVER I DO....



THEY SAY I'M IN IT FOR THE MONEY.

part one.

From 1867 to 1918 Hungary was a partner in the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary under the Habsburg Emperor in Vienna. The Empire consisted of many different nationalities - Germans, Magyars Poles, Czechs Croats and others. By the end of the First World War in Autumn 1918 the Empire, which had fought on the side of Germany, had collapsed. The various nationalities declared their independence and Emperor Franz Joseph fled his capital. One of his last official acts was to appoint as Prime Minister of Hungary, one of that country's richest landowners, Count Mihaly Karolyi.

Karolyi, though a member of the feudal aristocracy which ruled the country, was something of a liberal, he believed in Hungarian independence and limited "democratic" reforms.

When he was appointed Prime Minister this was confirmed by General D'Esperey whose Allied army was occupying Budapest. For the time being his appointment suited both the Allied and Austro-German interests, since it

made gestures towards reforms whilst keeping power in "responsible" hands. This was vitally important at a time when, all over Europe, workers, soldiers and peasants were looking to the example of the Russian Revolution, when Germany was in the throes of Revolution (see Libertarian Struggle no. 8), when British and French troops mutinied against both the senseless slaughter and the system which had caused the war.

As happened in Germany, the first prop of the ruling class in Hungary was the Social Democratic Party. They provided the only element of popular support for the Karolyi government which had alienated the medieval landowners by its vague promises to the peasants of land reform, and which had no support in the small Hungarian working class which wanted no compromise with their class enemy. Even one with a soft voice and a smile on his face.

Lacking support, the Karolyi government

survived on the interests of the Allied and Austro-German ruling classes. When these interests diverged it fell, and in falling ceased to be the obstacle to open class conflict it was created to be. When France set about creating a series of client states in Eastern Europe both to threaten Germany from the East (thus posing Germany a war on two fronts in any future conflict with France) and to 'contain the Bolshevik infection', she inspired their dismemberment of Hungary which soon lost 3/5 of its territory to the French client states - Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Serbia/Yugoslavia.

The area of the state was shrinking daily. The landowners blocked any move towards land reform, the railway system (there was no road system to speak of) had collapsed.

The Karolyi government fell, the Social Democrats were also paralysed, Power fell into the only hands willing to take it - the small, barely formed Hungarian Communist Party led

THE LABOUR PARTY

The three bourgeois parties have met to discuss the programmes that they will offer to the British people in the coming election. The joyful Liberals see the possibility of the disillusioned voters of the Tory middle ground giving them the balance of power, while the despondent Tories at their conference see little prospect for a future victory, causing the antagonisms within their ranks to become even deeper.

The Tory leadership turned to attack the newly discovered danger of Enoch Powell, for the right-wing of the party had started to threaten the unlikely 'socialists' Ted Heath, Barber and Carr. Barber played the role of Heath's hatchet man and accused Powell of possessing "all the hallmarks of a fanatic", to growing cries of shame from the rank and file delegates at the Blackpool conference. While Thorpe still continues to collect the very votes that were given to Heath in 1970.

But what of the party to which the mass of the working class, formally through its unions and informally through the ballot-box, owes its allegiance - the Labour Party? What radical manifesto does Harold Wilson push forward as the way to solve the present and ever developing economic crisis that threatens to take from the working class its democratic rights and present living standards?

The Labour Party has revealed at its conference by all its machinations, evasions and retreats, the policies by which it will lead the working class to a defeat that will leave it tied hand and foot in its battles with the employers in future years. Behind all the concern and rhetoric (not shared by the last Labour government) for the rights of free collective bargaining, stable council house rents and the maintenance of the level of expenditure on Education and the Social Services, can be clearly seen the backdoor that leads to complete collaboration with the demands of a profit hungry bourgeoisie.

Wilson and Healey clearly outlined their disrespect for the wishes of the conference which saw the solution to the present situation in "public ownership". These motions for nationalisation, passed or unpassed by conference, were to be ignored as Wilson stated: - "...the parliamentary committee, charged by the constitution with the duty of sitting down with the Executive to select, from the programme adopted by conference, the items for including in the election manifesto, entirely reserves its full constitutional rights on the matter."

He meant to say, "Me and my mates will do as we please and all you irate workers can go and get stuffed." It also means that any thing Wilson promises now or prior to an election can be taken with a pinch of salt. He



The role of the so-called 'lefts', Scanlon, Jones, Foot and Benn, was to deliberately oppose or confuse any attempts that would have openly revealed Wilson's role. Scanlon 'remitting' the AUEW's motion for ending talks with the Tories so that no vote could be taken, Benn stating "we are not the party of confiscations" (the only way the working class gains control), Foot helping the anti-common market motion to be thrown out; all these examples show clearly that the lefts stand with Wilson. Meanwhile the Clay Cross councillors were not allowed to speak to conference on the progress of the parties principal stand against the Fair Rents Act. can use any policy and 'constitutionally' owe no responsibility to the party conference.

Many groups on the left still urge 'support for the lefts' and 'fight within the party to change it'. This conference cannot leave a single doubt in any sensible mind as to the stupidity of these slogans. But even more dangerous are the slogans from the left that are going to be pushed forward during the run-up to the next election. The working class will be asked to support slogans for a 'Labour government pledged to socialist policies' or 'vote Labour with no illusions' and many other phrases calling for partial or critical support for the Labour Party. All of these slogans hang on one idea, that a Labour government will be easier dealt with in a period of crisis than any other party. The idea does not take into account the greatest danger that is sure to develop when the government turns to smash the living standards of the working class - the danger of coalition.

Coalition is the method by which the bourgeoisie unites all its political forces for the sole purpose attacking and annihilating

the organized resistance of the working class to its economic policies. It will occur at the particular time when the economy has developed to a critical level of high inflation, low investment, competing high interest rates and an unstable stock market - the period in which British capitalism is existing now. Any election in this period will show a marked tendency for the traditional parties to unite on a programme 'to save the nation' and demand sacrifices from only one section of society - the working class.

Wilson outlined his thought on the matter at the conference: - "As long as I am leader of this party there will be no electoral treaty, no political alliance, no understanding, no deal, no arrangement, no fix. Neither will there be any secret deal or discussions."

For some reason it seems that Wilson had already been spoken to concerning offers of coalition, and he felt he had to speak out against it, but it is well known that Wilson's iron statements change overnight, especially if you have the get-out clause to select from the labour programme as you please.

It is highly possible that the Liberals will hold the balance of power at the next election, and there will be many Tavernites, Jenkinsites and other rightists within the Labour Party who will clamour for united action between the two parties. The united action will take the form of a statutory wage freeze that will be much tougher than the Tories' effort.

It will be necessary to point out very clearly to the working class that 'its' party will be well prepared to turn traitor and join with the Liberals, and it is vital that the next election must not be used to give any support to the Labour Party led by Harold Wilson.

It will be necessary to prepare for the fight against a unified parliament - and mobilising support for the Labour Party can only lead to disillusionment and despair as the party turns sharp right. Slogans in the next election must be abstentionist and calling for militant organised action: -

DON'T VOTE - PREPARE TO FIGHT
DON'T VOTE - ORGANIZE
DON'T VOTE TORY, WHETHER WILSON, THORPE OR HEATH.
ALL GOVERNMENTS ARE ANTI-WORKER

Only by carefully explaining and exposing the role of the labour party to the working class can any progress be made to building a revolutionary anarchist alternative in the Labour Movement. It cannot be done by first insisting we vote Labour.

Bob Campbell

1919

by Bela Kun. On 20th March, 1919, he was a prisoner in Budapest's Marko utca jail, where he was receiving the customary beatings. On 21st March the public prosecutor himself released the prisoner in a suitably grovelling manner. On 22nd March he was Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Hungarian Soviet Republic and actual head of the government.

The small Hungarian working class did far more than liberate its militants. The hastily formed Red Army (the old National Army of officers and peasant-boy rankers fell apart) threw back invading Rumanian and Czechoslovak armies.

Allied encouragement and aiding of the invaders grew stronger as the Revolution took hold. Life stirred again in Budapest, production, stagnant for months, grew again as the workers' councils assumed control.

The Hungarian Workers Republic added to the pace of the revolution in Europe. When the news reached Munich, Bavaria was proclaimed a Soviet Republic (see Libertarian Struggle no. 8). The Allies hastened to crush the spread of working class power. On their side, the revolutionaries sent agitators to Bulgaria, Austria and Rumania. Whilst encouraging Hungary's invaders, the Allies sent a 'fact-finding' mission to Hungary, headed by General Smuts. The mission lasted two days and resulted in nothing.

To be continued

K.N.

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.

'THE WORKERS ARE REVOLTING'



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TESTING TIME FOR TEACHERS

When the government refused to award the £300 allowance to London teachers earlier this year it was clear that they still thought that teachers in general would think "Well, that is a bit mean of Mrs. Thatcher but we'll stick to the profession as it is a worthwhile career etc.etc." 20,000 teachers out on strike and the biggest London white-collar Trade Union march ever had little impact. The refusal of the award and the refusal of the union to pursue a militant line was the last straw for many. Coupled with bad conditions in schools, and poor housing, significant numbers of teachers resigned their posts and left. There is now an acute staffing shortage in London concentrated in the sectors of Secondary Education and in Special Schools ('maladjusted and ESN'). Many people who left were experienced teachers who had held posts of responsibility. In London the costs of keeping a family, even if you are a head of department, is difficult.

The shortage in secondary schools is more severe in working class areas. Some school departments (such as English) may be fully staffed and this can disguise the shortage. For example, the headmaster interested in keeping a mythical school unity can point to the total average of pupils per staff member in the school and the statistics can be made to look very good; but this may



TEACHERS ON STRIKE

cover-over the fact that there is no technical drawing taught and just one maths teacher, and that a large section of the school may be timetabled so that child receive no Art lessons. A theology student on supply may be teaching maths. The examples are too numerous.

Some reactionary headmasters are blaming the higher school leaving age. This obviously is a red herring. The extra jobs are there but the obvious fact remains that the pay in London is too low to attract an adequate number of staff.

Many schools have gone on part time teaching. The present teaching population in London schools is annoyed because of the the situation and their feelings are becoming expressed in the form of calls for militant action by the two teaching unions, the NUT and NAS. In many schools the two unions are co-operating. London NUT Associations have set up action committees and the Inner London Teachers Association (ILTA) central council have passed a militant motion supporting individual NUT members who refuse to cover classes where there is no teacher. This decision was

bureaucratically overruled by the N.U.T. Executive, who ordered that two thirds of the NUT membership in a school must agree on an action before the union would give support. As stated, shortages only affect a few departments in a school and the executive knew that a two thirds majority would be difficult to obtain, and instituted the ruling to head off militancy.

VICTIMISATION

The ILTA council voted to support, on full strike pay, a victimised union member, Dorothy McColgan, who had been moved from school three times in the last four years until this year when she had refused to be moved once again. The Council demanded that she be given the assigned post in a definite school that was promised to her and had been taken away. The Local Education Authority moved her for holding "unacceptable views". She was an NUT Rank and File supporter (an alliance of socialist militants in the NUT).

Individual Rank and File groups have worked hard in their local associations, but again the R&F conveners have as yet refused to call an All London Meeting to coordinate action. Will the IS leadership of R&F ever show any militancy in the face of victimisation by Education Authority and Union alike?

Several NUT London Associations, including Newham and East London, have passed motions calling for a £500 London allowance. Although this is a step forward for London, teachers must relate their claims to demands for a high national award, or action could become isolated in London.

Under Tory phase 3 proposals London teachers might get a rise in their London allowance although the award will be a long way below what is demanded. Increasing inflation will have neutralized the effect of the rise by the time it is made. This will bring forward the call from teachers for a higher basic rate of pay to keep up their dwindling living standards.

The union members must fight for links with other workers, on a national level, in the form of joint Action Committees, and solidarity and sympathy strikes. Rank and File union members must see the necessity for such links, especially in the public sector since the government always tries to control its own workers before it tackles those in private industry. Before these demands can be won the Rank and File membership must understand the role of its backward Union leadership, and defeat all its bureaucratic measures to prevent the taking of militant action. The first step in that struggle is to democratise the N.U.T.

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.

Leeds: Trevor Bavage, Flat 3, 35 Richmond Road, Leeds 6.

Hull: Marion McCartney, 13 Colman Street, Hull.

Manchester: Les Smith, 277 Kingsway Park Davyhulme, Urmston, Manchester.

Lancaster: Joe Thornberry, 56 Norfolk Street, Lancaster.

North London: Doug Durrant, 68a Chingford Road, London E. 17.

York: Neil Hunt, 24 Moss Street, York.

There are also contacts in: Andover, Birmingham, Colchester, Dundee, Edinburgh, Harlech, Liverpool, West, East and South London, Newcastle, Norwich, Oxford, Poole, Reading and Swansea. If you want to be put in touch, write to Terry Green, at the York Group address.

MIDDLE EAST

Next time you're reading a newspaper or watching the news and the Arab-Israeli conflict comes up, then just remember that:

- 3million Arab refugees have been created since the Israeli state was created in 1947.
- Since 1947 thousands of dispossessed Palestinians have been rotting in refugee camps in places like the Gaza Strip on the borders of Israel.
- The Israeli state was set up by America and the western powers, not to atone for Nazi atrocities against the Jews, but to have a friendly state willing to protect western oil interests in a hostile Arab world.
- That because of this need the possibility of a multi-racial state of Arabs and Jews was smashed.
- That although the subsequent 'pure' Zionist state was initially very small in the immediate years after its creation, the western powers heavily subsidised ruthless Israeli territorial expansion.
- That the present size (post 1967) of Greater Israel is only a logical extension of these expansionist policies.
- That Zionism has always worked to divide Arab and Israeli working class in the interests of imperialism.

NO WAR BUT THE CLASS WAR

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CHRYSLER



The strike by electricians at Chrysler's Ryton and Stoke plants is now well into its third month. The strike was, at first, an attempt to force the Chrysler management to cough up the £250 per year increase in wages that the electricians claim the management promised them last February. The management stalled the electricians, knowing that their friends in Parliament would back them up by enforcing the State pay laws. These laws make it a crime for workers to strike for a decent standard of living. A crime for which workers can be jailed.

The Pay Board, set up by the Tories to supervise this attack on the standard of living of the working class, quickly came to the aid of the Chrysler management, by ruling that the £250 per year increase was illegal. The electricians, however, refused to back down and remained on strike. The Chrysler management realised that they would have to use other tactics to break the strike. They instructed non-union labour to do the jobs of the striking electricians. This caused many workers all over the Midlands to protest and threaten solidarity strike action. The workers at Chrysler's Linwood plant in Scotland struck in protest at the management's action, and refused to scab on the strike.

All this time the leaders of the Unions involved were scurrying about in the background. Frank Chapple, well known 'red-baiter', secretary of the EEP TU (the electricians' Union) was continually denying that his Union was trying to fight the law and blindly maintained that it was a dispute between the management and the workers. It was only after two months of pressure from the striking

electricians that Chapple was forced to back the strike. The 'dynamic duo', Jack Jones (secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union) and Hugh Scanlon (secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers), so-called 'left' Union leaders, were instructing their members at the Chrysler plants to work 'normally'. This clearly meant scabbing on the strike and working on machines repaired by scab labour. The workers at Ryton grew angry at having to scab on their mates. The shop floor at the Ryton plant was close to boiling point.

8,000 REDUNDANT THREAT

At this point the Chrysler management played their 'trump' card. They threatened to close certain plants, making 8000 workers redundant if the strike did not stop. The management quickly stood back as the 'dynamic duo', Jones and Scanlon, steam-rolled into the battle. Had they at last realised their 'mistake' in scabbing on the strike? Were they at last going to do what should have been done months before - call their members out in solidarity? Were they hell! They ploughed in - on the side of the management.

They used the management's threat of 8000 redundancies as the excuse they needed to go all out to isolate the electricians and break the strike, so as to avoid any fight with the bosses and the Government over the Tory's anti-working class pay laws. This is despite their repeated, verbal, 'opposition' to these laws. They were also trying to avert the threat of rank-and-file union members



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**24 Moss St.
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ARTICLES, SUBS, ORDERS

FOR LIBERTARIAN STRUGGLE TO

**29 Cardigan
Rd., Leeds 6**

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND EVENTS

MANCHESTER AREA REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISTS

Fortnightly public meetings
Thursdays, 8.00 p.m.
Lass O'Gowrie, Charles Street

GLASGOW ORA

Meet Wednesdays 8.00 p.m.
Iona Community, 144 Clyde Street

LEEDS ORA

Discussion meetings
Contact Group Secretary (see page 7)

Publications

Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists. (ORA pamphlet) advance orders to D. Young, 91, Burghhead Drive, Linthouse, Glasgow.

The Tyranny of Structurelessness by Jo Freeman. Obtainable from Leeds Womens ORA, 29, Cardigan Rd., 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 Libertarian Struggle.

Mole Express Manchester voice of revolutionary struggle. News/reviews/exposes/graphics/features. 10p monthly from 7, Summer Terrace, Manchester 14 SWD.

Michael Tobin, who was jailed for two years being in possession of leaflets calling on British Army soldiers to desert, has been released. He wishes to be contacted by fellow ex-prisoners, or prisoners, to organise a campaign against the British penal system. Contact Michael Tobin, P.O. Box 10638, Amsterdam, Holland.

De Vrije Socialist paper of the Dutch Libertarian Socialist Federation. For copies write to, Jan Bervoets, Willem de Zwijgerlaan 104, Den Haag, Netherlands.

Solidarity, a paper for militants in industry and elsewhere. 6p. plus post from 123, Latham Road, London, E6

Inside Story the radical magazine which specialises in the stories Fleet St. won't print. For sample copy send 25p to Dept. AP 20, 3, Belmont Road, London S.W. 4

Front Libertaire fortnightly paper of O.R.A. France. Sample copy from North London group, subscription details from 33, rue des Vignoles, 75020 Paris, France.

taking independent solidarity action, and of course, to get themselves out of the awkward position of being seen to be forcing their members to scab on the strike.

Jones and Scanlon maintained that the management were not bluffing, and that the electricians were endangering 8000 jobs. Regional officers of the AUEW appeared on television saying that the electricians were being 'unreasonable'. The Linwood workers had already resisted attempts by Scanlon to make them give up their principled solidarity strike, but were forced back to work after massive pressure was put on them by the T & GWU, the AUEW, and the Scottish TUC leaderships. Jones and Scanlon have now managed to get an 'independent' inquiry set up. The Linwood workers have, however, pledged support for the Ryton electricians, should the Ryton electricians reject the inquiry's findings. This inquiry is a blatant cover-up job.

All this time the Chrysler management had sat back and let Jones and Scanlon get on with their dirty work for them. The bourgeois press jumped on the situation and stated that the dispute was an inter-union one. With the help of Jones and Scanlon, and the press, the Chrysler management had successfully diverted the fight to an inter-union one, away from the real issue - the Tory attacks on the working class standard of living and the gangster-style tactics of the Chrysler management.

This created widespread confusion and anger on the shop floor. Many workers were angry at Jones and Scanlon for acting as coppers for the Chrysler management, and can see that the actions of the Chrysler management, backed by the Tories, were part of a concerted attempt to break the Trade Unions inside Chrysler. This would not only be disastrous for the Chrysler workers but would be a major body blow to the whole working class.

Jones and Scanlon's actions throughout this strike are consistent with their activities over the past few years. They have promised action against the Tory attacks on the working class, but in practice have bent over backwards to divert any confrontation and to avoid a fight. Since the start of Phase Two of the Tory attack they have settled, in every wage dispute, for the

Tories' £1 plus 4%, which when viewed with the astronomic rise in food prices and the rise in the general cost of living means a cut in wages. They have shown their resolute cowardice and that they are prepared to compromise with the bosses at any price, even if the price is, as in this case, every trade union principle in the book.

COUNTER - ATTACK

In this strike some of the major problems facing the working class become clear. It is obvious that the Tories are determined to drive the standard of living of the working class down to pre-war levels. They have used their main weapon - the law - to raise rents, freeze wages, outlaw strikes and push up prices, in order to boost the profits of the bosses. A counter-attack by the working class is clearly necessary.

To do this, workers must fight against 'lifetime representatives' and must fight to make all union representatives recallable. The rank and file members of the unions must make all the decisions, and any representative who does not obey these decisions must be recalled. Links between shop floor workers in all industries, and all sections of the working class, must be built. We can see that a small group of workers fighting on their own, no matter how courageous or principled, is at best futile and at worst suicidal. Fear of the law must disappear. Workers must realise that the law is a weapon in the hands of the bosses. We can see that with the attacks on militants all over the country, like the Shrewsbury 24. As one worker said after the 5 dockers were jailed last year 'If the law says they can jail workers for fighting to maintain their standard of living, then we don't recognise their law'.

The counter-attack against the Tories and the bosses must be a united, organised one, firmly under the control of shop floor workers.

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