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INTERVIEW
WITH
JOAN
MAYNARD

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Arthur Scargill made one good point this week when he demanded that Wilson and Healey should be removed from the leadership of the Labour Party. Wilson, supported by the Murrays and Joneses of the TUC, has now set the working class and the Labour movement on the road to disaster.

Under cover of 'economic catastrophe' and 'the danger of coalition' they are undertaking the greatest attacks on the working class since the 1930s. They will reap the whirlwind in the greatest Labour electoral disaster since 1931. The most important question facing the working class is how to prevent Wilson, his policies, and his supporters from dragging down the rest of the labour movement with him.

REAL DEBATE

It is on *how* to conduct this fight, and what to replace Wilson with, that the real debate in the left must take place in the coming months. While some unions such as ASTMS are putting resolutions to the TUC Congress against the incomes policy measures, they have not taken a position on the struggle in the Labour Party. A few Labour MPs will vote against the measures but refuse to clearly take up the issue of the Wilson leadership. Some place the stress on putting up candidates against Healey and the Wilsonites for the NEC of the Labour Party — and certainly anyone should vote for candidates in the Labour Party who clearly oppose the current measures.

But it is not through TUC or Labour Party resolutions that the decisive blows against the Wilson leadership can be struck. Wilson and the ruling class cannot be defeated through bureaucratic manoeuvres, but only by smashing their policies in the class struggle. The decisive task is to show in the struggle of the working class that there is an alternative to that proposed by policies such as the Healey measures. The biggest blows against Wilson and the capitalists have been achieved not through resolutions but by the AUEW strike against the NIRC, by the 25,000 who took to the streets against the anti-abortion Bill, and by the NUR strike threat.

MASS ACTION

In the coming weeks it will be through mass action in support of workers in struggle against the pay norms, through mass solidarity with the Portuguese revolution, through developing the struggle against the James White Bill, through stepping up actions for the withdrawal of troops from Ireland, and through occupations and struggles for the right to work that the reply to Wilson will be forged.

For Scargill and others to call for the removal of Wilson is excellent — but a miners' strike which smashed the pay norms would weaken Wilson's position a million times more than even the finest speech. The decisive task is to build mass struggle and mass organisation in the rank and file of the labour movement that can both clear out Wilson and begin the real struggle for alternative socialist policies.

As to what should replace Wilson, many on the left will have different ideas. For the IMG the only real alternative can be the construction of a revolutionary party which

UNITE AGAINST WILSON'S MEASURES!



United mass action as on the Shrewsbury issue and in the abortion campaign show the way forward against Wilson's attacks.

will lead a workers' revolution in Britain — but this is itself something that will only be achieved via a long struggle in the trade unions and Labour Party. For many others it will be a revitalised Labour Party — or a Labour/Communist alliance. All these questions must be thrashed out and debated. But they must not get in the way of the absolutely vital united mass action which is necessary to defeat Wilson's attacks and

to begin to forge a new leadership in the labour movement. Today the first dividing line in the construction of that leadership lies in who is and who is not prepared to

UNITED ACTION

take all the steps necessary to defeat the Healey measures and the rest of Wilson's Tory policies. Whatever other differences

exist, united action — at every level from mass demonstrations and strikes, to votes in the Labour Party and trade unions — must be forged between those committed to this task.

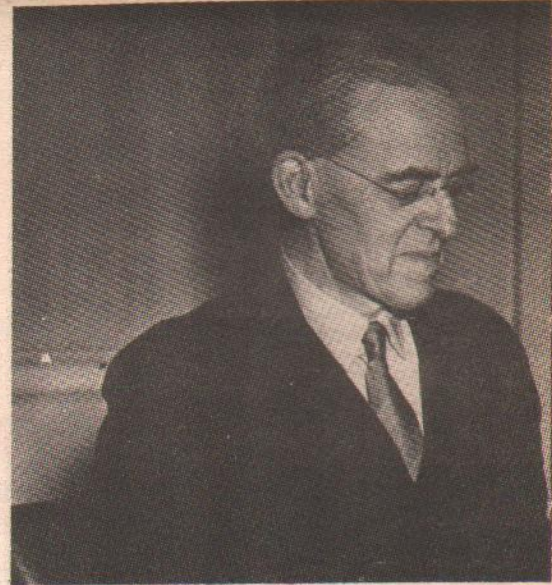
MASS ACTION TO DEFEAT THE GOVERNMENT'S MEASURES!

THE LEFT MUST UNITE AGAINST WILSON'S TORY POLICIES!

NO TO ANY FORM OF INCOMES POLICY!

INCOMES POLICY LABOUR'S DISMAL RECORD

by MICK GOSLING



Stafford Cripps—post-war architect of wage restraint

There have been many names for incomes policy since the end of the Second World War. But the game remains the same: wage-cutting.

Every Labour Government has applied 'wage restraint'. On each occasion it has been accompanied by the same pious lies: 'If wages continue to rise, jobs will be lost and the social services cut back' — so wages were duly frozen, while unemployment increased and social expenditure was cut in any case.

Each time 'common sacrifice' has been called for in the name of the so-called 'national interest'. Control of dividends, prices and profits has been promised in return for wage restraint, and each time the living standards of the working class have been the only sacrifice.

TRICKERY

In 1948-49 Sir Stafford Cripps sold his wage freeze to the unions by using the 'dividend-freeze' trick. The bosses' own union, the Federation of British Industries, was asked to produce a scheme for reducing their own prices and profits *where possible!* What Cripps didn't point out was that even if the bosses had complied, re-invested profit would simply have meant larger capital gains for the shareholders later on, whereas a frozen wage rise is lost forever.

Healey is using the same trick today, claiming that a dividend freeze will 'balance' the 10 per cent ceiling on workers' wages. But the Chairman of the Association of Unit Trust Managers for one treats such a suggestion with with contempt. He told the *Daily Express* (4/7/75) that 'the dividend restraint is purely a cosmetic factor, drawn up to fool the public and placate certain ignorant members of the TUC'.

And what about the more equitable distribution of wealth, the 'socially just' society that incomes policy is meant to create? 'Redistribution of wealth could go no further until new wealth had been created — and in the meantime there must be a ceiling on the social services', declared Cripps in his Budget speech in April 1948.

LOW PAID HIT

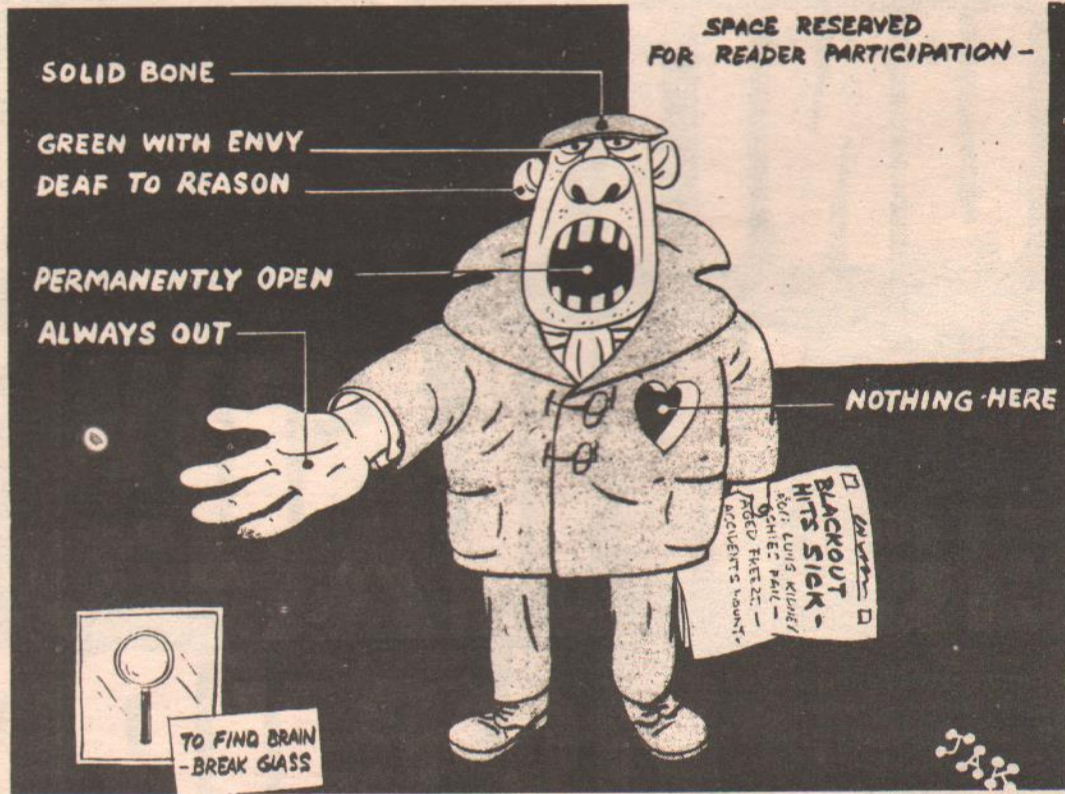
At the same time the Minister of Labour, encouraged by the TUC's acceptance of the wage freeze the previous month, instructed wages councils and wages boards — mostly centred on low paid sweated industries where unionisation was weak — to accompany all future awards with a memorandum to him showing that the conditions laid down in the White Paper on *Wages and Personal Incomes* had been adhered to. So much for incomes policy helping the low paid.

Living standards were consciously reduced. The *Economic Survey for 1948* stated that supplies for home consumption would be three to five per cent less than in 1947; food supplies would go down; there would be less meat, fat, fruit, vegetables and potatoes, with increases in cereals and (slightly) in eggs.

While retail prices rose by 10 per cent over the year to September 1948, wage rates rose by only six per cent. And profits? Cripps stated in his mid-July report that 'profits declared this year have been considerably higher than in the last twelve months'.

RIGHT-WING

Cripp's Budget in 1949 was so right-wing that the *Observer* remarked that 'some people might even say he had taken over Conservative policy'. The pegging of food subsidies led to an immediate rise in the cost of living index of almost two per cent.



A premature attempt to take advantage of splits inside the working class was this cartoon in the *Evening Standard* during the power workers' dispute under the Tories. On that occasion class solidarity by printworkers stopped the presses. Now Jack Jones's divisive plan opens the way to similar witch-hunts.

Jack Jones - splitting the workers' movement

Jack Jones's version of incomes policy — a flat rate increase of £6 for all workers — is a particularly divisive and vicious scheme.

The claim that it would defend the low-paid if the higher paid made sacrifices is a fraud. With inflation running at an annual rate of about 25 per cent a year, a £6 increase would only maintain the living standards of a worker grossing £28 a week, already £2 below the TUC minimum wage, and £10 below the minimum wage Jack Jones himself favours.

A worker on £30 a week gross would require an increase in take home pay to £33.95 to compensate for 25 per cent inflation; a £6 pound flat rate increase would give a take home pay of £30.73 — a 9½ per cent wage cut. However, as the average wage for man-

ual workers is around £45 a week and for all workers around £55 a week, Jones's plan means a significant drop in living standards for most sections of the working class.

And Wilson has already made it clear that the £6 figure is not an entitlement but a maximum. He told the House of Commons on 11 July: 'It is not a requirement on employers who simply cannot afford to pay it'. Those who 'simply cannot afford it' will inevitably be the low wage employers, not least those in the public sector.

What makes the Jones plan even more pernicious — even if it is rejected by some unions as part of a 'voluntary' package — is that it does the bosses' job for them:

it sets the low paid against the relatively better paid by suggesting that the cause of the present mess is not the anarchy of the capitalist system but the small gains achieved by years of struggle by the better organised sections of the working class.

As these latter are likely to be the first to challenge wage-cuts, Jones's plan serves the function of isolating them from the rest of the working class, allowing the employers, the Government and the press to mount a tremendous witch-hunt against them.

This will make it more difficult to mobilise support for such struggles — struggles like those of the miners, which smashed two sets of Tory pay laws to the benefit of every worker.

prices and reduced the real value of wages and social benefits — an even more savage attack on wages was launched. The Government's policy of 'no increase in wages unless there is more production' was replaced with 'no increase in wages even if there is an increase in prices'. The TUC's abject capitulation to Government threats bore very hard on many sections of the working population. The miners, for example, had had no pay rise since October 1947 while the cost of living had risen 11 per cent.

It was not till May 1950, when in a single week six union conferences rejected the wage freeze policy, that resistance crystallised. But before the TUC annual conference met the Labour Government had used wartime Order 1305 to break strikes in the docks, at Smith field meat market, and in the gas industry.

It was still another year before Aneurin Bevan, followed by Harold Wilson (!) and John Freeman, resigned from the cabinet. Like Benn and Foot will do today, they sat in a Government which presided over a series

— the question of charges within the NHS — after the working class had been thoroughly confused and demoralised by their failure to lead any sort of fight against the right wing policies of the Government.

Not surprisingly, Labour staggered to electoral defeat in October 1951 after having won a larger parliamentary majority in 1945 than any previous single party government.

'SEVERE RESTRAINT'

The Labour Government of 1964-70 introduced a battery of incomes policy legislation. Up to July 1966 the policy was 'voluntary' and had little effect on the wage rates of a working class which had successfully defeated Tory attempts in the early Sixties at wage restraint. But the period from July 1966 to 1967 was one of savage restraint. The total wage bill rose by only two per cent between the second quarter of 1966 and the second quarter of 1967, compared with rises of 4.1 per cent and

After the period of 'severe restraint' ended in June 1967 wage rates rose faster, often as a result of productivity dealing which increased work pace and work loads and had spread to six million workers by 1969. But this did not stop the Government's incomes policy from notching up a number of 'successes'.

In January 1966 the Prices and Incomes Board reported on a particularly badly paid group of workers, the rail workers. Wages per standard week (excluding overtime) were given as follows: porter £10.90; leading luggage room attendant £12.25; second-year guard £12.95; qualified fireman £14.40; qualified train driver £16.95. *The report refused the rail workers any increase.*

This wasn't the last that was heard of the PIB. In 1967 the Retail Drapery Wages Council intended to increase the minimum wage paid to male assistants in drapery shops from £11.15 to £11.90. The Prices and Incomes Board decided that that was too generous — £11.75 was enough!

However, to give the PIB its due, it did use the low pay exception when dealing with the 1967 claim of agricultural workers, who at that time were earning £10.50 for a 44 hour week. It gave them 3 per cent more — another 30p a week.

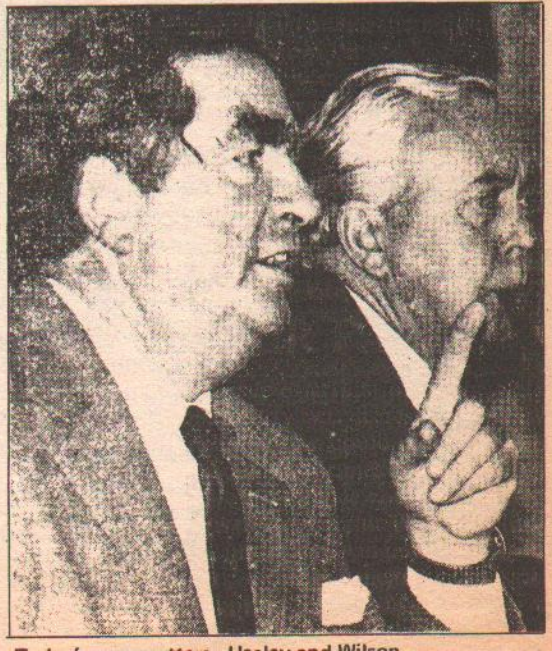
UNEMPLOYMENT

And what had been the effect on jobs of these years of wage restraint — which the capitalist politicians and press are again telling us is essential if unemployment is not to soar? Between the time Wilson's freeze came in and the winter of 1967, unemployment rose from just under 300,000 to nearly 600,000 and it has never been below that since.

The effects of incomes policy under this Government, statutory or not, will be no different. Unemployment is certain to go well over the million mark, and the Labour Government's fake concern for the low paid has already been exposed by the Social Contract. From the day it took office after the miners smashed the Tories, it resolutely campaigned against the extension past November 1974 of threshold agreements — which had done something, however inadequate, to defend the living standards of the low paid. A Government acting in the interests of the working class would have transformed the threshold system into a genuine sliding scale of wages, giving automatic 100 per cent protection against inflation to all workers' incomes.

LESSONS

But then, as the history of Labour Governments since the war has shown, incomes policies have never had anything to do with protecting workers' incomes.





Scargill (second left) with Yorkshire delegation at NUM Conference

COMMUNIST PARTY SABOTAGES FIGHT IN NUM

A great opportunity to launch the fight-back against Wilson's wage-cut plans was lost at the annual conference of the National Union of Mineworkers last week. The conference voted unanimously to accept a composite motion seeking pay rises to give face workers £100 a week. But the demand for the claim to be met by 1 November, and the demands for £85 for other underground workers and £80 for surface workers, were withdrawn.

The motion carried means all things to all people. Although moved by Arthur Scargill, the motion was seconded by the notorious Nottingham right-winger, Len Clarke. Despite Scargill's brave words denouncing the capitalist crisis, Len Clarke pointed out that 'you don't remove the word "demand" and put in the word "seek" and mean the same thing. We'll get the £100 when the country can afford it and not before.'

SETBACK

The agreed position is definitely a setback for the left in the NUM. It is also a setback for the whole working class — giving a much-needed boost to the Government's attempts to get a voluntary incomes policy.

All this, however, did not stop the *Morning Star*, the paper of the Communist Party, from claiming that the decision was a big victory. 'Neither 10 per cent nor £6 has any relevance — Miners vote to seek £100 a week' ran the headline the next day.

The Communist Party, in fact, played a thoroughly sordid role in the whole affair. Instead of sponsoring a motion totally rejecting the Government's wage-cutting plans, supporting any group of workers striking against it, and pledging to continue the campaign for £100 in the fields, the Communist Party had already decided to drop the Yorkshire resolution the Thursday night (3 July) before the conference began.

For the next four days the Communist-dominated South Wales, Scotland and Kent areas sat quiet while the right-wing tried to produce a compromise the CP had already decided on. Eventually on Tuesday 8 July, at a lunchtime meeting of the NUM executive two hours before the wages debate was due to begin, CP member and NUM Vice-President Mick McGahey urged Scargill to accept the compromise.



'measures which the labour movement should see were rushed through Parliament in place of the wage cuts White Paper' (*Morning Star*, 14 July — our emphasis).

WEAKNESS

If the NUM conference exposed this bankruptcy, however, it also showed up the weak flank of Arthur Scargill's brand of militancy. The burning need of the moment is for the organisations of the labour movement to develop their own plan to deal with the crisis, as a concrete alternative to the class collaborationist policies of the Labour Government.

In the recent past Scargill himself argued for one of the aspects of such a plan — an integrated energy policy. But he did nothing at the NUM Conference to spell out how such a plan bore on other questions — such as wages and the organisation of the coal and oil fields. In other words he sees his plan not as a basis for working class action to impose a workers' solution to the crisis, but as a proposal to be referred to the relevant ministry to consider. In the meantime it's 'militant trade unionism' as before.

By relying on sectoral militancy to defend miners' living standards, rather than setting political goals for this militancy which benefit the whole working class, Scargill allowed the right wing to exploit Wilson's claim that the demand for £100 would wreck the Government's anti-inflation plan and undermine democracy. Gormley's slander that sections of the NUM leadership were 'drunk with their own power' could have been completely smashed by spelling out precisely how the miners could use their industrial might to the benefit of every section of the working class.

EXAMPLE

By developing an alternative plan, by fighting for a series of class-wide demands to defend the real value of workers' incomes and the social services against inflation, by campaigning for industrial action in support of the low paid and those fighting unemployment, the miners could have an electrifying effect on the rest of the workers' movement — giving it confidence to struggle against the Government and their own bureaucratic misleaders.

In the months to come it will be the ability to begin to impose this sort of workers' solution to the crisis which will not only defeat the manoeuvres of the right and the Stalinists in the trade union bureaucracy, but will determine the ability of the working class to roll back the

IN FOCUS

HOW TO SMASH THE CURRENCY SPECULATORS

In 1931, 1948, 1966 and again today Labour Governments have introduced wage cuts or freezes in the name of 'protecting the pound' and 'preserving foreign confidence'. In reality the basic problems of the British economy do not lie in 'runs on the pound', but in the crisis of British world capitalism as a total economic system. However, from this fact it does not follow that socialists do not have to take very specific measures for dealing with the monetary crisis. This is given a particular weight in Britain by the importance of the City of London as the finance capital centre of the world — the one field in which British capitalism still operates on a truly 'world historic' scale.

When faced with 'the crisis of the pound' there is no doubt that many in the labour movement fall into confusion and blame the whole thing on 'foreign bankers'. This is not merely a general cover up for chauvinist nationalism (we are being stabbed in the back by foreign [Jewish?] financiers) but if concretely leads to inactivity and helplessness — if we are totally subject to control from overseas, then there is little that can be done about it.

But the reality of the situation, particularly in the latest crisis, is very different to the general picture painted by Wilson and Co. The real reasons for the attacks on the working class and the 'run on the pound' have virtually nothing to do with foreign capitalist operations. As even the City of London's own mouthpiece the *Financial Times* admitted, the pound in the latest crisis was being sold not by foreign speculators, but 'by big corporations, including UK companies'.

As the *Financial Times* also admitted: 'There are those in Whitehall who argue that alarm about the pound is a necessary ingredient in negotiating new wage guidelines.' The TUC and the Labour Government, of course, promptly came up with the goods. They declared that it was the only possible solution. In fact, far from there being no alternative to the Government's plan, the steps to smash the currency speculators and financiers are amazingly simple. They can be boiled down to four:

1 Suspend the foreign exchange markets and the stock exchange: In the face of a plot of the kind that has been carried through recently, the short term way to smash the speculation is simply to suspend the foreign exchange markets and the stock exchange, and to freeze all foreign money invested or banked in Britain. This step is in fact absolutely simple — having in the past been carried out not only by British Governments but by hardly revolutionary regimes such as that of General de Gaulle. By this one single move the Labour Government could have smashed at one blow the 'run on the pound'.

2 Requisition all British owned overseas assets: While suspension of the markets and freezing of funds is an immediate step, it clearly cannot be a long term solution. Firstly, no socialist government could hold some of the funds held — notably those of the 'Third World' countries. Secondly, while there is no particular moral reason why the funds of the imperialist powers should not be held onto indefinitely, it would in practice be a very stupid thing to do as it would provoke immediate trade boycotts and other attacks. The task must be to pay off these sums of money — although, of course, if other imperialist countries did threaten economic boycotts the seizure of their funds would be a useful way to 'dissuade' them.

In paying off foreign debts, any socialist government has a remarkably simple solution. British capitalism has gigantic overseas assets. The so-called 'portfolio' investments alone — roughly speaking, holdings in overseas stocks and shares — were worth £4,400 million at the end of last year. In addition to that, there is a further £14,470 million worth of direct overseas investments and £50,000 million of bank holdings. These figures absolutely dwarf figures such as the £4,900 million official foreign sterling holdings or the £2,500 million private holdings.

Even in the unlikely event that all foreign firms and countries withdrew every single penny which they had in Britain, the overseas assets of British capitalism could still pay off the lot. The assets in 'Third World' countries should be returned for nothing to the workers of these countries; and holdings in imperialist countries should be sold off to make it possible to pay the foreign debts.

3 Total ban on British investment overseas: A ban on British investment overseas is often put forward by those — in the Communist Party, for example — who want to denounce capitalists for 'lack of patriotism' to the British imperialist state; or those — as for example with many on the Labour left — who naively believe that if money is not invested abroad it will be invested in Britain. Both of these views are nonsense, and this has led to many on the left being wary of raising the demand for a ban on investment overseas. In fact this would be an integral part of any socialist policy. Not only is there no place in a Britain moving towards socialism for firms engaging in exploitation of workers in other countries, but British foreign investment is in fact on such a scale — around £1,200 million — that it is a very considerable element in ruining any hope of coping with the world economy.

4 Open the finance books — workers' control of the banks: There is not the slightest doubt that the financiers of the City of London would attempt to wriggle round any government measures — just as their counterparts in Chile took hundreds of millions of pounds out of the country. The only way to stop this is to open all the books of the banks and place the finance system under workers' control. It was this measure in Portugal which put a stop to the massive flood of funds out of the country.

Of course there is no doubt that these measures would hit certain people very hard — to be precise, it would put a whole series of financial interests completely out of business. The resistance of these people would doubtless be very violent. But before we shed too many tears, we should consider that the alternative to dealing with these few thousand people is precisely the vicious attacks on the standard of living of fifty million which are now being carried out.



WORKERS' CONTROL AND THE PRESENT CRISIS

in last week's *Red Weekly*, Steve Bodington of the Institute for Workers Control stressed the importance of workers' control. He emphasised its importance in the fight against the anarchy of capitalism and pointed out the role it can play in working towards a socialist society.

But despite its non sectarian approach and its obviously genuine attempt to propound socialist solutions, his article suffers from an almost eternal timelessness and lack of concrete proposals for action. Most of the arguments he uses have been popular currency in 'workers' control' circles for many years now. Even given that the article was written before the announcement of the Healey measures, there is little suggestion that the workers' movement is facing the greatest onslaught launched by the ruling class since the 1930s.

The Healey measures did not come out of thin air. They were a response by the Labour Government to the present crisis of British capitalism. What comrade Bodington fails to do is to put the struggle for workers' control in the context of that crisis and the major new problems facing working class militants. And without doubt, a problem that these militants have to confront is the fact that it is the Labour Government that is leading the attack.

TURNING BLIND EYE

No mention is made of the fact that Benn — who will be summing-up at the Institute of Workers' Control Conference this weekend — was chopped a few weeks ago from the key post of Minister for Industry, from where he claimed to be working for the introduction of comrade Bodington's 'people-power'. And this same Benn now sits in a Government imposing the biggest wage cuts since Ramsay MacDonald. We therefore have the spectacle of this advocate of 'people-power' collaborating in a Government that openly serves 'capital power'.

We are all for collaborating with Benn or any member of the Labour leadership — but on the simple condition that they are on the right side of the barricades on the central question of the hour. At the moment Benn is on the *wrong* side, acquiescing in a violent attack on the very militant workers who alone can really wage the struggle for workers' control. It is a disgrace that such a person should make the final address to the Conference; what the IWC should be demanding is that he resigns from the Government to wage a struggle against its policies or else is given no platform at the Conference.

And incidentally, comrade Bodington is very wrong if he believes that cuddling up to Benn, no matter what he does, will enable the IWC to 'gain credibility'. On the contrary, by associating itself with people launching vicious attacks on the working class, all the IWC will do is to ensure that sections of militant workers turn *away* from it. The IWC should be going out of its way to give a platform to every trade union or Labour leader, no matter how confused, who opposes these measures. It should give no platform at all to anyone who doesn't. If and when Benn changes his line on this he should be given a platform — but not until.

THEORY ONLY

Comrade Bodington is right to stress that workers' control is directly relevant to the problems and tasks facing the working class in their fight against the capitalist crisis. But he only makes the point — he doesn't actually demonstrate how this truth actually works out in practice.

He makes the valid point that the working class should look beyond its immediate concerns and take up broader questions about who holds power in society and how that can be changed. But if you don't *first* have clear cut answers about what the working class should do to meet the practical material problems that are hitting it over the head every day, then all this talk of 'power' is meaningless.

Look at the TUC. Almost exactly two years ago they published a report on 'Industrial Democracy' which made quite sweeping proposals for the whittling down of the authority of shareholders and company managers in favour of elected workers' representatives. The

Brian Slocock replies to Steve Bodington's article in last week's RED WEEKLY

'...could focus the struggle to shift the balance of power in Britain, and move the country in the direction of socialist democracy.'

Two years have passed, and what has the TUC done about this Report? Nothing except sit on it. And now this same TUC, far from moving 'in the direction of socialist democracy', has negotiated a deal which will involve a massive cut in the living standards of the working class! This is why it is vital that the IWC Conference must place right at the top of its agenda the organisation of the fight against Labour's incomes policy.

Many of the economic demands of the IWC and even of the Tribune MPs are widely accepted in the working class. Obviously the IMG has many criticisms of these policies and does not consider that they are far-reaching enough. However, it is not primarily at present on the questions of simple economic policies that the most central divisions on the left lie.



IWC should not give Benn a platform while he sits in the Labour Government, but only if . . .

For example, the economic proposals put forward by the Tribune Group do not go nearly far enough either in nationalisation or steps to protect the working class from inflation and unemployment. Nevertheless these measures, if put into practice, would mean a real short term improvement in living standards — particularly compared to Healey's cuts. Where however, absolutely massive differences exist is on how these can be fought for.

The 'left' MPs put their economic proposals forward in a context outside of and separate from the present struggles of the working class. They offer their plans as an 'answer' without seeing that it is only through using the strength of the working class and thereby advancing the latter's struggles that such policies can ever hope to be implemented.

Whilst there is no doubt that centralised action through a government is the best way to call for these measures, they cannot be left in cold storage until one day there is a 'left' Labour Government able to put them into

wages, for example, is a demand that *can* and *should* be fought for now. That can be achieved by mass industrial action — backed by the Labour 'left' — and is not dependent on a Parliamentary majority.

The winning of such a demand would not only defend the working class against the ravages of inflation, but it would give an enormous boost to its confidence, develop an anti-capitalist consciousness amongst wide sections of workers, and strengthen the workers' movement in relation to the ruling class.

The fight for a sliding scale of wages, a shorter working week with work-sharing and no loss of pay; the nationalisation of all firms threatening redundancies; reversal of the present Budget cuts; the launching of a massive programme of public works, financed by taxing the rich and abolishing 'defence' spending; and the nationalisation of the banks, insurance and finance companies under workers' control — all this can only be achieved if the movement is based on the strength and organisation of the working class. And such organisation cannot be simply conjured out of thin air. It has to be built up both by central policies and by linking these policies at every stage to the living struggles of working people.

If we go beyond the present stage of the class struggle and consider the situation of a

has to be linked to organisation moving in this direction, and campaigned for over many years, otherwise it will end up in the Santiago stadium and not in a socialist solution. By leaving out this crucial political dimension, comrade Bodington leaves the movement for workers' control up in the air.

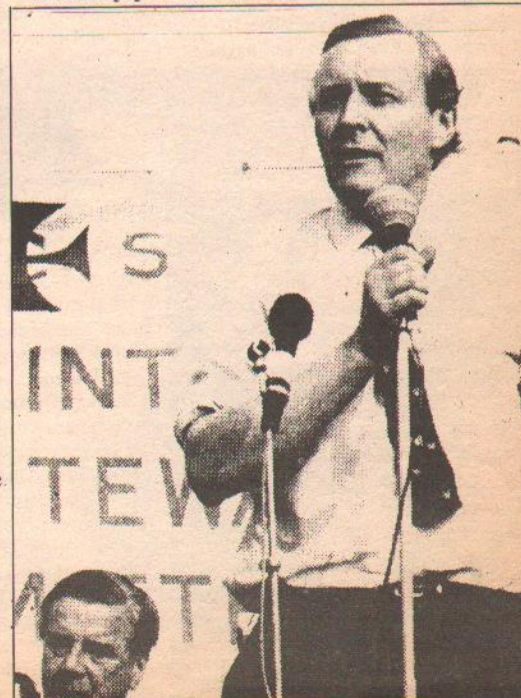
BEGIN DISCUSSION

The issues which face this IWC Conference are many. Under the best of circumstances, it will gather only a small fraction of those forces in the labour movement who are prepared to fight Government policy. Moreover, the IWC itself has functioning local organisations in only two or three areas, and even they are very weak. What the IWC Conference can do is *start* the discussion on how to fight Government policy and, even more important, start the *organisation* of those forces prepared to lead a fightback.

If the IWC Conference were to issue a clear call for the organisation of national and local united conferences and organisation of the labour movement to discuss how to fight incomes policy and resist the attacks, if all the delegates attending were pledged to build such conferences, and if the apparatus of the IWC were committed to campaign in the labour movement for such conferences, a major step forward in uniting and organising the left against the Government would have been taken.

LINKS

There may be some who consider these steps a 'diversion' from the IWC's stated goal of popularising workers' control. But quite the opposite is true. In order successfully to win the mass of workers against the policies of the pro-capitalist forces within the workers' movement, it is necessary not only to have alternative policies on paper to those of Wilson but to clearly link these at every stage to the struggles of the working class. Without this, all comrade Bodington's fine sentiments on workers' control will simply remain pipe dreams.



he resigns to lead a struggle against its policies



Movement for workers' control must be rooted in mass organisation and struggle—as in Portugal today

ECONOMIC SABOTAGE

An attempt at political as well as economic sabotage by the ruling class is also certain. It would need massive organisation of the working class — the development of workers' councils of the type which began to appear in Chile and which are appearing today in Portugal —

'But much more important than what we do inside the House of Commons is the need for us and other people of like mind to mobilise the working class movement outside, because that is where we will be the most effective.'

INTERVIEW WITH JOAN MAYNARD

Over the last few weeks *Red Weekly* has interviewed a number of Labour MPs who have on paper declared their opposition to statutory incomes policies. This week we are pleased to carry an interview with Joan Maynard, MP for Sheffield Brightside, a member of the Labour Party national executive, and Vice-President of the Agricultural Workers Union.

Joan Maynard makes suggestions on what can be done to oppose Healey's measures. If most of her proposals are put into practice — by herself and the other 'left' MPs — they could find an echo inside the mass organisations of the working class. But the key question is whether they will really be fought for now that the crunch has come.

The first test of this comes with the vote in the House of Commons. Opposition to Healey and his proposals is

meaningless unless it is translated into action. If Joan Maynard goes into the Division Lobby against the Government measures she will have put the stamp of reality on her opposition. That action, and the action of other MPs from the Parliamentary 'left' who vote against these measures, could act as a catalyst inside the organisations of the working class. We can therefore only judge her words on her practice.

But that is only the beginning. Every group of workers who go into struggle against the new 'pay laws' will be subjected to a barrage of hostile propaganda. They will find ranged against them not only the media and the right-wing Labour leaders, but also arguments from people like Michael

Foot who will say 'by your unconstitutional action you are forcing a statutory incomes policy'. So it will not just be a case of voting against the measures. It will also mean actively solidarising with all workers defying the Government and trying to smash the £6 maximum.

The vote in the House of Commons is the starting point. It is on the picket lines that the issues will be decided. The 'left' MPs must decide which side of the picket line they stand — either with the employers and the Labour Government or with the working class. It is their actions and not their words which will determine the credibility of the Government's opponents in the eyes of the labour movement.

Photo: PETER HARRAP (Report)



companies, the rest of the land and some of the profitable manufacturing industries.

● What do you think of threats to cut social spending?

I'm very much opposed to cutting social spending. For one thing it will only make unemployment worse. One of the ways you can control investment at the moment is through social spending, because local authorities are part of the public sector. To cut back on it now would be bad for employment and bad for our social services, which need to be expanded. We need to spend a lot of money on our

● What actions would you like to see to stop them?

I think there are a number of us in the House of Commons who will vote against the cuts if we get the opportunity. We are particularly determined to vote against rent increases. But much more important than what we do inside the House of Commons is the need for us and other people of like mind to mobilise the working class movement outside, because that is where we will be the most effective.

For example, on the Industry Bill the Government have now capitulated completely by making it voluntary for companies to declare their policies, programme, profits and what have you. This makes the Bill absolutely use-

chopped around — it certainly wasn't as good as it was in the Labour Party election programme — but now it has been completely emasculated. In this situation we need to be mobilising not only to stop the Government travelling its present path — which I consider to be an absolute disaster for the working people of this country, because we've never had a Labour Government that would stand up to the City and this one has just capitulated — but to reverse its direction and get it back on the path of the manifesto with which we fought the last two elections.

● What is your attitude to Wilson remaining as leader of the Labour Party?

He is not the leader I would vote for. He has never been a socialist. I would like to see the leader of the Labour Party elected by the whole movement.

I hope there is a flood of resolutions on this matter at the next Conference of the Labour Party. I believe the leaders of the Party must be accountable to the Labour Party.

We also need to make MPs much more accountable to the people they go there to represent. I would like to see a situation where every Labour MP had to face a selection conference at every general election, along with other prospective candidates. In other words they would have to give an account of their stewardship. In my experience of public life I have found that if you can't make representatives accountable you're in a hopeless position. They just do as they like and that is what really goes on in that place in London — they feel they are safe, established.

● In that case, would you support the moves against Prentice in his constituency party, and the move by the Yorkshire miners over the NUM-sponsored MPs who voted for the Common Market?

I think that with the Prentice case it's really a matter for the local Labour Party. If they feel their MP is not satisfactory then they are entitled to say that they will not sponsor him or nominate him next time. I think that is a healthy sign in the labour movement.

I think the same thing applies to me. I'm a sponsored MP, sponsored by my own union, and I know I would not be an MP today if it were not for the support of my union over many years. It is important for me to remember that all the time, because that place in London is very insidious. It's not our place, it's the other people's place, and it would be easy to forget the people you go there to represent.

It strikes me as extraordinary that sponsored MPs don't feel they have a duty to the people who sponsor them — not only a duty to represent them in Parliament, but a duty to report

● Will you vote against the Healey proposals?

I shall either vote against or abstain. I will certainly not vote for an incomes policy.

● Should Foot and Benn stay in the Government?

If it comes to a statutory incomes policy Foot and Benn should resign. No left-winger should stay in a Government that has a statutory incomes policy.

● Even if the penalties are not directed at the workers, would you still oppose it?

I would still oppose it. The end product would be the same. Also I feel that doing it that way is giving encouragement to the employers to be strike-breakers. Also I see this as a move towards a corporate state.

● What should be done to organise opposition to the proposals outside Parliament?

Two things. Firstly to try and get the organised trade union and labour movement mobilised. This involves getting as many public meetings on joint trade union and *Tribune* platforms as possible — not only to argue against the proposals and build support against them, but also to put forward alternative socialist policies.

In order to encourage the movement outside the House of Commons, MPs also have to use their positions by opposing the proposals and going into the division lobbies.

● What should the workers do?

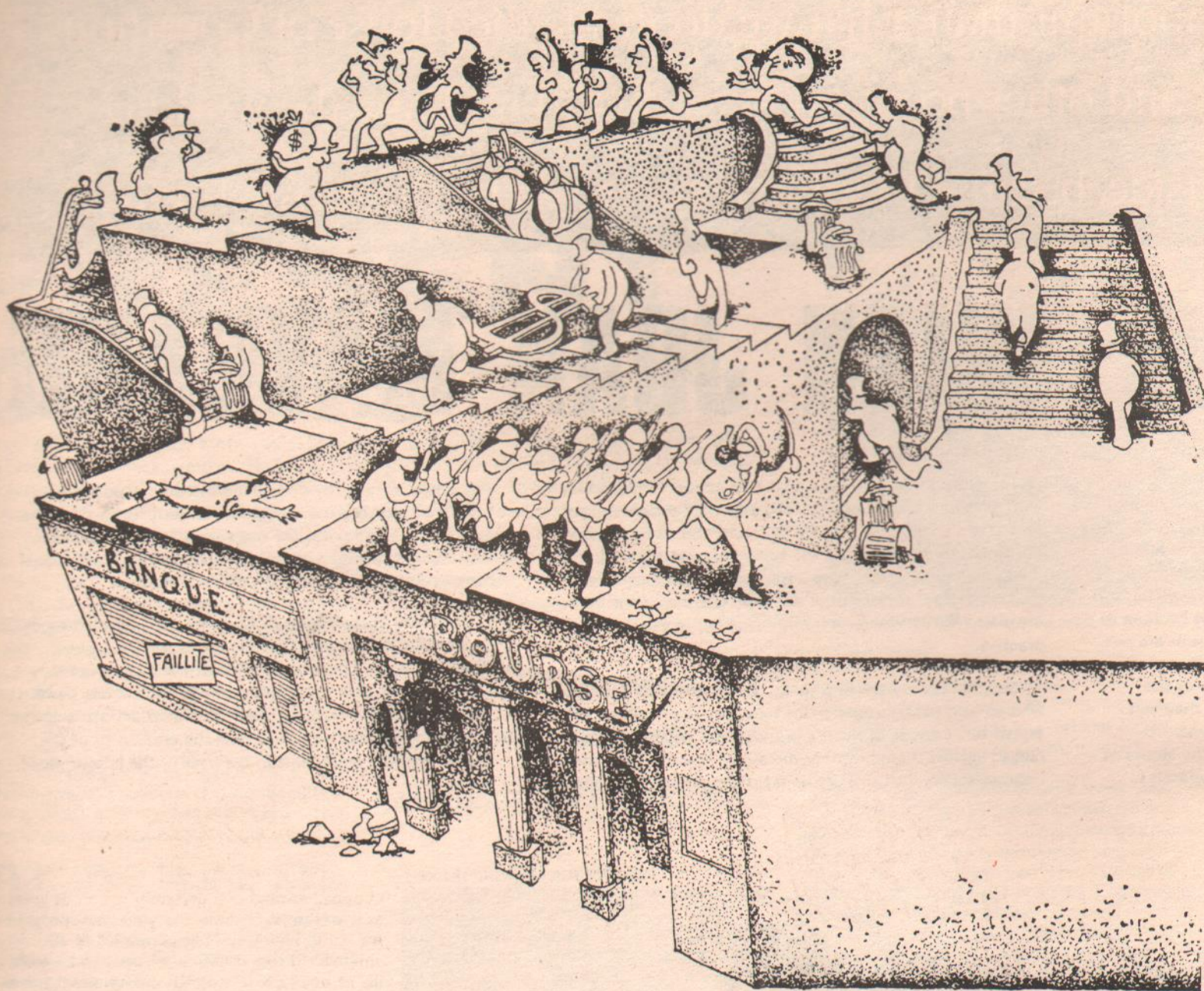
They should make clear through their trade unions that they are not prepared to accept these proposals. They must make clear that they are not prepared to have the crisis of the capitalist system put on their backs.

I think we are reaching rock bottom when Wilson makes an appeal to the miners to put loyalty to the nation first. It makes me want to vomit.

● How do you think the labour movement should tackle the economic crisis?

We should do a number of things. I think we should immediately put a stop to capital leaving the country, and put on selected import controls — if the EEC regulations allow these, which is probably a bit doubtful. These measures are needed to protect our industry until we are able to put in the necessary investment, which has not been there for at least thirty years.

In my opinion that means the Government investing, because I don't think private industry is going to do it. They haven't done it for thirty years, and I can't see why we should



The world and the British economy are at present in their worst economic slump since the 1930s. While this is rooted in a crisis of capitalist profits and exploitation, nevertheless its most direct expression, flowing directly from the crisis of profitability, is as a collapse of markets and a crisis of investment. The Healey measures will actually make the situation on these fronts worse. By cutting wages Healey decreases the market for consumer goods, through cutting public expenditure he decreases markets in the social sector, and he will produce no significant increase in demand for investment goods in a situation where investment is likely to fall by 15 per cent this year.

As for the one area where the Healey measures are supposed to have their effect — an increase in exports — a policy based on an increase in trade is a ridiculous strategy in a situation of world depression, where every capitalist country is under the absurd delusion that it can export itself out of its depression. Healey's measures in fact have the same dynamic as the wage cuts of the 1930s — they will cut back demand and add to the tendencies to slump and mass unemployment. Healey's plan must be rejected along with every other form of wage restraint under capitalism.

Instead of acceptance of wage cuts — and in addition to the measures on currency discussed on page three — what is required is a clear economic strategy which links the most immediate economic measures to the socialist goal of full nationalisation and planning of the economy. There are at least seven vital steps for this:

1. Wage increases

An immediate increase in wages pensions and unemployment pay: Far from imposing wage cuts, what is needed at present is to increase the demand for goods through pumping money into the pockets of the working class. This can be done through tax cuts — or much better through wage rises, imposition of equal pay, and a national minimum income level for wages, pensions and unemployment pay. This will step up the demand for goods throughout the economy and be a first step in pulling out of the slump.

2. Public works

An emergency programme of public works: While wage increases are one step in increasing demand, they are not in themselves

investment — and will not produce all the socially desired results. The next step is to reverse all the social expenditure cuts and begin a massive programme of public works in health, education housing, etc. The resolution passed by this year's ASTMS conference demanding a £1,000 million injection of state funds into the health service can be the first step in this.

3. Sliding scale

Sliding scale of wages and social expenditure: A substantial increase in wages and in public expenditure will bring about an immediate rise in working class living standards. This is not only desirable in itself, but is absolutely necessary to create the working class enthusiasm and drive needed to break through all the obstacles the capitalists will put in the way of socialist measures.

This increased living standard will be easily maintained and improved as the increase in investment described below works itself through the economy. Furthermore, while getting control of this investment should ensure that inflation is kept down — and indeed a planned economy is the vital step to smashing inflation — nevertheless there is some short term possibility of price rises until the basic economic measures begin to have their full effect. It is vital, both economically and politically, that the working class and its allies have their living standards protected against any inflation generated in this period.

Economically this is crucial so that inflation does not erode the purchasing power of working people, and therefore wipe out the 'reflationary' effect of the wage increases. Politically it is vital so that the workers do not see their living standards falling, and thus lose their enthusiasm for these policies. A failure to protect wages against inflation was one of the fatal weaknesses which beset the Allende Government in Chile.

protect living standards is a sliding scale of wages and public expenditure, i.e. automatic increases to offset any increase in prices. This demand is absolutely central for any socialist economic plan.

4. Price reductions

Reduction of prices of essential commodities and release of resources for investments through radical taxation of the rich and cuts in defence expenditure: While the protection of working class incomes against inflation is a vital part of any economic strategy for the present crisis, it is also clear that every attempt must be made to keep prices down — particularly on essential commodities. A combination of price freezes and subsidies is the way to achieve this. In order to prevent the subsidies from having inflationary effects in other sectors of the economy, they must be financed through radical taxation of the rich and slashing of defence expenditure.

The resources which could be released through these two measures are gigantic. For example, the Cambridge Political Economy Group has calculated that without any extra taxation on incomes below £75 a week, and with actual increases in pensions and pay for workers doing onerous or dangerous jobs, around £1,400 million could be generated. More radical measures on fewer people could also have great effect — for example, eliminating the income merely of the richest 9,000 would release more resources than are at present spent by all local authorities on personal social services such as old people's, child and handicapped persons' welfare. We would propose as the best means the adoption of the TUC target of penal taxation on all incomes over £10,000.

DEFENCE CUTS

Equally as vital as taxation on the rich are the cuts in defence expenditure. This is politically necessary — a first aim of any socialist government must be to create the conditions to weaken and disband the counter-revolutionary standing army — while economically it would release huge resources. A real socialist plan would have no trouble in doubling or trebling the £1,000 million cuts in defence proposed by the Tribune group.

The resources released through defence cuts and taxation of the rich would also provide part of the resources for a massive increase in invest-

A P T BE T CR

5. Work-sharing

Work-sharing with no loss of pay — nationalisation of all firms creating redundancy: While higher wages and a programme of public works will increase demand and beg to cut back the slump, they will take some time to work through the economy. Until this occurs, employment must be protected. This means a shortening of the working week — work-sharing — and the taking into public ownership of any firm which declares bankruptcy or redundancies.

This will require immediate nationalisation



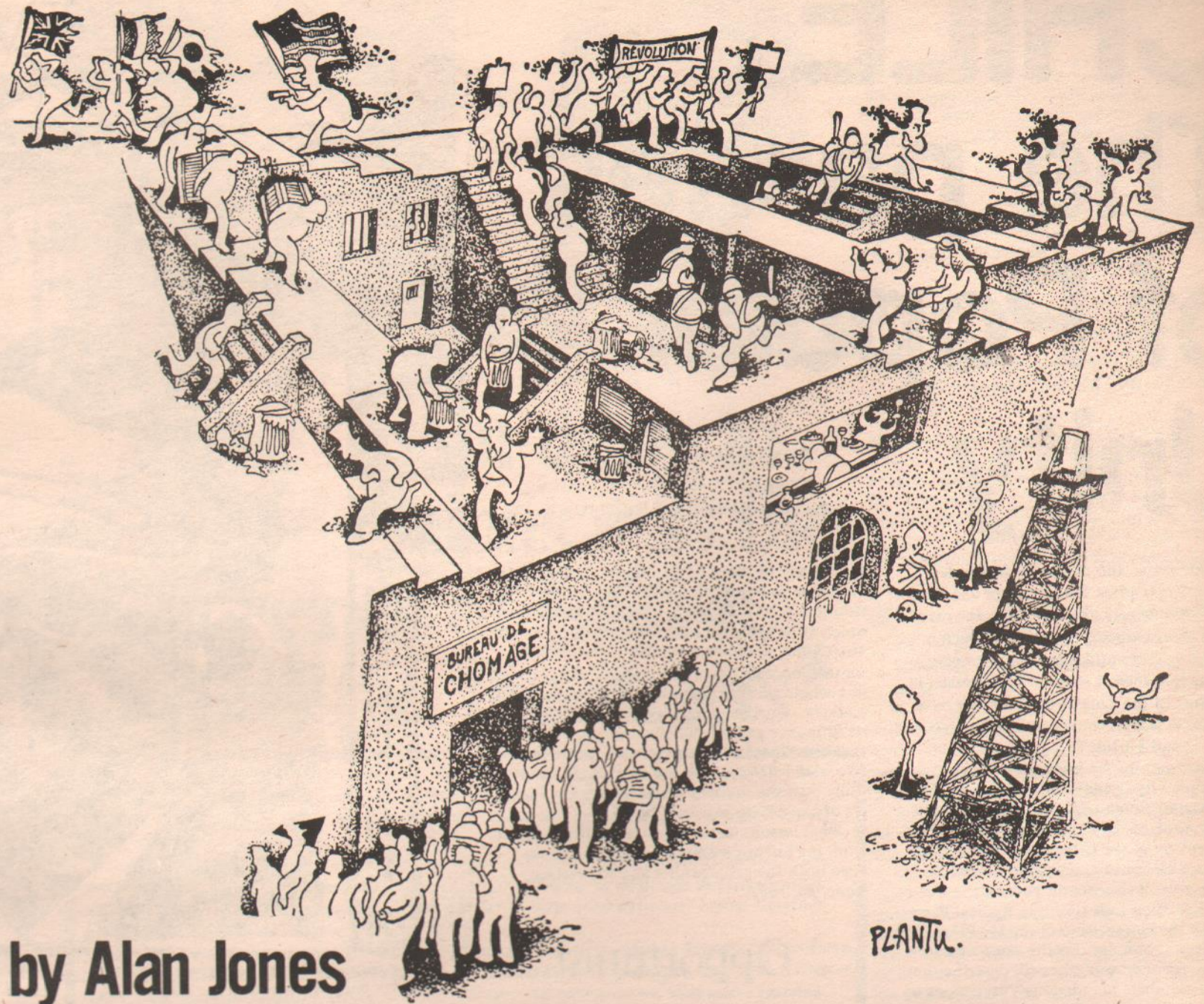
of a number of industries already severely hit — for example construction and cars. The finance to run these industries will be generated through the taxation increases, through the expansion of the economy, and by the cuts in defence expenditure.

Work-sharing must obviously be with no loss of pay, both because the working class should not pay the price of the capitalist crisis, and so that no cuts in demand are made in the economy.

6. State monopoly

State monopoly of foreign trade: A

PLAN O AT IE SIS



by Alan Jones

the labour movement for selective import controls. These are both economically wrong — they would not achieve the desired results — and in many cases they are politically reactionary — suggesting that we support the sacking of German or Pakistani workers if it will save British jobs.

But there is no doubt that an integral part of any programme for meeting the slump must include control of foreign trade. This is both because in the early period of economic revival inflation could be produced — which would suck goods into the economy and lead to a rapid deterioration in the payments situation — and because radical working class measures to deal with the crisis could lead to huge man-



oeuvres by British and foreign companies on trade and finance.

The answer to the problem of trade and payments is a state monopoly of foreign trade. This is both easily enforceable — not merely are the docks and airports easily dealt with, but a mere 100 firms account for 50 per cent of all exports — and it would also ensure the control necessary to carry through domestic economic policies.

7. Workers' control

Workers control of industry, and work-ers control of state direction of investment:

creases and a massive programme of public works — protected by a sliding scale, a state monopoly of foreign trade to prevent domestic policies from being destroyed by a payments crisis, and work-sharing, and nationalisation of firms creating redundancy — can both protect the working class and provide an immediate stimulus to the economy. But it is quite clear that these can only be short term measures. Indeed if they are not followed by radical measures to solve the crisis of lack of investment — and it is only by overcoming this that a long term expansion in production can take place — they will create gigantic and uncontrollable inflation which will be followed by mass unemployment.

The measure most widely supported within the labour movement for overcoming the investment crisis — proposed for example both in the original plans for the National Enterprise Board and in the Tribune group statement on the economy — is that of planning agreements. The basic aim of this strategy, to ensure that investment begins to be controlled not by profit but by social and productive priorities, is perfectly sound. The targets put forward, a doubling of investment in manufacturing industry, are perfectly realisable in terms of resources. However the present proposals put forward in the labour movement suffer from three fatal weaknesses.

NATIONALISATION

Firstly, they do not spell out clearly that real control can only finally be achieved through the nationalisation of the decisive sectors of industry — of the 250-300 firms which dominate the British economy.

Secondly, the plans are not drawn up under the control of workers' representatives but by bureaucratic machines in Whitehall. Workers' control of individual factories is excellent, but it comes to nothing if it is not linked to workers' control of the central economic decisions.

Thirdly, the present plans are simply not enforceable by the means which are proposed, and will simply be flouted by the capitalists.

In order to overcome these fatal weaknesses, and move towards real economic planning, at least the following steps are vital:

(a) *Establishment of a central planning organisation of the trade unions and labour movement:* One of the best demands of the recent Tribune statement on the economy was that calling for labour movement representation in planning. But this must be extended to full control of the planning process by represen-

(b) *Nationalisation of the banks and finance system:* The banks are a vital linchpin of any economy. In the present state of economic crisis in Britain their role becomes even more important. Taking their direct role in company finance alone, in 1971 out of total funds for industry of £6.41 billion only £732 million were drawn from bank borrowing. By 1973, however, bank borrowing represented £4.5 billion out of total funds of £13.98 billion, i.e. between 1971 and 1973 bank borrowing as a percentage of funds went up from 12 per cent to 32 per cent. With Britain rapidly moving towards the European model of company finance — where the banks provide up to 70 per cent of funds — the nationalisation of the banking system is even more vital in any move to take over control of industry.

FINANCE SYSTEM

As for the rest of the finance system, again even its direct role in industry is immense. For example, nearly one half of shares in Britain are held by insurance companies, pension funds and other financial institutions. Securing control of the finance system through its nationalisation is a number one priority for any economic plan.

(c) *Open the books and place industry under workers' control:* Within the labour movement workers' control is far too often treated as some sort of 'optional extra' which can be added on as a 'luxury' after nationalisation and the establishment of a planned economy. The reality, however, is that there is no possibility of extensive nationalisation or planning without first securing workers' control.

SABOTAGE

The reason for this is very simply: every historical example of a left-wing government — whether Chile under Allende or Portugal today — shows that radical socialist measures in the economy met with economic sabotage by the capitalists. Even such a comparatively small measure as nationalisation of the steel industry in 1950-51 was met with capitalist sabotage in Britain. Certainly any attempt today to carry out any form economic planning or radical measures of nationalisation will be met with formidable resistance. The decisive steps to smash this are the opening of the books and workers' control of industry. No attempt at planning without this will have even the remotest chance of success.

ic industry: The public ownership of a mere 250-300 companies would provide effective control of the economy.

STRUGGLE DECIDES

The proposals which we have put forward are, of course, in themselves only a means to an end — a step towards the full nationalisation and planning of the economy. The resources which would be created by this would completely dwarf even anything put forward here. But the proposals we have made are indispensable steps towards this goal.

One final point must be made however — and it is really the most important question of all. No economic policy is worth anything at all unless it is completely linked to and based on a mass movement of struggle by the working class. Only such a link can drive forward the relation of class forces which makes possible the implementation of a socialist economic policy, only mass struggle and organisation by the working class can smash the economic sabotage the capitalists will carry out against such a policy, and only the might of the working class can smash the state resistance with which, as in Chile, the ruling class will threaten the labour movement.

NO SUBSTITUTE

Many of the proposals we have put forward — for example the sliding scale of wages, smashing of the Healey wage cuts, nationalisation of firms creating redundancy — can and must be fought for as aims in the present trade union struggles; while others require the constitution of a government acting in the interests of the working class. But all must be fought for in the understanding that to put forward a generalised economic policy is not a substitute for the struggle here and now, but is an indispensable means of strengthening and giving direction to the day-to-day struggles.

It will be the ability to connect the general line of advance to the massive struggles of the working class which will take place against the capitalist crisis and the Healey measures that will be the vital test for socialists in the coming months. A struggle without a general policy will soon exhaust itself, but equally a plan not rooted at every stage in the struggle of the working class, and not put forward while participating in and supporting every struggle of that class, is not worth the paper it is written

CHILE: The parties of Popular Unity

Part Three of an eye-witness
account of the situation in Chile
by JEAN-PIERRE BEAUVAIS

Economic crisis, the misery of a people paying a larger price than ever for the coup of 11 September 1973, repression, the manoeuvres of a bourgeois opposition which is coming together in the Christian Democrats The left doesn't seem to figure much in the outline of the Chilean situation we have described in the previous two articles (see *Red Weekly*, 3 and 10 July).

In fact, despite the numerous declarations made abroad by 'leaders' or 'representatives' of the parties which made up Popular Unity, there is unfortunately little doubt that with the exception of the Communist Party these parties are too weak and are too divided to play any role in the present context.

The Christian Left (IC), the Radical Party (PR), and the two sections of the MAPU all find themselves in more or less the same situation, with isolated militants who still describe themselves as members in individual discussions or clandestine meetings. Though plans to reorganise are sketched out through fleeting contacts, often lost through the repression, they have yet to produce any very concrete results.

The situation is somewhat different with the Socialist Party, although not qualitatively so. Firstly, those who regard themselves as members are clearly more numerous than in the IC, MAPU or PR. That of course only reflects the situation in Popular Unity before the coup, where the Socialist Party was a mass party able to mobilise infinitely greater forces than these other groups.

Sectarian

Today, however, its situation also reflects in a sharper and even sectarian form the incredible variety of political positions which found a home in the SP before the coup. The most advanced form of centralisation adopted by a section of SP militants inside the country is a 'co-ordinating committee' of several regional leaderships — but a co-ordinating committee which lacks any common political perspective.

Things are very different in the Communist Party, although it is very much weakened, and its forces are much reduced in comparison with two years ago. Despite the death or dis-

appearance of many of its middle cadre, it has been able to re-establish a functioning national structure — as seen in its monthly publication, which although duplicated and not very widely distributed is the best source of information on the concrete situation of the working class in a whole number of factories throughout the country. Furthermore, despite its weaknesses, its influence and its audience remain large thanks to the daily broadcasts of Radio Moscow — the station with the most listeners in Chile, and the means by which the exiled leaders of the CP are regularly heard.

What lessons have these organisations drawn from the historic events in which they have been both the protagonists and the victims? None, basically.

Opportunist

Apart from their respective organisational situations, this is their real weakness. While the task of the hour for the Chilean workers' organisations can only be the recomposition and restructuring of the workers' movement on the basis of the three years of experience gained under Popular Unity, together with a radical balance-sheet of the defeat which resulted from it, the remnants of the SP are simply tearing themselves further apart with confused debates which often degenerate into conflicts of personality or authority.

The representatives of the 'co-ordinating committee' of the SP inside the country are adherents of the 'left' faction. They are critical of the General Secretary, Altamirano, considering that his actions in exile have been opportunist. But that's nothing very much. They still see concessions and tactical alliances as necessary to maintain the unity of the party, and they do not question its global strategy over the last years in the framework of Popular Unity.

According to these comrades, it was necessary in 1973 to go further and make fewer concessions. The self-organisation of the workers, their massive arming . . . they agree, but without any conviction. 'The problem was elsewhere', according to them. 'It was in the reformist orientation of the CP and the weight of this party in the working class.'



The Communist Party, for its part, applies its line with perfect consistency — almost as if nothing at all had happened. Its approach is to regroup all anti-fascists regardless of the price. Hence its hardly concealed support for the Christian Democrats, and the instructions given to its militants in various places to give concrete support to the Christian Democrats' efforts to reorganise in the workers' movement.

More than ever, the leadership of the Communist Party blames the overthrow of Popular Unity on ultra-left actions both outside Popular Unity (the MIR) and inside it (a large section of the Socialist Party).

In shifting the blame onto others in this way, the Communist Party and the 'left' sections of the Socialist Party continue to play an old game which has its uses for both of them. To say that the one was too reformist, while the other was too 'impatient', avoids the basic question of the strategy of Popular Unity, of the peaceful and gradual transition to socialism.

Blind alley

To hear the representatives of these parties speak is like being in another world. The defeat, the tears and the blood shed since 11 September 1973 by the Chilean workers, the repression which they must daily face — all this hasn't opened their eyes. More concerned to justify themselves to those who follow them,

and to satisfy their own consciences, rather than to draw the lessons of a reality which they have helped to shape and whose victims they have now become, they continue along the same road, down the same blind alley.

In such a situation the possibilities and tasks facing revolutionary militants are even greater. Not because they can in the short or medium term become an alternative to the power of the junta, but because on their role will depend — in the long term, unfortunately — the possibility of victorious struggles by the Chilean workers.

Repression

This is well understood by the leaders of the junta. It is against the revolutionaries, and above all against the MIR, that the repression has been concentrated, not without serious consequences. The losses of militants and political cadres, including many of the best, have been considerable; to a large extent the organisation works to ensure its own continuation and survival, which thus reduces its ability to intervene.

All these factors mean that in present conditions it is particularly difficult to work out the precise orientation necessary for an effective political intervention to recompose the workers' movement.

Next week: The MIR

Workers' victory in Argentina



Senora Peron with her personal adviser Lopez Rega

The success of last week's general strike in Argentina is a great victory for the working class movement.

The upsurge began with a spate of wild-cat strikes at the beginning of this month, when President Peron refused to ratify the national wage settlements and set herself firmly against any rises over 50 per cent. The CGT (equivalent of the TUC) was forced to call a general strike for 7-8 July.

They promptly called this off ten hours before it was due to end when the President promised to allow increases of 100-150 per cent to cover the effects of the roaring inflation. However, when the President seemed to have second thoughts about her surrender, a new movement of wild-cat strikes spread out over the country on the 9-10 July. These forced 'La Presidente' to ratify the wage agreements immediately, and dismiss her Labour and Economy ministers

of the aims of the general strike.

President Peron also suffered a severe setback in the parliamentary arena, when her own party went against her and elected Italo Luder as the new Senate leader — who would succeed her if she resigned — rather than Raul Lastiri, son-in-law of Lopez Rega, who previously was next in line. Deputies from her own party were also going ahead to impeach Lopez Rega for 'common crimes' — namely the fostering of the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance (AAA), the notorious police death squad responsible for hundreds of murders of workers and intellectuals.

The armed forces have quite significantly been one of the forces pressing Isabel Peron to surrender because, they say, the austerity programme which she was trying to unload on the working class was 'playing into the hands of the guerrillas'. What the army wants to do is to buy peace with

establishing itself in control with the blessing of Lorenzo Miguel and other leaders of the Peronist CGT union bureaucracy. Then it would carry out its own version of what it cynically calls 'an acceptable emergency economic programme'. At the same time it will institutionalise the present more freelance repression of the workers' movement so as to more effectively 'neutralise' it.

The background to this serious social crisis is an economic situation which is worsening as the international recession gets a grip on the Argentine economy. The working class is being hit hard, with the austerity programme that sparked off the present crisis having doubled (or tripled) the prices of basic commodities, food and transport. Now, after the important strike by the steel workers of Villa Constitucion last August, and their courageous response to repression earlier this year,

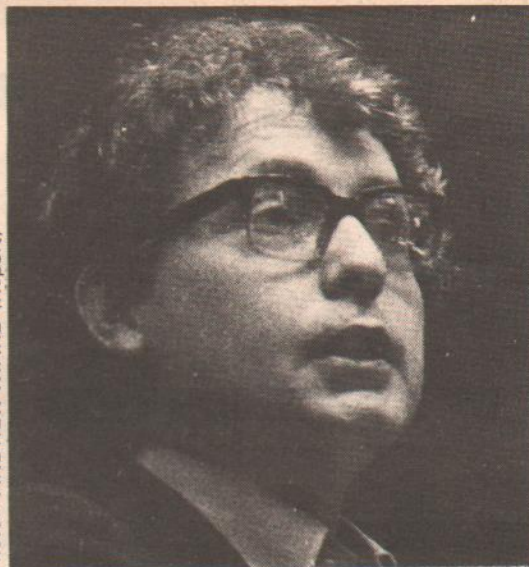
most important upsurge since the urban insurrections in Cordoba in 1969-71.

Villa Constitucion, like La Plata and several other provincial centres, again saw severe confrontations with the police, and the second wave of wild-cat strikes saw important guerrilla actions — especially in Cordoba, traditional centre of working class militancy.

The crisis of the Peronist movement, and the slipping grip of the trade union bureaucracy over the workers' movement (especially outside the capital of Buenos Aires) opens up a huge potential for revolutionary politics. In the context of more and more serious confrontations we must also prepare to launch a solidarity campaign for the thousands of political prisoners rotting in Senora Peron's jails.



Photos: ANDREW WIARD (Report)



Two of the delegates who were excluded: Mike Knowles and Rosemary Sales

Two people went down to Andersonstown Barracks to collect the signs on the Friday night (4 July) and they were immediately told that they were being held for questioning. One of them was actually badly beaten up.

RS: People were extremely worried about the situation with the Loyalist assassinations, but they had no faith in the Army to protect them from this.

GMc: I think the general attitude could be summed up in one quote: 'We haven't fought them for six years to keep them here.'

■ What did they think of any Westminster solution — for instance, the Bill of Rights type approach that you found at the staged meetings you went to?

MK: Well, we found that the Bill of Rights simply wasn't an issue in people's minds — people didn't believe that it was possible for Westminster to legislate a Bill of Rights, they saw that sectarianism was built into the whole way the British presence operated, and this was the main thing they were concerned about.

■ Why in your view was the leadership of the delegation so inhibited about meeting a wide cross-section of opinion?

GMc: The delegation was supposedly sent as a fact-finding tour, but the overwhelming impression we got was that the line had been prepared, and the only organisations that we were to meet were organisations which supported the Bill of Rights as the way forward.

As we see it, the whole purpose of this delegation was to confirm to the London trade union movement that this line, the Communist Party line, had mass support in Northern Ireland. Without these incidents, they could have come back and said that everybody we met supports this line.

■ What do you think London trade unionists should be doing about all this?

MK: The delegation's main function in London was set up as to have a report-back conference which would be open to all trade unionists and would be held in the autumn. We think that London trade unionists should insist (a) that this conference be held, because there are strong suspicions that it will be cancelled or be a closed meeting, (b) that trade unionists should invite speakers from amongst the three expelled members to their branches and trades councils, particularly if speakers from the rest of the delegation are making a report at their meetings.

RS: Yes, we want to make sure that when the report-backs are taken both sides are heard — that we're not condemned and censured unheard, but that the whole discussion, the whole way that the delegation was rigged, comes up — and that the facts are available to the whole trade union movement.

■ Could you describe the background to your visit to Belfast?

Gerry McMorrow: This was a supposedly fact-finding tour organised by the Greater London Association of Trades Councils. We were elected by our particular Trades Councils to take part in this tour.

Beforehand there was a meeting at which the schedule was described by the delegation's secretary, Jack Dromey. It was suggested then that it was a very narrow one, and we proposed that the delegation should meet a wider cross-section of the community. But we were told that the schedule had all been prepared in Belfast and couldn't be diverged from.

Yet two days after that meeting we received letters from Jack Dromey saying that the trip had been postponed for almost a month because no arrangements had been made in Belfast.

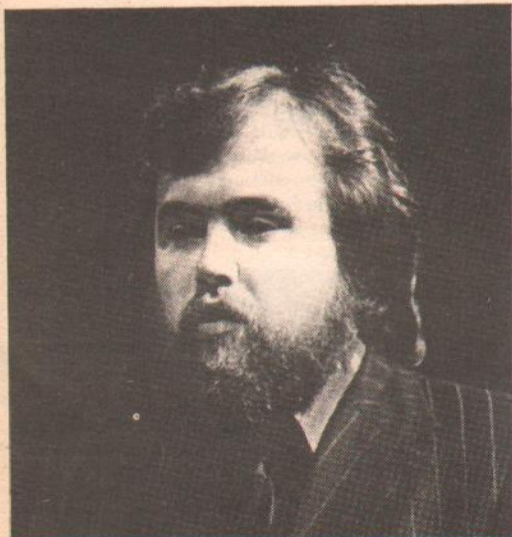
Rosemary Sales: When we finally arrived in Belfast itself on the Thursday night (3 July), we found that four things that hadn't been mentioned in the original report on 7 June were actually included: these were a visit to Harland & Wolff, a visit to a Government Training Centre, and visits to two Official Republican Clubs.

Two of these — Harland & Wolff, and the Government Training Centre — were completely irrelevant, tourist type trips.

■ Could you explain why you were forced to leave the main delegation body?

Mike Knowles: On the Thursday night we met with some members of the Executive of Belfast Trades Council, and had a short discussion with them. On the Friday the whole morning was taken up with the visit to Harland & Wolff. The afternoon was similarly taken up with the completely irrelevant visit to a Government Training Centre.

Then at 5 o'clock on the Friday we met Brendan Harkin, who's General Secretary of the Public Services Alliance — an amalgamation of the Civil Service unions in Northern Ireland.



Delegation secretary Jack Dromey—tried to prevent discussion on troops

RS: Gerry asked a question on the troops, and then Jack Dromey tried to steer the discussion away from this on to the economy, unemployment etc. We didn't think this was what we'd really come for — people were busy asking questions on the Social Contract and so on. We felt it was necessary to bring the discussion back onto the question of troops because we wanted to have more information about what they really felt on this.

But when I tried to reintroduce the question, Jack Dromey actually prevented me from speaking. That was where the trouble started.

MK: The next meeting was almost immediately afterwards, at 7 o'clock on the Friday evening, with NICRA — the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. Here again the majority of

'The main thing in people's minds was the presence of British troops on the streets'

As we have often explained in *Red Weekly*, the need for the British labour movement to take up the question of Ireland is vital. Any steps in this direction are obviously welcome; thus the IMG has always supported the idea of trade union delegations visiting the North of Ireland on fact-finding tours.

Unfortunately many of these 'fact-finding' trips have been stage-managed to convince delegates of the correctness of specific policies (e.g. a Bill of Rights to be passed at Westminster). This was the case with a delegation from the Greater London Association of Trades Councils which visited Belfast on 3-6 July.

Three of its members, however — Rosemary Sales (ATTI) of the Barnet Trades Council Executive, Gerry McMorrow (ASTMS) of the Hackney Trades Council Executive, and Mike Knowles (NUT), Secretary of Hackney Trades Council — attempted to change the visit into a genuine fact-finding tour and were excluded from the delegation for their pains. We asked them about their experiences.

hear.

■ So by this stage you still felt that you were meeting a very narrow section of opinion?

GMc: Well, we hadn't met any people who weren't either in the Communist Party or supported the Communist Party's line — except in Harland & Wolff's, where some of them seemed to be pretty sectarian in their opinions.

RS: So we decided that while we didn't want to miss any of the important sessions, we would go to meet the Editor of *Andersonstown News*, who introduced us to a number of people from the Andersonstown area, which is the largest Catholic ghetto in Belfast.

We were so interested that we thought that the other delegates should hear what these people had to say.

When they arrived, the chairman refused to allow them to meet the delegation, and so we felt that having invited these people along we had no alternative but to walk out of that particular session.

MK: At about 7 o'clock that night we met up again with the delegation, but when we approached them we were told by the chairman of the Greater London Association of Trades Councils, Tom Pilfold, that we were on our own now and they didn't want anything to do with us.

■ Could you say something about the views expressed to you during the latter part of your visit?

RS: The main thing we found in people's minds was the question of the presence of the British troops on the streets. We saw a great deal of evidence of Army harassment even during the truce.

When we asked them what did they think about the presence of British troops the vast majority of the people we met in the Catholic ghetto areas said that they didn't want the troops on the streets. We asked them — did they think the soldiers were there to protect them? They said no, that they were there to harass them. We asked them — did they think the Army could ever become a peace-keeping force? Generally, the reaction was fairly unprintable — people didn't believe the Army could ever be a peace-keeping force.

MK: The most recent example of why they

bottling plant in a Protestant area. Its workforce is predominantly Catholic, and recently there was an attempt to assassinate five people, who escaped by locking themselves in a fridge.

The shop stewards there immediately asked the Army for protection, but the shop steward we talked to was told by the Army that they just hadn't the manpower to offer any protection. He made the point that when he went home, to his own area — Turf Lodge, a Republican area — the place was crawling with soldiers, doing nothing during this period of truce but harassing the people there.

GMc: Another incident of harassment that we came across happened after a community organisation from Andersonstown had put up signs of their own accord on a section of the Andersonstown Road saying 'Accident Black Spot'. The Army first removed these signs and then later apologised and said would the people go down to Andersonstown Barracks and collect their signs.



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

WILSON SAYS 'NO CHOICE FOR WOMEN'

Dear Mrs Hesmondhalgh

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 20 June which you brought to No. 10, about Mr James White's Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

Like its predecessors, this Government believes that the issues in the sensitive area of human responsibility like abortion must be decided by individual Members of Parliament on a free vote exercising their own independent judgments.

However, the Government shares the concern of Mr White and his supporters about the need to prevent abuses in the private sector — which is one of the purposes of his Bill. The Minister of State (Health), Dr. David Owen, has already made it clear that on this point the Government agrees with the sponsors of the Bill and are ready to consider legislation; he has, indeed, already taken action to strengthen the controls to prevent abuse in the private sector.

The Prime Minister nevertheless agrees with the Ministers responsible for health services that some of the other provisions of the Bill require close examination, among them the proposal to amend the grounds for abortion set out in the present Act. Officials of the Department of Health and Social Security recently gave evidence to the Select Committee which is considering the Bill, and the Department's Memorandum of Evidence makes the following points on this provision:

- that it is likely to create considerable uncertainty in the minds of doctors who are familiar with the present law;
- that it would increase for the individual doctor the possibility of his judgement being challenged in the courts, and it is likely to increase the number of doctors in the NHS who are reluctant to recommend or carry out termination, thus making it more difficult for women who meet the criteria of the Act to have their pregnancy terminated within the NHS;
- that the willingness of doctors to recommend and carry out terminations privately is likely to continue with the result that there could be increased recourse to the private sector;
- that there will be a risk that some of the less well off, less sophisticated women refused terminations within the NHS would seek what the Lane Committee described as, 'the squalid and dangerous help of the back-street abortionist'.

The Prime Minister accepts the force of these criticisms, though he does not agree with those who argue that a woman should be able to demand abortion as a right. Under the present Act the decision on whether an abortion should be performed is taken by two registered medical practitioners, and Mr White's Bill would not change this situation. The Government believes that doctors are the right people to make the decision, and that a doctor should not be required to perform or even recommend an abortion against his own clinical judgement as to what is in the best interests of the patient.

As you point out, a number of people have recently argued that abortion should be restricted to the National Health Service. While recognising the attractiveness of this suggestion, the Ministers responsible for the National Health Service believe that it could work to the detriment of women seeking abortions. Doctors exercising their independent judgement in the cases which are presented to them interpret the requirements of the Abortion Act in different ways. The existence of the private sector ensures that a woman has an alternative source of help and guidance available. It is desirable that the National Health Service should provide a uniform level of abortion services in all parts of the country, and the Ministers responsible are working to bring this about. Nevertheless, they consider that the private sector is at present a valuable adjunct to the National Health Service in this field.

The Prime Minister recognises opposition to Mr White's Bill among some members of the public appears to be growing. No doubt the Select Committee which is receiving evidence from professional bodies, interested organisations and members of the public will also be aware of the strength of feeling. The Prime Minister, and the Government as a whole, awaits the Committee's report with great interest.

(Printed with permission of the recipient.)

RED WEEKLY takes a look at Harold Wilson's letter to Sally Hesmondhalgh who had written to the Prime Minister on behalf of the 21st June NAC demonstration

Opposition to the James White Abortion (Amendment) Bill has grown at a rapid and impressive pace in recent weeks. As the opposition has swelled some people in the pro-abortion movement have begun to talk confidently about the Bill being ditched. Harold Wilson's letter should dispel any premature illusions in that direction. Apart from some amendments — mainly as a result of protests from doctors — the Government is quite clearly sympathetic to the White Bill.

What Wilson's letter shows is that he is violently opposed to the right of women to choose.

The line is clear. The MPs — where males are in absolute majority will decide. When a woman needs an abortion she will not have the choice. Instead two doctors will take the decision on her behalf. Of course a woman is entitled to get the doctor's medical opinions, but it is only she who should decide whether she wants a child or not.

Wilson's reactionary position takes on particularly dangerous overtones given the present situation. Poverty and unemployment are growing inside the working class. The Healey proposals mean further attacks on working class living standards.

MISERY

For millions of people this will mean increasing misery. Squalid conditions, deprivation, and absolute shortages of money to make ends meet have devastating effects on the relationships between men and women. Wife-beating and cruelty to children will increase. The haunting fear of another unwanted child in these conditions will plague women.

The same cynics who talk about the need for a 'sensitive' approach on abortion callously impose measures which will have the most catastrophic social effects on working women's lives.

Of course Mr Wilson is not completely against abortion. He defends the private sector, saying 'that a woman has an alternative source of help and guidance available.' That is true — providing that she has mon-

ey. But the people who most need abortion on social grounds are the very people who cannot afford to go to Harley Street or pay some fat fee to a consultant.

POTENTIAL

The 21 June demonstration with its 25,000 participants showed the enormous potential and support that exists inside the women's movement and the working class to defeat the White Bill. Now the campaign has to be extended. But the way to extend the campaign is not by reliance on the MPs. It is by winning trade union branches, trades councils and all organisations of the labour movement to support 'Free Abortion on Demand on the NHS'

That means that organisations like the National Abortion Campaign must send speakers into the unions. It means organising action committees as the pro-abortionists have done in the Hammersmith Hospital

in London. They have arranged departmental meetings and are trying to get each department to elect a delegate to the Campaign Committee.

In consultation with the local NAC they have organised a picket of the hospital and demanded that consultants who are anti-abortionists should be removed from taking any decisions about abortion. Such a campaign can be effectively followed up in other areas.

CLASS ACTION

The pro-abortion campaign can defeat the White Amendments but the way forward lies in its ability to organise action inside the working class. Without that the Bill will pass and the misery of the back-street abortion will once more be joined to the misery of unemployment and poverty.

Jane Groves

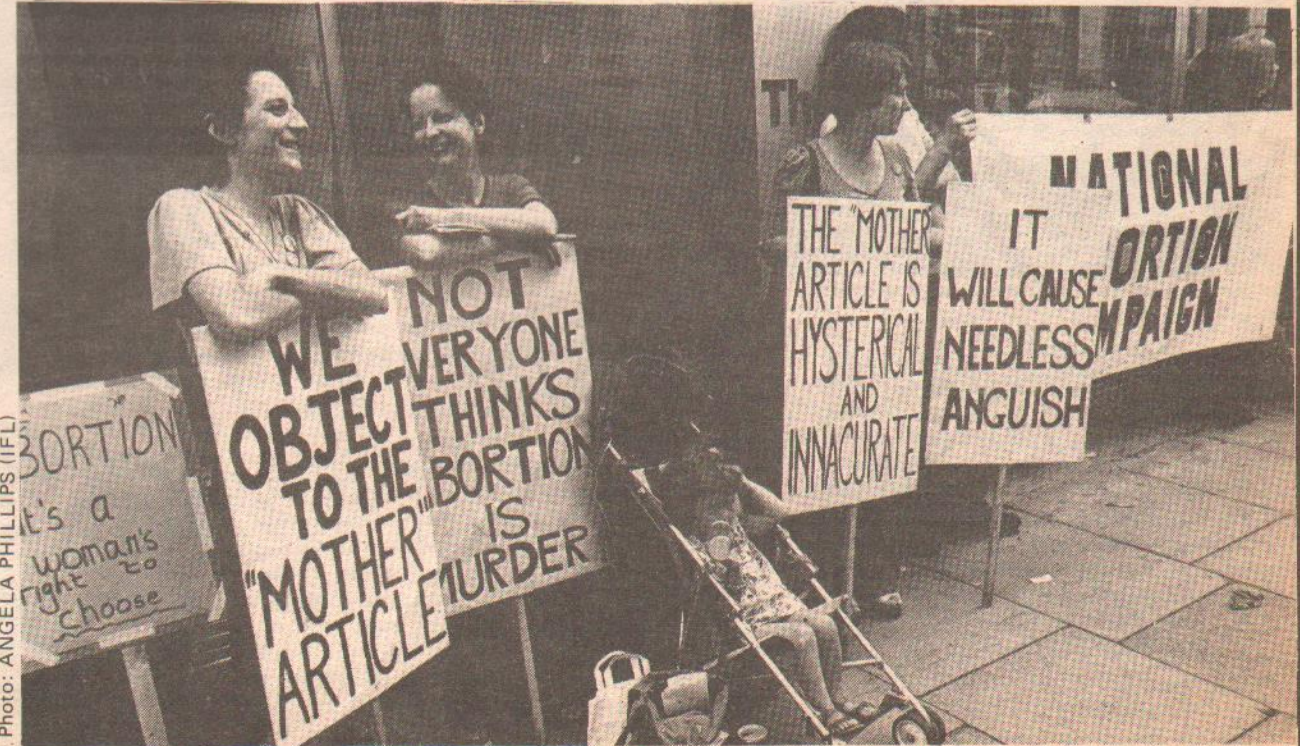
John Ryman, Labour MP for Blyth, addressed a heckling audience of 60 at a meeting held in Cramlington, near Newcastle upon Tyne, last Sunday. The hecklers were not protesting the views that Ryman is best known for — his commitment to defend the NHS and vote against any public spending cuts, his support for the withdrawal of troops from Ireland, or even his opposition to the Healey measures. Rather, the protesters — from the women's movement and left groups — were challenging his decision to appear on the platform at a meeting called by Life (the anti-abortion group with strong ties to the Catholic Church). Ryman's view, like that of Life, is that abortion is 'murder'.

Although the organisers of the meeting came armed with their usual distorted filth — slide shows with photographs of bins filled with foetuses, glossy literature, etc. — they failed to use the meeting to instill the audience with this rubbish. Instead the debate centred on the concern of the protesters — how could anyone supposedly committed to fighting for a socialist society, one in which women will be able, along with other members of the society, to play a full and creative role, publicly speak against abortion? Women will never be in a position to fight for their rights — let alone plan their lives in a way which leaves all opportunities open to them — if they are not free to determine when and if they wish to have children.

WHAT'S ON

- SUPPORT AFRICAN FREEDOM FIGHTERS:** Public meeting on Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) with speaker N. Sithole (ZANU President). Thurs 17 July, 7.30pm, at Friends House, Euston Road. Admission 20p.
- CUTBACKS IN THE NHS** and how to fight them — meeting to discuss the situation in the Westminster area and thrash out campaign to defend NHS and fight private practice. Thurs 24 July, 7pm, St George's Hospital (large lecture theatre, medical school), Hyde Park Corner. Speakers include Jamie Morris (Westminster Hospital NUPE), Steve Johnson (NALGO health services officer) and Berry Beaumont (MCAPP/NAC).
- SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY.** Public meeting, 26 July at 7.30pm, Central Hall, Westminster (tube Westminster). Speakers: Carrillo, general-secretary Spanish CP; a member of the EC of the British CP.
- REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST GROUP** Day-school on 'Chauvinism, Economism and the Current Crisis'. Saturday 2 Aug, 10am-6pm, The Enterprise Pub (Chalk Farm tube). Sessions on Fascism, Women and Ireland. For information on speakers and suggested reading write to David Yaffe, 78 Parkhill Road, NW3 2YT.
- NEW WORKERS FIGHT PAMPHLET** — For A Rank And File Movement — articles include 'Why a Rank and File Movement', 'A Programme for the Rank and File', and 'Lessons we have to learn'. Available from C. Whytehead, 2 Saville Place, Bristol 8. Price 10p + 5p p&p.

- NEWHAM IMG** public meeting: 'No to coalition policies, clear out Labour's coalitionists!' Thurs 17 July, 7.30pm at the Boleyn Tavern, 1 Barking Road, E.6. Nearest tube: Upton Park.
- NORTH LONDON TOM** public meeting: 'Why the troops should be withdrawn from Northern Ireland'. Thurs 17 July, 8pm, in Co-op Hall, 129 Seven Sisters Rd. Chair: Coun. Val Veness. Speakers include Mike Knowles (Sec, Hackney Trades Council).
- FOR CHEAP** reliable IBM typesetting with fast turn-around phone Carl or Martin on 01-837 9987.
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- FREE DESMOND TROTTER** Campaign: Picket every Friday, 4.30-6pm outside East Caribbean High Commission, Haymarket, SW1.
- BIRMINGHAM** Troops Out Movement public meeting, Sunday 20 July, 7.30pm in Digbeth Civic Hall. Speakers include Jeff Rooker MP and national TOM speakers.
- DEFEND AND EXTEND** the right to NHS abortion: picket and street theatre outside University College Hospital Outpatients Building, Grafton Way (Warren St tube). Tues 22 July, 4-7pm. Organised by Camden and UCH NAC.
- SOCIALIST FORUM:** 'Spain—The Growing Crisis'. Speaker: Sue Fox (sec, Spanish Solidarity Cttee). Tues 22 July, 7.30pm, at Friends International House, Torrington Place WC1.



Journalists and other media workers joined a 50-strong picket of IPC's Mother magazine in Holborn last Friday, to demand a right of reply to a highly emotive and inaccurate anti-abortion article published in the magazine's June issue. The article talked of 'babies quietly disposed of by means of that legalised murder called therapeutic abortion', with 'facts' lifted from SPUC and Life propaganda. The picket, called by the National Abortion Campaign, was backed by two NUJ branches.

'Somebody has to begin the fight against these measures; it may as well be us.'



Alder & Alford workers at the mass meeting on 10 July which voted overwhelmingly to continue the strike

WORKERS CHALLENGE WILSON

Workers at Alford and Alder in Hemel Hempstead are first in the firing line of Labour's incomes policy. Last Thursday, after being out over four weeks for a £10 claim, the 750 strikers voted massively to continue their struggle in the teeth of Healey's wage-cutting measures. Convenor Ted Mitchell announced: 'Somebody has to begin the fight against these measures; it may as well be us.'

All the signs are that the Alford workers — who supply components to British Leyland — are digging in for a bitter fight. For four weeks, knowing that incomes policy was around the corner and hoping the workers would cave in once the good news fell from Healey's lips, management bent over backwards not to rough things up. But now things may change.

The Alford workers also have other problems. Although they have the support of the AUEW District Committee, the recommendation to the union national executive that the strike be made official has so far met with an ominous silence. No doubt the AUEW leadership considers it more important not to promote any struggles anywhere in the motor industry while the 'delicate' negotiations over the implementation of the Ryder Report are going through.

After all, when you're pleading how responsible your members are in order to wheedle some sops of workers' participation from the BL management, you don't want to blow the gaff by making a strike within the group official, do you? The strike has already led to the lay-off of 11,000 workers at Cowley, Longbridge and other BL plants, and this could rise to 35,000 after the summer break.

A clear call should come from all militants to make this strike official, particularly from within the motor industry and in the Engineers Union. Now is the time to test the resolve of the AUEW leadership in voting against the new version of the Social Contract now in operation. Money and all messages of support should be sent to: Secretary of the Strike Fund, 417 Barnaces Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Welfare cuts — the other edge of the axe

The Government's economic proposals do not simply constitute an attack on the wages front. The so-called battle against inflation involves savage attacks on all fronts and the beleaguered National Health Service is no exception.

Last week Barbara Castle admitted: The prospects for financing the NHS in the next few years would be bleak... She added: 'I think we shall be very lucky if in the next few years we see any real growth whatever in the service.'

INADEQUATE

Originally the NHS was supposed to be getting around £100 million a year on top of its present budget. This in itself was a miserably inadequate figure. Now the Chancellor has lopped this to £25 millions.

Mrs Castle's 'solution' to these vicious cuts is to look desperately for a pressure group. She whined: 'Both education and social services have in recent years repeatedly shown higher rates of real growth than planned by the Government: health on the other hand has always shown exactly the growth planned by the Government.... To me it is a near tragedy that the health service has lacked the kind of effective pressure groups that education has had.'

This faded old 'left' clearly has no solution to the attacks by the ruling class on the NHS. All she can suggest is some Washington-type lobby to filch some of the money from the other social services.

As the squeeze gets tougher, the need for a working class solution becomes more imperative. The 11 October Conference called by the Medical Committee Against Private Practice can help to lay the basis for organ-

ising the forces for such a solution. Unlike Mrs Castle it does not see a way out for the NHS at the expense of the other social services. On the contrary it believes in a united front of the working class movement to defend and extend *all* the social services.

Mrs Castle is simply trying to operate a health service that is subordinated to the needs of capitalism, whereas MCAPP argues that the NHS can only be defended and extended to work in the interests of the working class on an anti-capitalist basis.

Sponsorship for the Conference is growing at a steady rate. The organisers do ask us to point out, however, that whilst support in the London area is impressive, out-of-London sponsorship is coming in much more slowly. As they explain: 'This is a national conference. To be successful it must get support on a national basis.'

NEW SPONSORS

No doubt *Red Weekly* readers will take note and make sure that their organisations are approached as soon as possible to sponsor and support this very important conference.

Latest sponsors include: St Georges Hospital NUPE branch, presently engaged in a private practice ban; Westminster Hospital NUPE branch, scene of a private practice ban some weeks ago; United Manchester Hospitals NUPE branch; North London District Council of the National Union of Railway men; Southwark Trades Council.

For details of the MCAPP Conference write to: Dr Paul Stern, 55 Bridge Lane, London N.W.11. (tel. 01-455-4920).



Bernard Regan, an IMG teacher militant, addresses last Saturday's conference

hensive alternative to the Social Contract and incomes policy; and secondly, that defending the present education system from financial starvation means putting forward an alternative based on the needs of the working class against the Black Paper reactionaries and the so-called 'professional educationists'.

Finally, Blackpool emphasised that unity of the left in the NUT can only be around agreement on the most important issues and practical campaigns to take them up inside and outside the union. At Blackpool, Rank and File stood by with mouths gaping as the most electric fight of the whole conference took place over the question of women's rights.

As a small beginning to resolve these problems, against which Rank and File has always turned its face, Saturday's conference was a qualified success. But only faltering steps were taken to hammer these insights and intentions into united action.

LABOUR PARTY

When the issue of affiliation of the NUT to the Labour Party was discussed, those who opposed such a notion could mouth only timeless truths about the 'crimes of social democracy'. But the conference voted that a fight for affiliation to the Labour Party would not only be a means of achieving united action with other workers — without meaning necessarily one iota of support for Labour policies — but would also raise the issue of workers' democracy and the relation of teachers to the labour

The conference went on to support the principle of automatic protection of salaries against inflation through a sliding scale of wages and agreed a motion opposing cuts in education spending. A speaker from the Troops Out Movement was also welcomed.

UNITED ACTION

Finally, the attitude which should be taken to Rank and File arose on several occasions. Workers' Fight argued for continuing work in Rank and File to change its policies. For them, the only thing wrong with Rank and File is its 'wrong' demands. The IMG argued that to concentrate exclusively on the fight to reform Rank and File (although we will do that) was dangerous at a time when the most effective action at present in the NUT will be gained with militants who have never been inside Rank and File and don't intend to be.

The conference agreed to meet again in the autumn to agree on practical lines for action. Teachers from Scotland particularly stressed the importance of this, pointing to the glaring gaps in policy and precision in the conference.

No-one argued for the premature creation of a new organisation. But if all teacher militants work to build the autumn conference, better steps will be taken to mount an effective opposition to the policies of the NUT leadership and to take the issue of the education

Teachers prepare to fight cuts

Over 150 socialist teachers met in London on Saturday to discuss the present crisis facing the left in the National Union of Teachers. The fact that all who attended are in some way disillusioned with the 'established' organisation of the left in the NUT — Rank and File, dominated by the International Socialists — is itself a symptom of that crisis.

The IS have desperately clung to the myth that Rank and File is the organisation for teachers on the left. Their demagogic insistence that a powerful organisation on the left in the NUT can only be built around a diet of hysterical paper attacks on the union leadership combined with a refusal to extend the scope of Rank and File beyond the so-called 'immediate' issues of wages and conditions has been

ling sales of the paper, falling membership and political impotence in the union itself.

Increasingly left with their own members and immediate supporters in Rank and File due to their sectarian antics, the IS were moved to issue a leaflet to the Socialist Teachers Conference appealing against 'a split'. Interestingly, the IS thought such a tragic possibility so important they instructed their own teacher-members not to attend the conference to warn against any such wayward instincts.

WARNING LIGHTS

It was at the annual conference of the NUT at Blackpool this year that the warning lights began to flash for the left. It became clear firstly that there can be no effective opposition

CIVIL WAR THREAT IN PORTUGAL

— by Chris Balfour —

An economic boycott? Plans for a coup? Send in NATO troops? These must be the sort of schemes that are being discussed in imperialist circles now that the Socialist Party has left the Portuguese Government for good. For the Socialist Party — along with their capitalist allies, the Popular Democrats, who are also threatening to walk out — are the main defenders of imperialist interests against the struggles of the Portuguese working class.

The Socialists pulled out of the Government last Thursday — ostensibly because of the refusal of the Government to keep a promise, made several weeks ago, to take the newspaper *Republica* out of the hands of its workers and give it back to its Socialist Party editors. But what was really getting up Mario Soares's nose was the recent decision of the Armed Forces Movement (AFM) to set up 'popular assemblies' based on elected factory and residents' committees, coordinated eventually at the national level through a National Popular Assembly. This would clearly challenge the authority of the Constituent Assembly elected earlier this year, which the SP

and the Popular Democrats control, and which they hoped to use to back-up their pro-imperialist policies.

•AFM PLAN•

The AFM plan was first introduced two weeks ago as part of a compromise between the left wing and the right wing inside the AFM. As such it has two contradictory sides.

On the one hand it banned political activity inside the army, ruled out the creation of any form of popular militia not under strict military control, and proclaimed its

determination to restore 'order and discipline', guaranteeing the role of the political parties in the political life of the country. On the other hand, it advocated the 'popular assemblies' and promised extensive workers' control of production as part of the reorganisation of the economy.

Soares and the SP leadership clearly hoped that the repressive moves would be implemented rapidly, while the talk of workers' control and popular participation would be put off until doomsday. For a while it looked as if things were going their way. No sooner had the AFM drawn up its plan than troops from the COPCON security force moved in to evict striking telephone workers from the Lisbon telephone exchanges.

•RESISTANCE•

But the working class didn't see eye-to-eye with either the AFM leaders or Soares. Despite this crack-down the telephonists refused to go back to work, and telephone engineers in the northern city of Porto threatened to strike in solidarity. Meanwhile workers at *Republica* made it clear that they would neither accept a move to turn the paper back to its editors, nor sit around indefinitely while the AFM played for time. At the Catholic Church-owned Radio Renascenca the occupying workers rejected an AFM decision to turn the station back to the authorities, and thousands of workers demonstrated their solidarity with this stand.

•RETREAT•

It was clear that the AFM either had to throw its plans into reverse gear or face a major confrontation with the Portuguese working class,



at a time when the ranks of the army were in close contact with militant workers and being swept by a sense of class solidarity.

The repressive plans were thus abandoned, the Government reversed its decisions on both Radio Renascenca and *Republica*, and an AFM General Assembly decided to implement immediately the plans for the popular assemblies.

•BLUFF•

A few weeks ago Soares threatened that the Socialist Party could paralyse the country if they didn't get their way. But so far all that has resulted is a march of several thousand Catholic fanatics in a small northern town. The fact is that the SP, despite its considerable electoral support, doesn't have the sort of base in the organised working class to carry out Soares' threat. As a group of railroad workers put it in a statement denouncing the SP's manoeuvres: 'This gentleman will

not paralyse anything, because he hasn't the power to do so, but we, the transport workers, do...'

What the SP can do however is to provide a cover for the mobilisation and reorganisation of reactionary forces and sow the sort of chaos that can strengthen the right wing in the army and eventually lay the basis for a 'Chile' style coup.

•THREAT•

The Confederation of Portuguese Industry has already issued an ominous threat that it will wash its hands of any responsibility for the economy if Government policies aren't changed. At the same time the Confederation is behind the call for an assembly of small and medium businessmen, which the left-wing Executive Committee of Small and Medium Traders has denounced as 'music which reminds us of the baying of the Chilean wolves...'

The European social-democratic parties are, as in the past, providing a cover for the bloody plans of imperialism. But this time they have been joined by the Italian and Spanish Communist Parties, who see their own home-grown class collaborationist schemes threatened by the development of the Portuguese revolution.

•SOLIDARITY•

The fact that the Labour Party has joined this motley crew with a statement affirming its solidarity with the Portuguese Socialists underlines the need to step up the solidarity campaign in this country. It is necessary to educate labour movement militants on what is taking place in Portugal and the reactionary role played by the Socialist Party; to organise a campaign to prevent the Labour Party from boosting the social democratic smokescreen for reaction; and to prepare a mass solidarity movement in the event that imperialism tries to put into operation its plans for economic boycott and political or military intervention.

RED WEEKLY

BENN'S BOGEY

When Benn was shifted out of the Department of Industry their subscription was cancelled. Now we've got a new one — from the Department of Energy. But this time it is for six months rather than a year. It might be hoped that Benn thinks he will be out of the Government and leading a fight against Wilson's policies within that time. Unfortunately, however, we don't think *Red Weekly* has much influence on Benn — otherwise he'd have been out of this anti-working class Government long ago.

But if *Red Weekly* doesn't influence Wedgie too much, it can teach you to understand his policies. *Red Weekly* is the only paper which right from the beginning has spelt out an analysis of Benn and the new type of reformism he represents. The reason we hope Benn has to read our paper is not because it influences him but because he comes under a hammering from the arguments we give to militants on his policies. This is one of the things which gives *Red Weekly* its special character and makes it an indispensable weapon in the class struggle.

Which brings us to the question of money. In July we need a minimum of £500 for our fund drive. The way to make sure you continue to get your analysis of Benn and every other issue in the class struggle — is to send your donations immediately to 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

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PORTUGUESE WORKERS CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE meetings with Marcelino Abrantes, shop steward and vice-chairman of Portuguese Textile Workers Union, plus woman member of the Plessey (Portugal) workers commission

Sunday 20 July, 8pm
Labour Party Rooms
ROCHDALE

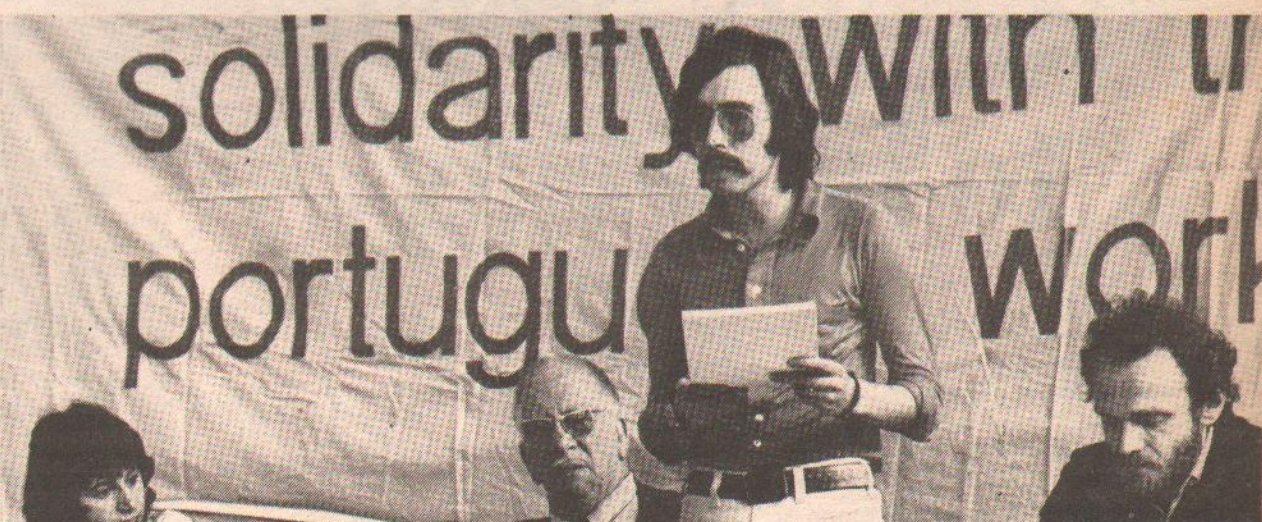
Mon 21 July, 7.30pm
Lass O'Gowrie, Charles
St. MANCHESTER

Tues 22 July, 7.30pm
Trades Council Hall, Saville
Place LEEDS

PICKET SPANISH NATIONAL DANCE CO.

39th anniversary of Civil War
Friday 18 July, 6.30pm

at the Coliseum, St Martin's Lane
Organised by Spanish Solidarity Cttee



Rui Domingues, a worker from *Republica*, was in London last week to put the record straight on the dispute and expose the Socialist Party's distortion of the struggle to serve its own political ends. Among the meetings he addressed was this one on Fleet Street (photo shows Domingues speaking, with left to right: Carmen Miranda of the Portuguese Workers Co-ordinating Committee, Bill Freeman of the *Observer* NATSOPA chapel, and translator Eduardo Guedes).

Domingues explained during his stay that 'it was the Socialist Party that chose to blow this thing up'. When the increasing bias of the paper became clear it was the workers who suggested that it be turned into an open SP organ and the management who refused. It was after the management's insistence that *Republica* was an 'independent' paper that the workers — including many members of the SP — insisted that the paper should give equal coverage to all working class struggles.

Said Domingues: 'We believe that *Republica* should be open to all currents of opinion within the working class, that it should be a paper of the workers and for the workers.' It was their decision to bring out the paper again last week on this basis which