

# 2 MILLION OUT OF WORK IN 1977?

# UNITE AGAINST THE DOLE

THE WORKING CLASS goes into 1977 faced with the prospect of unemployment on a scale larger than for over a generation.

The official estimates show 1.4 million jobless, currently increasing at 10,000 per month (excluding school leavers). Even Denis Healey predicts a further increase during 1977. Many forecasters say that the figure may touch two million.

In 1975-6 the world economy turned upwards after the recession of 1973-5, the biggest in post-war history. But the recovery was — and still will be in 1977, with the OECD predicting only 4% growth in the advanced capitalist countries — slow and hesitant. It has been largely absorbed by excess capacity and speed-up, without reducing unemployment.

In the USA, the foremost bastion of world capitalism, unemployment stood around 8.1% at the end of 1976, little more than 1% below the 1974-5 level.

In Britain, together with a slight upturn in manufacturing industry, there have been drastic cuts in the public sector, not only hitting working class families who depend on the social services to maintain their standard of living, but also throwing thousands out of work. There are already over 200,000 building and construction workers unemployed, and the employers' federation in the industry says there could be over 300,000 out of work in 1977, one third of the industry's total work-force. Over half the finishing students in some Scottish teacher training colleges have been unable to find jobs in teaching.

That has been the record of the social contract, which was supposed to protect jobs and social services in return for sacrifice on wages.

At the same time, wages have failed to keep up with prices. Real disposable personal income had fallen 6% by the second quarter of 1976 from the 1974 level. And already the TUC leaders are preparing for a new round of this disastrous policy.

The poor are hit hardest. From 1974 to 1975 the number of people on incomes below the minimum supplementary benefit rates rose 43%, to 2,070,000. The number on incomes less than 140% of those rates rose from 10 million to 13.1 million.

Because tax exemption levels, and cut-off points for means-tested benefits, have not risen in line with inflation, a worker supporting a family can now see any wage increase up to about £35 a week cancelled or negated by loss of benefits and tax. Since unemployment benefits have been increased in line with the cost of living (though the period between increases has been extended from seven months to one year), many wage-earners are now worse off than they would be when unemployed.

The obvious answer is that wages should, as a minimum rise automatically with the cost of living. This gained no hearing from the Labour government, amid speculations about depressing the level of unemployment and other benefits.

The millionaire press backed this up with a great outcry against 'social security scroungers', threatening a real danger for the working class movement, of sharp divisions between employed and unemployed. Such divisions fragment and disarm employed workers' struggles against job loss — and threaten to

# workers' ACTION

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## YOUTH CAN FIGHT BACK

FEW THINGS could be more urgent than a campaign against unemployment.

Last year the Right to Work Campaign managed to highlight the problem of unemployment but not to fight it. Yet few needed it highlighting: workers were all too aware of unemployment, and trade union and Labour leaders never stopped apologising about it.

Now the LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS have got the Youth Campaign Against Unemployment off the ground.

Many supporters of Workers' Action are LPYS members and we welcome this attempt to mobilise Labour's youth to fight against what one of the campaign leaflets calls "the scandal of the hour".

The programme of the YCAU is set out in a leaflet headed by the slogans "For Action Against Unemployment", "For a 35-hour Week Now" and "For a Massive programme of Public Works".

The crucial omission here is the demand for "Work-Sharing with No Loss of Pay". At one level of struggle this demand calls for a reduction of the hours of work so that everybody in a particular works is guaranteed a job. And at a more advanced level, its class-wide implications can be realised through workers' control of production and an absorption of the unemployed into the ranks of the employed.

In this sense it is a slogan of class unity between the employed and the unemployed.

Of course, a general reduction of normal hours to 35 would be an important and positive step in this direction. The YCAU is therefore absolutely right when it points out that Jack Jones has himself admitted that "a reduction of 8½ hours in normal working per week would be needed throughout British industry to bring about a standard 35-hour week and that this would provide 700,000 new jobs."

They might have pointed out too that an end to overtime

and no loss of jobs — and no loss of pay. Every union must be committed, not just to call for, but to fight for, a 35 hour week. And productivity deals — which, sooner or later, mean selling jobs — should be rejected.

A fight must also be waged against overtime, together with a fight against wage curbs and for wage levels which make overtime unnecessary. And there should be no covering for unfilled vacancies.

Central, also, to the fight against unemployment now is the fight against the cuts.

The basic principle throughout must be the unity of the working class, including the unity of the employed and the unemployed. Trade unions must be committed to resist pressures to force black workers, youth, and women out first, and to recognise women's equal right to work. The unemployed must be integrated into the trade union movement, with full membership rights; there should be trade union registration of all vacancies and of unemployed workers.

If we do not fight for unity, the forces of division and demoralisation cannot fail to gain.

**Saturday 15 January. National meeting to launch "Left Action", campaigning bulletin to build a left opposition in the LPYS. 1pm, Council Chamber, Sheffield Uni. Or write to Linda Gregory, 7 Newman Rd, Sheffield S9 1LP.**

push increasing numbers of unemployed workers into the hands of the racists and fascists, who, taking off from the labour movement's inability to fight unemployment, point to an easy scapegoat and an easy 'answer'.

1977 could see racist violence on the streets of Britain on a scale bigger than 1976, unless the labour movement does begin an effective fight against unemployment. That means challenging the demands of capitalism, challenging the subservience of the Labour government to the banks and big business, and challenging the TUC leaders' servile loyalty to the Labour government.

It means the sit-in tactic at factories and offices where redundancies are announced.

It means combining demands for nationalisation without compensation with concrete steps to implement workers' control in those factories and offices.

It means fighting for the opening of the books of all capitalist enterprises in order to see exactly what the situation is: that is, how many swindles are going on that workers don't yet know about, and which are playing havoc with our lives.

If the bosses say there is not sufficient work for all, then each shop stewards' committee should organise a re-allocation of the work available, with shorter hours

Cont'd. on Back Page



# FIGHTING FOR 'THE FREEDOM TO ASSEMBLE AND DEMONSTRATE IN THE STREETS'

"The USSR minus the social structure founded by the October Revolution would be a fascist regime", declared Leon Trotsky in 1939. With its 'exchange' of Vladimir Bukovsky for Luis Corvalan, the Russian bureaucracy has in its own way confirmed Trotsky's judgment.

The bureaucrats themselves have equated their jailing of Bukovsky with the Chilean military dictatorship's imprisonment of CP leader Corvalan, and refused to liberate Bukovsky as an elementary act of justice.

And indeed, if the existence of around 7,000 political prisoners in Chile, and the disappearance of 1,000-2,000 people who have been arrested there, is horrifying, so equally is the picture of the Russian regime shown by Bukovsky's experience.

At the age of 34, he has spent one-third of his life in prison — and even the French CP recognises that it has been for no 'crime' other than 'having expressed opinions contrary to those of the Soviet government'.

The Russian bureaucracy has incurred even more infamy by flatly denying that the exchange took place, and by covering its tracks with denunciations of Bukovsky in the worst Stalinist style: "a common law criminal, a paid agent of foreign anti-communists, a bandit type, who is presented as a martyr for

truth" (Izvestia); "organiser of terrorist acts and accredited agent of fascism" (Trud). Trud even declares that during the '70s Bukovsky "had formed a group of five people who did firearms training in a forest ... with the aim of overthrowing the Soviet state"!

If Bukovsky, terrorised by the Russian bureaucracy since the age of 16, has some illusions in Western capitalist 'democracy', then only the bureaucrats are to blame: and, in any case, even pronounced pro-capitalist ideas would not justify the treatment he has received.



Bukovsky himself stated clearly (at his trial in September 1967) why and how the working class needs democratic rights: "I have before me the text of the Soviet constitution: 'In conformity with the interests of the workers and in order to strengthen the socialist regime, the law guarantees to the citizens of the USSR ... the freedom to assemble and demonstrate in the streets.' Why is this article present in the constitution? For the 1st May march and the October commemoration? But it was absolutely pointless to insert such an article for demonstrations organised by the state, for it is clear that nobody will disperse them.

"We don't need the freedom to say Yes if we don't have the freedom to say No. We know

that protest demonstrations are a powerful weapon in the hands of the workers, an inalienable right in all democratic states. Where is this right refused?"

If a hard-pressed revolutionary working class regime, like that of the Soviet Union in the years immediately after 1917, may be obliged at times to limit these rights, the same certainly does not apply to the monumentally well-established regime in Russia today.

And are Bukovsky's ideas right wing? "Our task is a double one: to give our people the maximum of objective information and to create the conditions necessary for the free expression of its will".

Like most other Russian dissidents, he does not call for the restoration of capitalism in Russia; but he is sceptical about the ability of the Russian working class to change society. "Neither the Prague Spring, nor the Budapest insurrection for my country, but a Soviet variant... For the time being the opposition movement in the USSR is not posing the problem of changing the political system".

The French, Italian and British CPs have all deplored the exchange, saying that Bukovsky should never have been imprisoned. But they have tried to differentiate Bukovsky's case from Corvalan's by declaring that it is an 'episode' in the 'continuing process of the



Vladimir Bukovsky — before and after 'psychiatric' and prison treatment

development of socialist democracy'.

How then do they counsel the Russian workers? To keep their mouths shut and hope that some day this 'process' (which has, it seems, taken several decades to become as civilised as Pinochet's Chile) will work itself out? In reality, even though the social and economic base of the Russian state is different from Chile, its bureaucracy can only be overthrown in the same way as the ruling class in Chile: through the revolutionary organisation of the working class.

# THE PHOENIX THAT KEPT ON RISING

IT ALL BEGAN in 1959 when, as a young school student, he published a samizdat, "Martyr" to protest against social inequalities in the 'fatherland of socialism'. Turned out of school, he managed to get into Moscow University, until, one year later, the KGB picked up his tracks again and got him expelled. From then onwards he was very active in all the oppositional and literary circles which flourished at that time.

As storekeeper in a museum, in 1962 he managed to organise a clandestine exhibition of abstract painting. That got him a warrant for his arrest, which he evaded by hiding in a geological expedition to Siberia.

But it was in 1963 that his real troubles began. He was first arrested for 'anti-Soviet agitation', for having founded the clandestine literary journal "Phoenix", which published the verses of young poets. He was also charged with circulating Milovan Djilas' theoretical work, "The New Class". He was then condemned to the special psychiatric hospital of Leningrad, and got out of there only in 1965.

A few months after his release, he was once again arrested and re-interred without trial in an asylum, for having participated in the demonstration of support for Siniavsky and Daniel, the well-known condemned dissident writers. He was not released until the end of 1966.

Just after he came out of the asylum, on 22 January 1967, Bukovsky took part in the demonstration in Pushkin Square in Moscow protesting against the arrest of Galanskov (who was to die in prison camp in 1971 after an indefinite hunger strike). He was on this occasion condemned to three years in a prison camp.

In January 1970, as soon as he was released, he dedicated himself to the exposure of psychiatric internment for political ends. He prepared a dossier, and calculated the date on which he sent it abroad, for 20 days before the opening of the 24th world congress of psychiatrists, in Mexico. It made an impact even though the psychiatrists in Mexico, under pressure from the Soviet delegation, refused to consider it. He was, of course, arrested and given the maximum sentence: seven years deprivation of liberty...

But Bukovsky's tireless struggle didn't stop in the prison camps. He spent two years in Vladimir prison, the hell of the Gulag archipelago. Then, in 1974, he was transferred to a labour camp in the Perm region, where he met up with several other political detainees, including Semyon Gluzman, with whom he produced the famous "Psychiatric guide for the use of Soviet oppositionists". He took part in all the struggles in the camps, including the great hunger strikes of 1974 to gain the political prisoner status which was not officially recognised. For that, he got close confinement on several occasions, and then was sent back to Vladimir prison.

Since then his condition has deteriorated, and he has successively undergone close confinement, reduction of food rations, forced labour, deprivation of visits and correspondence. At the age of 34, he has rheumatism, heart trouble, a stomach ulcer, and a vesicular disease. Up to now he has been refused the care necessary for his condition, and there have been fears for his life.

From "Rouge", 18-19 December

## TEAMING UP WITH THE DEVIL ... TO CRUSADE AGAINST SIN

ON FRIDAY 14th January there will be a public meeting at Friends House, Euston Rd, to counter the slanders which the WRP has been spreading for nearly a year against two leaders of the American Socialist Workers' Party, Joseph Hansen and George Novack.

The WRP, without any evidence or justification whatsoever, assert that comrades Hansen and Novack, both of them in the Trotskyist movement for over 40 years, are and have for long been agents of the Russian Stalinist secret police! In addition, Hansen, at least, is charged with a share of the direct responsibility for the murder of Leon Trotsky in 1940.

As we explained in Workers' Action no. 37, this latest bizarre binge by Gerry Healy and the other leaders of the WRP was apparently triggered by Hansen's publication, in Intercontinental Press, the weekly magazine he edits, of a devastating account by Tim Wohlforth of the paranoid and gangster regime within the WRP and its international satellites. Wohlforth had been for over a dozen years leader of the WRP's American shadow group.

This summer the slanderous gibberish spilled over into the bourgeois press, when the WRP wheeled out Harold Robbins, once one of Trotsky's bodyguards, who vaguely agrees with their theory. To judge by his published press interviews, this old man is obviously senile — to say the least — and his account is totally incoherent. Hansen has very convincingly demolished all this farrago of poisonous nonsense in Intercontinental Press.

The 14th January meeting is necessary and timely, and we urge our readers to attend it.

We do not sympathise politically with the present SWP, and their attitude to us was demonstrated by the fact that when organising signatures for a statement condemning the WRP campaign, they approached grouplets and individuals in Britain representing a small fraction of what we do in the labour movement, or nothing, but did not approach us. Excellent! It proves clearly that when we took independent initiatives against the WRP campaign, we acted not from political sympathy or rapport with the SWP, but in defence of elementary working class standards.

However, when the organisers approached us for active support in preparing the 14th January meeting, we, very regretfully, refused, though we agreed to publicise it.

Unless we are to boycott ourselves we have no alternative but to publicly explain why.

The speakers at the meeting are Novack, Wohlforth, Ernest Mandel, Michel Pablo, and Pierre Lambert. We have political agreement with none of the speakers, but that is irrelevant, because it is a duty of all honest tendencies in the working class movement to unite and combat antics and methods like those of the WRP.

The problem is this. Mr Pierre Lambert is the leader of a political tendency in France [the OCI] which is, arguably, worse than the WRP, with which it was associated until late 1971. It uses political slander and lies just as casually as the WRP and in addition uses organised, systematic violence within the working class movement on a scale that shows the occasional resorts to violence by the WRP to be amateurish.

The OCI have a specialised, organised squad of thugs for the pur-

pose. For more than a year now, they have conducted a campaign identical to the WRP campaign against Hansen and Novack. But theirs is against a small break-away group from the OCI: they say its leader, Michel Varga, for 15 years an OCI leader, is both a CIA agent and an agent of the KGB! The 'evidence' is as insubstantial as the WRP's 'evidence' against Hansen and Novack. Moreover, the OCI thug squad physically attack the Vargaites wherever and whenever they appear, at demonstrations and at meetings. They do the same to other groups like the LCR, Lutte Ouvriere, Combat Communiste, etc. who usually intervene to protect the Vargaites (who call themselves 'the Fourth International'...) Even to pick up a Vargaite leaflet scattered during an affray is to invite assault!

All this is common knowledge, and there is no lack of evidence. Until two or three years ago Intercontinental Press carried regular reports of everyday OCI thuggery.

There is no place for Mr Lambert in any credible campaign against the methods used in Britain by the WRP — and in France by the OCI.

It is possible that one could form a united front with Mr Lambert against, say, fascism — but not a united front in defence of truth in the labour movement, and against slander! One does not fight sin in alliance with the devil, nor get rid of a foul smell by scattering manure. Lambert's presence can only taint the campaign against WRP methods. If it does not totally discredit it, that is only because of general ignorance about the OCI in Britain. Workers' Action

is equally opposed to WRP methods in Britain, France, or anywhere else.

The reason Lambert is present is because within the so-called 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International', the faction led by the SWP is in close collusion with the OCI, and, if the USFI splits, will probably form a new link-up with it. Mandel, in a different faction, is manoeuvring and fencing with the SWP to preserve the 'unity' of the USFI.

Comrade Michel Pablo, himself for decades the victim of slanders by both Healy and Lambert, is there, presumably, from a feeling of duty to defend the political honour and reputation as honest revolutionaries of Hansen and Novack, his political opponents for the last quarter century.

The presence of Lambert is rationalised on the grounds that a commission of inquiry is under way into the OCI/Vargaite dispute — but the commission is a farce since both the OCI and the Vargaites boycott it!

The cynicism involved here on the part of Mandel, Hansen, and Novack is stomach-turning. As for the IMG, the British section of the USFI, it can hardly be more happy about Lambert's presence than we are — though as yet it has failed to add its signature to the declaration by the International Communist League of Britain, the Lutte Ouvriere group of France, and several other organisations, condemning the gangster methods both of the WRP and of the OCI. It is utterly spineless to allow this meeting to take this form, and to allow itself to be tainted with the stench of the French super-Healyites. We refuse to be.

Workers' Action editorial board.

**THIS YEAR**, says Jack Jones, must be "The Year of the Beaver". And last year, what was that? Last year was surely "The Year of the Bureaucrat".

It was the year the trade union and Labour bureaucracy not only succeeded in continuing their pact with the Government, but also in blocking, dissipating, or co-opting the big movements of opposition to Labour policy.

During 1976 the economic ground continued to give beneath the working class's feet. The world capitalist recovery from the 1973-5 recession faltered and stumbled. British capitalism floundered, and would have 'sunk' without IMF help.

## BROKERS WHO DEAL AND FIX

The strike figures, the lowest for 11 years, testify that the tried and tested weapon of the post-war decades — localised strike action — was not deemed adequate in this situation. The collective reformist working class response, in so far as one existed, was support — albeit grudging, discontented support — for the Social Contract and the Labour Government, seen as "better than the Tories" by millions of workers unsure of any alternative **outside** the capitalist system, seeing (rightly) few options **within** the system, and therefore unsure of their strength.

With that background, the Labour and trade union bureaucracy loomed larger than it has for a long time, wheeling and dealing and fixing, acting as the essential broker between the working class and the government.

When the working class is strong enough, when the situation is favourable to it, it can and does find paths around the bureaucracy. In the '50s and '60s, the working class, often by-passing the national structure of the unions, pushed up wages through shop-floor action. It was not until the struggle against "In Place of Strife" and the Industrial Relations Act that the bureaucracy regained a role central to working class life — and then only because it felt unable to police the shop floor as those Bills and Acts called on it to do, and was ironically forced to appear as the protector of rank and file militancy.

## WAVES OF DIRECT ACTION

From the late 1960s to 1974 there were tremendous waves of direct action — but the limits of the sectional reformist militancy of the '50s and '60s which, even while by-passing the bureaucracy, had never **consciously** challenged it, were not transcended. The struggles never reached the level of overall confrontation with capitalism, through a general strike. They stayed within the limits of fighting for improvement within the system. And thus they produced as their final triumph nothing other than the Labour Government of February 1974.

And then the crisis and its effects on possibilities for direct action, together with the authority built up in the five years of struggle between 1969-74,



**BRITAIN**

**1976**

# The Year of the Bureaucrat



put the labour bureaucracy firmly centre-stage.

In 1974 the Labour government still had the working class on a loose rein; in the first half of 1975, the strike movements in Scotland disrupted the first, informal round of Social Contract wage limiting. But the bureaucracy continued to strengthen its grip, and in 1976 saw the peak of its triumph, more so than for 30 years.

The year opened with two big and, potentially explosive struggles: at Chrysler and in the steel industry. In both cases thousands of workers were threatened with redundancy and destruction of existing work practices. Thousands of South Wales steel workers struck against the BSC's plan to slash 30,000 workers, cut out premium shift working, and abrogate the guaranteed week agreement.

In both cases the trade union bureaucracy fought vigorously against any united strategy, bringing the many different plants together: and there was no adequate rank and file organisation to fight

fully for it. The bureaucrats spoke out against any refusal to accept the basic economic case being put by the employers. And the employers got their way.

With the decline in real wages being felt throughout the working class, and resentment growing at the Government's inability to honour its "side" of the 'Social Contract', a movement got going to stop another similar agreement being concluded. It was a weak movement, easily manipulated by the bureaucracy. Right from the start it was clear that the open-ended nature of the demand for 'A Special Recall Conference of the TUC' might give the trade union bureaucracy the chance of using just

such a recall conference to confirm a new contract.

And so it was... Because the attempt to use the 'Recall the TUC' slogan to mobilise at rank and file level produced feeble results, the bureaucracy was able to co-opt it for its own ends.

By early March the NUM Executive had joined the growing list of those calling for the TUC to be recalled. At that time we wrote: "Just as the CPSA leadership posed a recalled TUC as an alternative to recalling their own union and fighting cuts now, so Gormley hopes a recalled TUC will support the Government's policies and strengthen his hand against the left in the NUM when it comes to his own union conference".

## 3 MORE YEARS SIGNED AWAY

On March 27 there met in London one of the biggest post-war delegations — labour movement rallies — the Assembly against unemployment. Over 3,000 delegates decided to organise a Day of Action on May 26 which would press for a recall TUC.

But while the Day of Action was in progress the TUC leaders were signing on the dotted line for a new wage limit based on a document outlining the need for a continuing contract for the next three years. With that document to present to the movement, they happily agreed to the Recall meeting.

That recall conference showed greater unanimity than the previous TUC. Trimmed of the more explosive issues — unemployment and the cuts — it turned into a rally to rubber stamp the new agreement,

the 4½% limit. It capitalised on and crystallised the ebb of the rank and file movement.

By September, when the ordinary TUC conference met, the bureaucracy had it all sewn up. It had headed off the calls inside the individual unions for recall conferences, it had turned the call for a TUC recall from a mobilising slogan into near unanimous congratulation, and it had presided over a period in which Labour had introduced a whole series of instruments to blunt direct action struggle.

The introduction of participation schemes — above all Ryder — and of "independent" arbitration boards like ACAS helped the bureaucracy to keep the lid on the trade union struggle. A whole series of anti-discrimination laws coming into force in 1975-6, or due to come into force soon — the Equal Pay Act, the Sex Discrimination Act, the Employment Protection Act, and the new Race Relations Act — with associated tribunal systems, embodied a trend to increased state arbitration of the class struggle. The 21-week equal pay strike of women workers at the Trico windscreens wiper factory, Brentford, was politically the most important strike of the year, precisely because the strikers **boycotted** the industrial tribunal which decided **against** them under the Equal Pay Act, and went on to win through their own direct action.

But where more generalised opposition to the class-collaboration line might have emerged, through the Trades Councils, the TUC managed to forestall it, through Model Rule 14, forbidding Trades Councils to support actions against Labour Government — TUC policy.

The September TUC was memorable for only one thing:

the savage attack on the seamen's union for a claim in excess of the Social Contract mark II. Again it was the 'Left' that did the dirty work for the TUC. Murray, Jones, Daly and Parry of the Firemen's union threatened the NUS with expulsion from the TUC if they breached the wage ceiling.

## NUPE'S STING IN THE TAIL

But things did not go so smoothly at the Labour Party conference in the following month, reflecting a situation where the militancy blocked on the industrial front had partly translated itself into the fight inside the Labour Party. On the Monday of the conference, NUPE's motion opposing the cuts was passed, despite the efforts of the platform to have the last paragraph remitted. The sting in the tail of NUPE's resolution — the sting the platform sought to extract — was its pledge of Labour Party support for councils refusing to implement the cuts, and for trade unions opposing them, together with a national campaign by the Labour Party against the cuts.

On November 17th, with very little coaxing from the union leaderships, the biggest week-day demonstration in ages, 80,000 strong, marched from Hyde Park to Parliament. Called by several public sector unions and by the NEC of the Labour Party, its mood was militant, but still it lacked any real focus.

The only way forward pointed by the public sector union bureaucrats was to apply a little more pressure to the Labour Party leadership.

What of 1977? The trade union leaders show no sign of being prepared to break with the present system of wage limits. And as for the rank and file: everywhere we look, we see the Labour Government attacking us, yet whenever we listen we hear that the Tories would be worse.

## A FURTHER FALL IN STANDARDS

So long as the options that workers can see are only those of the capitalist system, it is natural that they should rely on the talkers and tight-rope walkers of that system, the trade union bureaucrats. And the bureaucrats, in their turn, will do their best to keep the movement feeling helpless and dependent on the health of the capitalist system.

If the labour movement does not organise itself to fight back in 1977, it is a certainty that there will be a further fall in living standards, and the unemployment level may well reach two million. The first necessity for the fight-back is policies that can unite and generalise struggles, while focusing those struggles **beyond** the limits of the capitalist system. Militants need **generalised**, class-wide answers on inflation and wages and on unemployment:

★ **Cut hours, not jobs! Work-sharing under workers' control and with no loss of pay.**

★ **The working class must not pay the cost of the crisis! Automatic cost-of-living wage increases, £1 for every 1% rise in the cost of living.**





## 1976 SOWETO'S CHILDREN SHAKE APARTHEID

**NKOSAZANA DLAMINI**, member of the executive of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO), has arrived in London after narrowly escaping the South African police. In this interview, reprinted from **SAMAJ In'a BABYLON**, she was speaking to Shamsheer Dharsani.

■ ■ What were the major events leading to the uprising in Soweto this summer?

□ □ I don't think you can talk about specific events leading to it, although obviously there were some specific factors that influenced events.

The Soweto uprising has to be seen in the context of the general struggle that has been waged in South Africa for many years by the oppressed black people, against apartheid.

The political work had been done by underground organisations like the ANC and by the students. After the police shooting, there was a reaction — the necessary political consciousness was there. This was clear in the strikes that took place, which were not simply a reaction but a coordinated offensive against the apartheid regime.

The strikers were given a date. The students' role was to distribute leaflets (which they did openly) but they would not have succeeded if they did not have the sympathy and support of the workers. Also, there were many people behind the scenes who were responsible for making the call for strike action effective. Obviously, we cannot give names of what their strength was.

■ ■ There have been reports about clashes between Soweto people and migrant workers. If there's some truth in these reports, can you say why the clashes occurred?

□ □ This was a very minor issue which was blown out of all proportions, especially by the Western press, to reduce the whole issue to fights between the tribes.

The migrant workers were organised by the police, who provided them with lorries for transport. The police smashed up the hostels in which these workers have to live, in their absence, and claimed that the students had done it. It is the age-old tactic of dividing the people in their struggle against their oppressor. The migrants were labelled Zulus, when in fact there are many people from different parts of the country who live in these hostels.

This tactic didn't succeed. In sub-

sequent strikes many migrant workers participated. The very people who were supposed to be against the students, supported and participated in the strike action.

■ ■ While we are on the theme of unity, could you tell me how Asians in South Africa see themselves in relation to the liberation struggle?

□ □ The majority of the Indian population, unlike in other countries in Africa, are working people. There are very few who have privileges which they would want to safeguard — the same as some black people, for instance the heads of the Transkei apparatus.

Therefore, the Asians see themselves as partners in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

■ ■ Why are the students attacking shebeens (drinking place) in Soweto?

□ □ There has been an anti-liquor campaign for some time now. People drink and forget their responsibility towards the struggle. Moreover, the government gets money from the liquor that is sold.

Initially, the liquor sellers were asked not to sell the liquor — but if they continue, they have to be stopped.

There's also a campaign to keep people away from Frenzied Xmas shopping and drinking.

■ ■ What would you say are the immediate tasks to further the struggle in South Africa? Is an organisation required to carry out the tasks? And what do you think people in this country ought to be doing in terms of solidarity work?

□ □ The tasks are to unite the people to fight apartheid and all its implications. At this stage, no new organisations are there and they must carry out the politicisation. Since in the final analysis the struggle will have to be an armed struggle, it is necessary to be politically aware about why one is fighting and for what.

In this country, we would like to see total isolation of South Africa. Britain invests there and collaborates with the regime in many ways.

People in this country must make demands on the British government to call for the release of all South African political prisoners. They should pressure the government to provide for refugees from South Africa who are being looked after by the neighbouring countries and the ANC.



## 1976 LEBANON'S WAR GOES INTERN

**THE CIVIL WAR** in Lebanon did not start in 1976. Its first battles raged as far back as April 1975, and the death toll had run into thousands and the number of refugees into hundreds of thousands before that year was out.

What happened in 1976 was the escalation of the war, its end as a purely local civil war and the beginning of its internationalisation. The critical period in this transformation was the period between December 6th 1975 — called 'Black Saturday', when 140 people were killed in a new outbreak of fighting — and January 5th, 1976, when Tel Zaatar was first surrounded.

In the first phase of the war, the Palestinians had held back from intervening directly in the conflict. They had restricted themselves to policing the numerous fragile ceasefires and to putting diplomatic pressure on the Lebanese left in order to effect a 'reconciliation' between the warring sides. In this they acted as the royal agents of Syrian policy.

But there was another reason why the Palestinians were wary of getting embroiled in the Lebanese civil war. By their abstention they hoped to demonstrate the falsity of the claims of the Lebanese Right that "the ungrateful foreigners are taking over" and they hoped thereby to keep the struggle localised too. "This is a purely internal Lebanese affair", was their line.

What were the origins of this "internal affair"? The institutions of the Lebanese state and society were based on a so-called confessional system devised by the French in 1943 on the basis of a population census

taken eleven years before. The system apportioned parliamentary representation, army command, and other important positions according to the balance of religious communities at the time of the census.

This gave the Christian community — consisting of mainly Maronite Christians — a guaranteed ascendancy over the Moslems, divided also into numerous sects, of which the biggest were the Sunni and Shi'a sects. To quote A Yusuf, a PFLP member: "Since 1943 many changes in the social composition have taken place. However, no census has taken place to measure the demographic change in the population..."

In the meantime the Christian population, which constituted the majority, today represents no more than 35% of the total population. The Moslems, and in particular the Shi'a sect, have a monopoly on — hence their 'Movement of the Deprived'.

"The oppressed majority's assertion of its rights coincided with the development of the Palestinian resistance movement".

But, while the struggle of the Palestinians and the existence of about 300,000 Palestinians in Lebanon itself, had a strong radicalising effect on the development of an almost exclusively Moslem Arab-nationalist movement of the Lebanon poor, that movement was basically fuelled by the changing class relationships there. "During the hey-day of its mercantile development, there existed a large middle class (service sector), but as the result of the widening disparity between rich and poor, large sectors of the middle class are entering

the ranks of the working class. The number of industrial workers in Lebanon between 1964 and 1974 has doubled, much of it owing to the downward mobility. In addition, the number of agricultural workers (agricultural proletarians) has doubled, and they presently number more than 100,000".

But, as these developments strengthened the Left and the more leftist Moslem political groups, they threatened the very existence of the established political clans — particularly the Christian political dynasts like Camille Chamoun and Pierre Gemayel — which based themselves on the reactionary communalism that the confessional system institutionalised.

Thus the stage was set for a ferocious conflict between the traditional Maronite groups determined to force the inevitable progress of class differentiation into the reactionary mould of dynastic privilege, and the Moslem-Left forces attempting to create a democratic Lebanon more responsive to the demands of the poor.

The fate of the highly organised Christian militias, led by the sons of Lebanon's Rightist leaders, soon demonstrated to the likes of Chamoun, Gemayel and Franjeh that they were fighting a losing battle so long as the struggle remained a local one. The political ascendancy of this minority could only be maintained if guaranteed from the outside; the developments within Lebanese society that inevitably undermined the basis of their political domination could only be offset if the minority rested on the might of an external force.

The options presented themselves very concretely to the



Gestures of contempt for Spain's police as one of their victims at Vitoria is buried



## Year One of the Juan Carlos regime

# INTERNATIONAL

**THE JUAN Carlos regime's reform proposals won a massive majority in the 15th December referendum. There were only 2.5% voting against, and only 22.5% abstaining or following the call of the opposition parties to boycott the referendum.**

The result was helped by the government's outlawing of propaganda for abstention in the referendum. But it does, nonetheless, put the regime in a strong position for the run-up to the elections, scheduled for May, for a Congress to be elected on proportional representation and a Senate to be elected by constituency majority-vote.

The arrest, on 22nd December, of Santiago Carrillo, general secretary of the Spanish Communist Party, certainly showed that the regime's reforms are far from guaranteeing the most minimal democratic rights to the organisations of the working class.

The ground was prepared for the policy followed by the Juan Carlos regime since Franco's death on 20th November 1975 by the rapid development of industry in Spain over the last 20 years, especially through US investment. The most important sections of the Spanish bourgeoisie began to regard the Francoist structure as unwieldy and unnecessary. A police state generally means low wages; but it also generally means low productivity.

Moreover, the Spanish capitalists have been increasingly concerned to gain entry to the EEC — which requires a certain homogenisation of the Spanish political system with that of the rest of the EEC.

And, finally, a special urgency was given to the need to introduce more bourgeois-democratic safety-valves for Spanish capitalism by the tremendous rise of the workers' strike movement. By 1973, even though all genuine trade union activity was still outlawed, the strike rate had risen to 12 million days lost during the year. In 1974 and 1975 the workers' struggles — particularly in the Basque country — were given a further impulse by the overthrow of the dictatorship in Portugal and the subsequent development of workers' commissions and workers' control there.

A last sharp reminder was given to the successors of Franco by the Spanish and world-wide protests at the time of the execution of five Basque nationalist and Maoist militants in September 1975.

Franco's death was a signal for a tremendous strike wave, from December to March, increasingly combining economic demands with political demands such as for an amnesty for political prisoners. The regime's response was twofold: repression in liberal quantities, and reforms (or promises of reforms) in small doses.

The repression was at its sharpest

with the police attack on the 'day of action' in the town of Vitoria on 4th March, which left 5 shot dead and more than 100 with bullet wounds.

On 13th July a law was passed partially legalising political parties other than the Francoist "Movement". On 30th July a partial amnesty for political prisoners was announced. Measures to legalise trade unions (other than the Francoist corporate-state CNS 'trade unions') have been promised.

Despite the repression, and despite the doses of reform, the workers' mobilisations continued after the first wave of strikes had passed. High points were the Madrid postal workers' struggle, lasting from July to September, and the one-day national strike against the government's economic policy on 12th November.

The Juan Carlos regime's position looked most precarious at the time of the appointment of Adolfo Suarez in place of Franco's old prime minister Arias Navarro, at the beginning of July. Suarez was chosen for his ability, as secretary-general of the Francoist "Movement", to retain the confidence of the Francoist old guard while carrying through the reforms needed by Spanish capitalism. But the appointment was followed by the resignation from the government of the two leading 'reformers', Fraga and Arelliza, and the biggest demonstrations in Spain for 40 years, during the week 5th-12th July, in favour of political amnesty.

If the Juan Carlos/Suarez regime nevertheless now finds itself relatively well-placed, it is above all thanks to the role of the reformist parties of the working class in Spain.

Before the death of Franco, both the Communist Party and the Socialist Party (PSOE) had tied themselves to coalitions with reformist bourgeois parties, thereby declaring that their perspectives extended only to the best deal possible within the limits of bourgeois reforms, and certainly not to workers' power. It was a promise that they would once again forestall or crush independent working-class action as they had done 40 years previously in Spain.

In March the two coalitions united in the "Democratic Coordination". In October the "Democratic Coordination" expanded itself to include various regional opposition coalitions and abandoned its slogan of 'democratic rupture' for one of a 'constitutional pact'.

Its perspectives now are focused on negotiating with and pressuring the Juan Carlos regime to provide more democratic conditions for the May elections. The Communist Party even declares, repeatedly and clearly, that it is quite willing to accept the monarchy.

A key question for Spanish capital-

ism now is whether it can by May create an adequate political party system to contain and channel the drive of the Spanish workers and peasants. Fraga, since resigning from the government, has created the "Popular Alliance" which will, he says, aim to play the same role in Spain as "the Conservatives in Britain or the UDR [the Gaullists] in France". The regime is also giving a large margin of toleration to the PSOE, hoping no doubt that it can play a similar role to the Socialist Party of Mario Soares in Portugal.

In late 1976 the PSOE held a legal congress in Spain, and received the approval of the major social-democratic parties of Western Europe.

Also in the last year, Jack Jones visited Spain to boost the UGT, the trade union federation linked to the PSOE. It appears that the Juan Carlos regime, having abandoned earlier plans for a gradual transformation of the Francoist CNS, will in the coming months legalise a trade union movement divided into four parts — the UGT, the Workers' Commissions (in which the CP has a majority), the USO (linked to the French CFTD) and the anarcho-syndicalist CNT. The CP's bureaucratic methods in the Workers' Commissions have considerably helped this policy of division.

Despite the CP's servility, and despite the fact that Suarez seems ready to negotiate with an opposition delegation including CP representatives, the regime still prefers not to legalise the CP. The Christian-Democrat components of the "Democratic Coordination" have already given open warnings that as soon as they get sufficient guarantees of free operation for themselves, they will not much mind leaving the CP in illegality. The regime also has the option of leaving the CP as such illegal, but allowing it to operate under some legal front.

In any case, even if the CP should be legalised, the Spanish working class, concerned to fight for something other than an extension of the combination of repression, exploitation and minimal reforms, needs a political strategy entirely different and independent from that of the "Democratic Coordination".

The transformation of Francoism into post-Francoist 'strong' bourgeois democracy is still precarious and very far from complete, and nothing has yet decisively quelled the turbulent combativity of the working class. The second year after Franco will see major struggles, as the first one did. Decisive for their outcome will be whether revolutionaries in Spain can mobilise the working class to deny a breathing space to the Juan Carlos regime, to fight for democratic rights by the most decisive proletarian methods, and to open the road to workers' power.

Christian leaders of the extreme Right. To win they would have to draw in other forces, they would have to internationalise the situation. To do that they would have to provoke a foreign intervention favourable to them. This could either be the US or a local force.

The conditions of 'détente', the unwillingness of Congress to sanction any US intervention, the increasing probes into CIA activity, and the Rightist leaders' lack of credibility with the State Department, all ruled the first option out. Realistically there were two other options: to provoke an Israeli intervention by pointing to the threat of a radical 'Nasserite', anti-Zionist regime being established which would give the Palestinians a sure base and free rein; or to provoke a Syrian intervention by pointing out to the Ba'athists the dangers for them of such a radical victory.

No doubt the Christian Right could not calculate all the options in advance. Either way, however, internationalisation was the key to their strategy, and the quickest route to that was to draw the Palestinians into the conflict on the side of the Moslems.

The events of 1976 in Lebanon make up the story of what happened when the Palestinians responded directly to the bloody provocations of the Christian Right.

The decisive provocations came in January. On January 5th the militia of Chamoun's National Liberal Party blockade the Palestinian refugee camp of Tel Zaatar near Beirut. Syria warns that she may intervene. Israel responds with a similar warning. A week later, the Druzes descend from the Chouf hills and besiege the local Christian villages. On the following day, the Phalangists capture the Christian Palestinian refugee camp of Dhayeh.

Two days later the Moslem-Left-PLO alliance attack the Christian town of Damour, the traditional base of the Chamoun clan. In return, Gemayel's son leads the Phalangist militia against the Moslem district of Quarantina. Both attacks end in victory and widespread atrocities.

In response, the PLO's Yarmouk brigade crosses the border from Syria and attacks the Christian villages of the Bekaa valley. The month ends with the declaration of the war's 26th ceasefire and the establishment of a Higher Military Committee to supervise it. The Committee includes



Kemal Jumblatt, leader of the Left in the Civil War

The first option was the more dangerous. It meant either a full-scale Middle East war or — in the event that the Iraqi and Syrian Ba'athists took it lying down — the fall of those respective regimes. That left the option of the Syrian intervention....

Continued on page 6



## LEBANON'S WAR

representatives of all the main forces including the Palestinians and Syria.

But, while the military situation of the Right had been weakened, they had succeeded in drawing the PLO and the Syrians more directly into the fight. They had begun also to drive in a wedge between them because the Syrians were still following their 'reconciliationist' policy while the PLO was in the thick of the fighting. In addition, by reinforcing communal tensions, they set in motion — whether intentionally or not — the fragmentation of the Lebanese army.

With the gradual break-up of the Lebanese state forces, the likelihood grew that Syria, who wanted above all to curb any radical elements in Lebanon, would now only be able to reassert order and police it by intervening directly.



Day after day the Moslem-Left victories brought them nearer total control over Lebanon. They controlled almost all of Beirut by the end of March.

Jumblatt, the Druze leader, and leader of the Moslem-Left alliance, now came under attack from the Syrian-controlled wing of the PLO, Al Saiqa, for refusing the Syrians' repeated demands for a ceasefire. But so long as Syria did not intervene militarily there was no reason for Jumblatt to settle for a return to the old regime which Syria was in effect propping up, when victory appeared in sight.

Gradually Syria applied her military muscle to bring the Left to heel. For instance, Jumblatt accepted the 27th ceasefire, on April 1st, only after Syria had threatened to impose an arms blockade on weapons going to his forces. Using the ceasefire, the Christian Right gathered arms while the Syrian forces now drove across the border to occupy the town of Masnaa.

Even at this stage, the Syrians may have hoped that this border occupation plus the arms blockade against the Moslem-Left forces could restore the old order and bring the Left to heel. But they were wrong. While the more moderate Moslem leaders agreed to continue the ceasefire, the Left waged an attack on Sidon and Tyre. Now the Syrians ordered a full-scale invasion.



Israel warned the Syrians not to go too far south and then sat back to enjoy the carnage as the invading troops joined hands with the beleaguered Christian Right in attacking both the Moslem-Left and Palestinian strongholds: what could not be controlled, would be destroyed. If Syria failed to control the situation now, Assad reasoned, not only would it acquire the radical neighbour it did not want, but it would lose the chance that now opened up of strengthening its hand at the international bargaining table. Left out by the terms of the 1974 disengagement agreement, it now saw its chance of climbing back into the bidding as the

tamer of the Palestinian and Lebanese Left and as the controller of even more territory adjoining Israel.

Therefore, the invading forces pressed on, sometimes allying with the Israelis who operated in the extreme south and made deliveries of arms to the Phalangists at Jounie, and sometimes with the Maronites themselves. Syria's problem now was to prevent the Arab League bringing pressure on it directly or indirectly on behalf of the US.

This problem was solved in what must have been the most cynical move of the whole war. The invading force agreed to the demands insisted on by Libya's Jalloud for a 'joint Arab League peace force'... by having its soldiers don a green striped beret and rename themselves 'Arab League peace force'.

While waging this ferocious war, Syria also attempted to restructure the Lebanese political complex by insisting on the election of the Maronite banker Elias Sarkis as President to replace Franjeh. While this bought the Syrians a little popularity, it did not solve their problems, for, after being elected, Sarkis refused to agree to the conditions for settlement as laid down by Syria.



Assad [right] wanted more clout with leaders like Sadat

Still unable to gain its aims diplomatically, Syria again pressed for a quick victory over the Palestinian and Moslem-Left forces, and marched on Sidon and Beirut to crush them there. Again the resistance was immense, and Syria was denied a quick victory. This allowed the Saudi Arabians and Kuwaitis to call them to order at the Riyadh summit, on October 18th, where, exerting their immense financial power and speaking with the authority of the chief agents of US imperialism in the Arab East, the oil states forced Syria to observe a bloody peace.

After all, the rules of détente and the interests of US imperialism do not coincide with the strategy of total destruction of the Palestinians. For the US, in particular, the most desirable outcome is a stalemate on the Palestinian question, not a solution: theirs is a policy of keeping the situation simmering but stopping it boiling.

The year ended with the PLO turning to the right, relying diplomatically now on the most conservative forces in the area, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and quietly shelving the Palestine National Charter of 1968 which called for the destruction of the State of Israel. The pro-US rightist alliance was thus further strengthened. And Syria received a huge arms supply (much of it will certainly go to the Lebanese right...) from the Soviet Union!

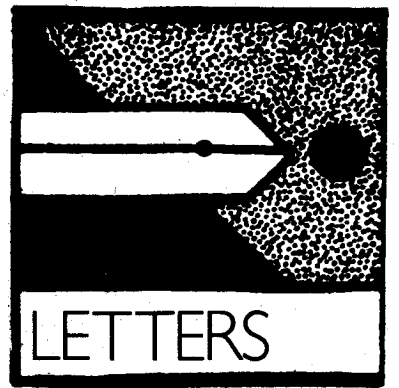
In WORKERS' ACTION no. 33, we printed a letter from R G McAuley attacking the lack of socialist principle shown by the Labour Party conference's refusal to call for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. Referring to the argument that immediate troop withdrawal would lead to a bloodbath, comrade McAuley pointed out that the Republican movement's demand is for phased withdrawal over a negotiable period of time, not immediate withdrawal.

In an editorial note, we explained that WORKERS' ACTION finds it necessary to call for immediate

withdrawal.

Comrade McAuley replied with a letter in WORKERS' ACTION no. 36, declaring that "calling for a phased withdrawal does not concede any right to the British army to be in Ireland, and... negotiated withdrawal does not... mean that the withdrawal itself is negotiable".

This week we reply to McAuley's second letter, and also to a letter by B McCaffrey in WORKERS' ACTION 40, disputing our assertion that the Provisional Republican Movement is "petty bourgeois nationalist".



# 'TROOPS OUT NOW' OR 'PHASED WITHDRAWAL' IT MATTERS WHO SAYS IT

IN POLITICS, it is not only what is said that matters, but who says it. The demand for phased withdrawal can mean different things dependent on who calls for it.

However much we criticised the National Liberation Front on other points, we never attacked them for putting forward various proposals for a negotiated American withdrawal from Vietnam. At the same time we insisted that the Vietnam solidarity movement in Britain, the USA, and other countries must take as its demand immediate US withdrawal, and not any formula of negotiated or phased withdrawal.

For the NLF, fighting the war against the Americans in Vietnam, concrete policies for negotiations were necessary. For socialists in Britain or the USA, the important thing was to establish the principle that the US had no right to be in Vietnam, and to build support for the struggle of the Vietnamese; whether or not they chose to negotiate, and whether or not they broke any agreements negotiated with the US.

The same principle applies to any strike. The workers involved in the strike need concrete tactics for negotiating with the bosses; for class-conscious workers elsewhere, the task is to give solidarity to the strikers, whatever they do about negotiations and whether or not they break any agreements made with the bosses.

In Ireland, there are additional reasons for anti-imperialist fighters to put forward concrete demands on negotiating British withdrawal: the need to neutralise Protestant workers who, as comrade McAuley points out, "believe implicitly that this part of Ireland belongs to the UK"; and the fact that many Catholic workers, also, would be alarmed by reckless or nihilistic attitudes towards the danger of all-out civil war.

There are also additional reasons why socialists in Britain have to say: troops out now. The main argument used in the British labour movement to justify the British military occupation of Ireland is that the troops need to stay there until peace, harmony, and democracy are established in Northern Ireland. The Communist Party, and sections of the left in the Labour Party, argue for a phased withdrawal, with the perspective that the period of the 'phased withdrawal' will be used to bring in that peace, harmony, and democracy, through some such scheme as a 'Bill of Rights'.

Against that, Workers' Action asserts that peace, harmony, and democracy can never be established in the framework of the sectarian Six County state, least of all by the British Army. The Republican Movement have the right to negotiate with the British government; but we unconditionally support the struggle to end the British

grip on Ireland, whether they negotiate or not.

Our reply in Workers' Action no. 35 was intended to relate to comrade McAuley's comment on the Labour Party conference in Britain and why we, in Britain, should call for Troops Out Now — but confused the issue by not bringing out the necessary distinction between what socialists must say and do in Britain and what republicans must say in Ireland.

Thus many of comrade McAuley's points in his second letter are quite valid.

Socialists in an oppressor country must, we believe, support the struggle for national liberation in oppressed countries unconditionally — that is, without requiring certificates of socialism from those leading that struggle. Otherwise we end up saying, effectively, that the oppressed nation must remain oppressed until its political leaders conform to political requirements laid down by the 'socialists' of the oppressor nation.

Thus the lack of clarity in our WA33 reply, seeming to make the same political demands on Irish nationalists as on British socialists, implied (unintentionally) left social-chauvinism (demanding that Irish nationalists be socialist) and/or illusory expectations that Irish nationalists should be socialists.

## "THE REPUBLIC" AND "THE WORKERS' REPUBLIC"

COMRADE McCAFFREY asks, is it that we think the petty bourgeois element lead the movement, only to misuse it, not fundamentally. The Republican Movement, going back to the Fenians and even beyond, has always been primarily a movement of small farmers and workers. Nor have those leaders of the Republicans who have come from a petty bourgeois background been scoundrels on the make — there are easier fields to work! Such fine incorruptible men as Tom Clarke and Patrick Pearse were petty bourgeois. And it would be foolish, in the present Republican movement, to look at the people from a petty bourgeois background as most likely to change colours or go wrong: it was the small capitalist Cathal Brugha who symbolised Republican principle in 1922, and the worker Michael Collins who was the decisive leader of the Free State compromisers.

Why 'petty bourgeois', then? The fundamental ideas of modern Irish republicanism (that is, before and apart from the Catholic tincture which it often takes on) were derived by the Fenians, in the 1850s and after, from the ideas

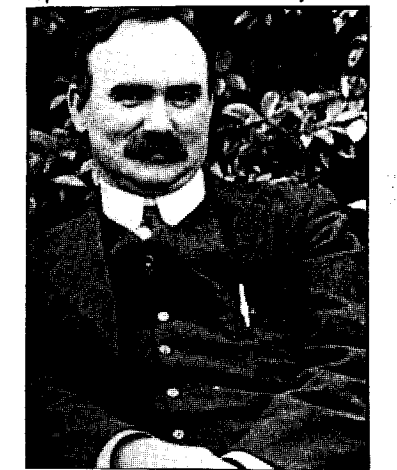
of the United Irishmen and Robert Emmett, who were the equivalent in Ireland of the French Jacobins, and through direct contact (Stephens, O'Mahony) with the living tradition in France, part of which had evolved far to the left, towards a form of communism, symbolised in the 1830s by Auguste Blanqui.

In the 1860s and '70s, the Fenian ideas were largely adequate to the situation in Ireland. Marx himself had no other programme for Ireland than that of the Fenians — for independence and agrarian revolution: that is, against English political control and against the English landlord system. Only a rudimentary working class existed in Ireland then, and a socialist movement in the modern sense was impossible.

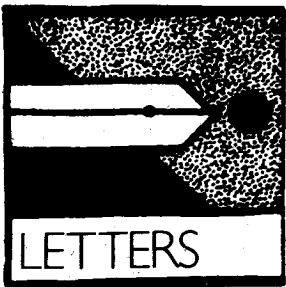
The tragedy for Ireland is that one result of the defeats of the revolutionaries from the Fenians onwards has been the survival of that Republican ideology as the dominant revolutionary ideology — into a period when a modern socialist working-class movement was and is possible.

Why did Connolly keep himself

apart from Republican traditionalism, right up until the merging of forces for the 1916 Rising? Why, in 1916, did he declare: "The odds are a thousand to one against us, but in event of victory hold onto your rifles as those with whom we are fighting may stop before our goal is reached"? Because he represented — consciously — a



James Connolly



### Why do we say it is illusory to expect the Provisional Republican movement to be socialist?

As comrade McCaffrey says, most of its members and leaders are working class, and it proclaims the aim of a Socialist Republic.

But, if the movement does not aim to mobilise the working class to overthrow the Irish bourgeoisie and assume direct control of society and a planned economy, through workers' councils, then, inevitably, it is not socialist.

Comrade McCaffrey says that perhaps the Provisionals' programme is 'not socialist enough', and speaks of it as a 'first step'; comrade McAuley speaks of the Provisionals' demands as a 'first stage' to a Socialist Republic.

In the sense that those demands may untangle the present impasse in Northern Ireland, they may be a first step. But there are no 'first stages' between capitalism and a workers' republic. You cannot skin a tiger claw by claw. Either the bourgeoisie is overthrown, or it retains its power.

Just as against Britain the Republican Movement has always focused on the state power in Ireland, so revolutionary socialists in the school of Lenin, Trotsky (and Connolly) focus on class power in the state: it will be either bourgeois power or workers' power. Within the class struggle in Ireland, a movement which blurs this question is the same as someone within the Republican Movement now who blurs and equivocates on whether Ireland should be free of Britain.

A movement that is 'not socialist enough' remains tied within the limits of capitalism, and thereby is not socialist, whatever its ideals and whatever its social composition.

Probably it is true that, if the Republican Movement manages to force Britain into negotiating a time-table for withdrawal, then Britain will have no choice but to concede the strictly national demands of the Provisionals — unity and independence for Ireland.

However, British capitalist interests in Ireland do not just exist through the direct protection of the British Army. They exist also in the 26 Counties,

where the British Army is not present. As Connolly declared: "If you remove the English Army tomorrow and hoist the Green Flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the socialist republic, your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through the whole array of commercial-industrial institutions she has planted in the country and watered with the tears of our mothers and the blood of our martyrs. England would rule you to your ruin".

And even if every penny of British investment should disappear, along with every single British soldier, there would still remain the capitalist exploitation of the Irish working class by the Irish capitalists, backed up by their state machinery.



### But does not the Provisionals' document "Eire Nua" set out a programme for a Socialist Republic?

The first precondition for a Socialist Republic is the independent mobilisation of the working class throughout Ireland, including in the 26 Counties, against all capitalists, British and Irish. Clearly and obviously, neither the programme of Eire Nua, nor the practice of the Provisional Sinn Fein in the 26 Counties, correspond to that perspective. The most decisive blows are being dealt to the Provisional IRA from the South. What can be expected from a government dominated by the descendants of the Blueshirts? And what has Sinn Fein been doing in the south for the last seven years? Sinn Fein has not known how to relate to it, or to its working class, on working-class socialist terms.

Eire Nua speaks of nationalisation. But only in these terms: "It will, therefore, be necessary for the Government to obtain a controlling interest in the commanding heights firms of key industries. The policy of managements of these firms will then be to improve the performance of the economy as a whole rather than to maximise the profit of the individual firm, as at present. Likewise, the policy will not be to stamp out competition, but to enable a rational structure within each industry to be obtained, taking into account local and national needs". (1971 edition, p. 18-19). To supplement this, Eire Nua proposes a system of producer cooperatives.



Along with this, Eire Nua presents none of the programme for smashing the capitalist state and replacing it with a state of workers' councils, which alone can make state ownership a socialist, and not a middle-class demand. Eire Nua's economic model,



maintaining capitalist competition as it does, is a model of small-scale capitalism rather than socialism.

Eire Nua, then, is a programme for greater social justice for the working population in general, within capitalism. That is why we describe the Provisionals' politics as 'petty bourgeois'.

### Moreover, nationalism is incompatible with socialism.

Socialism, we believe, cannot be built in one country (as Eire Nua proposes); the first principle of socialism is the greatest international unity of the working class. That implies the free union of nations, and, by the same token, freedom for all nations to choose independence if they wish. For that reason socialists support the liberation struggles of oppressed nations — in that sense Workers' Action is proud to describe itself as an 'Irish Republican paper' — but, whether they fight to free their country, as in Ireland, or to see its rulers defeated, as we do in Britain, socialists, like the working class, have no fatherland.

The Provisional Republican movement, however, attaches itself foremost to the Irish nation first and foremost, rather than the international working class.

Many of the best fighters for Irish freedom were internationalists, who saw their struggle not in national Irish terms but as part of an international battle.

Wolfe Tone said that the United Irishmen represented the 'Rights of Man' in Ireland — that is, the programme of the American War of Independence and of the French Revolution. Connolly went out in 1916 believing that the Irish were merely striking the first blow in a general battle that could not be confined to Ireland, and could not be confined in Ireland to the vague and general ideals set out in the Declaration of Independence: "... starting thus, Ireland may yet set the torch to a European conflagration that will not burn out until the last throne and the last capitalist bond and debenture will be shivered on the funeral pyre of the last war-lord".

And Liam Mellows, who came nearest to the Republican movement in the 20s and 30s, denounced the compromisers during the Treaty debates in Dail Eireann in internationalist terms. He accused them of selling out not only the Irish struggle but that in the other colonies, like India, and of 'hungering for the fleshpots of Empire'.

For a socialist, this internationalist point of view is indispensable. Without it, sooner or later, the interests of the working class are blurred over and confused by 'national interest'.

To sum up, Irish socialists, we believe, cannot support the Provisional Republican Movement as the force that will bring socialism in Ireland. They must build an independent proletarian party, while fighting alongside the Republicans against the British presence. Socialists in Britain must, however, aid, unconditionally, the fight for Ireland's national liberation, even if conducted in a form which can bring no more advanced result than a bourgeois federal 32-county republic.

## LABOUR PARTY WITCH-HUNT SIMMERS ON

THE WITCH-HUNT in the Labour Party is still going strong. January's National Executive Committee will consider the report on "entrism" prepared by National Agent Reg Underhill in 1975 and 'left on the table' by the NEC then.

The victory against the Right scored by the December NEC's decision to confirm Andy Bevan's appointment as Youth Officer was in the end not much of a victory at all. According to Labour Weekly, Bevan had promised that "he would break his links with the Militant faction in the Labour Party Young Socialists ... and that he would support the NEC policy and Conference decisions". The Guardian quoted Bevan as having promised to stop attending meetings of "any sectional group within the Labour Party. That includes the Militant group, the Tribune group, and even the Social Democratic Alliance"; though Bevan also insisted that: "As far as I am aware, the Militant tendency doesn't exist as a group".

Bevan, it seems, was out to confirm Party general secretary Ron Hayward's description: "I said as far as I was concerned, I regarded him as a poacher who was about to make a gamekeeper and that if he intended to be he could probably be the best gamekeeper we had ever appointed. But I told him that he would have to drop his association with Militant."

It is not for us to mourn if there is one less advocate of the blackboard-socialism ideas of Militant. But what Bevan did for the sake of gaining a

bureaucratic position was to concede not only [as is reasonable] that the Youth Officer should do his job in line with Party and YS policy rather than his personal opinions; but also that left wingers cannot take official positions in the labour movement and at the same time continue as individuals to fight for their ideas, "in personal capacity" as the well-worn phrase has it.

Any socialist who takes his own ideas seriously and is not a careerist should be duty-bound to continue to argue for his ideas and to resign from any official position if the discipline required for that position becomes incompatible with his principles.

But Bevan did not even stand up for the right of his own tendency to organise in the Labour Party: "the Militant tendency doesn't exist as a group". With this declaration Bevan opted out of any fight against witch-hunts of tendencies which do "exist as a group".

And that includes Militant itself: for the quickest glance at the weekly paper Meetings shows that they organise meetings, fund-raising and the production and sale of the paper and other publications on a regular basis.

Having thus set a precedent for condemnation of anything other than the most ethereal and quickly-dispelled existence of militant socialist ideas in the Labour Party, it was of no consequence that the NEC passed a resolution against "frenzied witch-hunts". All the NEC members, even the most right wing, found no difficulty in voting to deplore "a further

descent into McCarthyism" and "unsubstantiated and hysterical allegations against politicians".

The vacuousness of the resolution [proposed by Eric Heffer and Joan Lester] was underlined by Michael Foot jumping in to say that it was 'particularly important that tolerance should be shown on both sides — especially in view of the Government's precarious parliamentary situation'.

Reg Prentice's resignation from the Government shows above all that Newham North East Labour Party knew what they were about in their campaign to kick him out as their MP. James Callaghan commented, rightly for once, that Prentice had "step by step dissociated [himself] from the labour movement".

Prentice underlined the message by declaring that he would, as soon as the opportunity presented itself, abandon the Labour Party for some new "centre" party.

Now that Newham North East CLP has been vindicated for its steps to dissociate the labour movement from Reg Prentice, may we now see some spark of respect for alert CLP's who take steps to monitor the political behaviour of those they send to Westminster? The next Labour Party conference should have the chance to debate the proposal [which was left in abeyance at last year's conference] that all MPs should submit to re-selection by their CLPs before parliamentary elections.

different tradition, one which subsumed all that was progressive in Fenianism (independence and freedom of development for Ireland) but went much further, locating the class that would have to lead the revolution, the modern working class, and re-defining the Republic as 'The Workers' Republic'.

After Connolly's death, this independent proletarian-socialist tradition was never very strong in Ireland. In the wake of the defeat of 1922-3, traditional Republicanism was still the dominant force. Then the development of Stalinism, in the re-organised Communist Party of Ireland from 1932 onwards, finished off the real revolutionary socialist tradition of Connolly, and its 'stages' theory merged with a segment of left-moving Republicanism to produce modern populist Republicanism.

What this meant in practice is best seen in the history of the Republican movement in the '20s and '30s. In 1926 De Valera took a large part of the Anti-Treaty forces into Dail Eireann, founding Fianna Fail. In 1932 he formed a government. That government was unstable for at least four years. It relied heavily on the mobilised Republican movement to fend off the Blueshirt fascists — and then, when the danger was passed, began large-scale repression of the Republicans, ending with the military courts and firing squads during world war 2.

Fianna Fail in office served Irish capitalism. And the Republi-

ican movement? It had an attitude of benevolent support for De Valera, against the Blueshirts. It simply had no conception of taking power itself, nor any clear programme to fight for, nor any adequate understanding of the class struggle in Ireland.

That sums up what we mean by 'petty bourgeois' — a movement tied fundamentally to the bourgeoisie by its basic ideas.

It was not only the Right of the movement, led by Moss Twomey and Sean MacBride, but the Left as well. The left wing 'Republican Congress' of 1934 itself split into two over whether to take, as the immediate objective, 'the Republic' or 'the Workers' Republic'. Those accepting the 'stages' conception said 'the Republic' was the better, broader rallying cry. That was the beginning of Left or populist Republicanism. Despite the intentions of its activists, they too were fundamentally tied. That too was a politically petty bourgeois movement. Its legitimate modern descendant is the Official Republican Movement.

Issues and conditions in the Six Counties are very different today, and, certainly, very radical strands exist within the Provisional Republican movement. But can anyone argue that the movement as a whole, or its decisive sections, has changed in its political essence?

Neither in '30s, nor now, is it a question of the honesty, integrity, or seriousness of the militants or the leaders, but of an objective class assessment.

# WORKERS IN ACTION

**THE 60 electricians staging a sit-in strike at the Rubery-Owen component plant at Darlaston, Staffs., are to be denied the fruits of their victory.**

By a majority of 11, the strikers agreed to accept the offer that the TUC and the employers had patched together to settle the four-week dispute.

The electricians had demanded about £100 apiece for a period when they were laid off, but management refused, claiming the men had not gone through procedure.

The bosses' argument must have been flimsy, because even the *Financial Times* had to admit, "In demanding the payment, the electricians appeared to have a good case". Coming from that quarter, that's quite an endorsement!

Now management have agreed to pay out around £5,000 — which is not much short of what the men were claiming — but so as to deny the strikers the fruits of their struggle (and to avoid unleashing a spate of similar demands throughout the company) the employers are

## THE RUBERY—OWEN SETTLEMENT

### ANYTHING TO SAVE THE PAY LIMIT

going to pay the money to the EPTU which will give it to a charity.

This strike is important for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the lengths to which the trade union bureaucracy will go to protect their deal with the government. They are even preventing the company from implementing plans to rationalise the pay structure in the firm in case the workers get money than the pay limit allows them.

Secondly, there is the urgency of the Labour and trade union leaders' response to the call by the government to ensure that work at Leylands is not held up by the shortage of Rubery-Owen components. Before Christmas, Industry Minister Eric Varley and Employment Minister Albert Booth tried to settle the dispute and over Christmas itself Murray brought Scanlon, Breakell and other leaders together to solve the issue. The

workers couldn't get these worthies anywhere near the plant to help win the struggle.

Thirdly, the strike demonstrates that the question of lay-off money is likely to be as big an issue this year as it was last year. Remember the big struggles at Leyland and Fords?

Lastly, the urgency of the

"battle of the beaver" as far as the employers are concerned (which in this case was reflected in the way everybody from Cabinet Ministers to local union officials leapt into the action to save Leylands' production) can be used as an important lever in bargaining in the coming year if, as expected, order books pick up.

## MOTOR STEWARDS TO MEET ON WAGES

Both management and union officials at British Leyland are preparing a joint appeal to the Government to make sure that any new pay law is more flexible than at present.

The commitment made by the stewards to keep within the pay limits expires in July, and pressure is building up already to make sure that the lost ground is made up. This appeal is obviously at attempt to head off the struggle likely to be unleashed in August. Next month

the unofficial British Leyland Shop Stewards Combine is due to meet and it will discuss a resolution from the 18,000 workers at Longbridge to boost wages.

There are moves afoot too from stewards representing 15,000 Rover workers for a national conference of trade unionists to discuss a return to free collective bargaining, now that the prospect of the TUC leading the return — as they had promised last year — is fading fast.

From Page One

## YCAU

working is a necessary complement to this policy — otherwise the number of hours worked per person will not change. All that will change is that the employed will get time and a half for working those extra hours that could provide the unemployed with work; and employers will continue to pay wages so low that a flat week's pay is just starvation money.

So, "An end to Overtime Working" is a slogan that needs to be central to any such campaign.

It is vital that the YCAU goes beyond the advocacy, at a series of meetings, of this or that programme. However well orchestrated, a campaign that stops at such a series of meetings "on the problem of unemployment" falls far short of the possibilities.

The LPYS has to be galvanised into a fight to organise young unemployed people in groups capable not only of attending meetings, going on marches and lobbying MPs and trade union leaders (yes, them too!), but of organising delegations to go into the factories to demand an end to overtime and to demand that workers fight to stop any reduction in training so that youth will not be left without skills; and it should also be capable of organising the young unemployed to participate in struggles of workers against closures and redundancies, and against the Public Service cuts that are slashing jobs.

Young people out of work should also be organised to fight for their rights to benefits, and their rights to recreation

There are facilities in every area that should be opened to the unemployed youth. Colleges, schools and other institutions have social and sporting facilities that should not be limited to a few. In many cases, students would be only too ready to join with the unemployed in demanding that facilities not open to "the town" be opened to the young unemployed.

In such a campaign the National Organisation of Labour Students could play a leading part and help draw more youth into the ranks of the LPYS.

The YCAU has an impressive list of sponsors, including many MPs and trade union leaders. But this list must not be treated as a roll of honour, as a cheap way of gaining credit. The sponsors themselves must be drawn into the struggle to fight alongside the LPYS and the unemployed. These activities — and many more could be listed — must not be treated as stunts [though there is a place for publicity for the fight against unemployment]. These activities must be the solid centre of any campaign to organise unemployed youth.

## EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads, 8p per word; block ads, £5 per column inch. Send copy to "Events", 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for the following week's paper.

Friday 7 January. Hotbrook cleaners' strike public meeting, 7pm at North East London Poly, Greengate House, Greengate St, E13.

Saturday 8 January. Manchester Agee-Hosenball Defence Committee meeting with Red Ladder Theatre group in their new show, "Anybody Sweating?". Speakers: Philip Agee; Mike Bower (NUJ); Frank Allau MP. 7pm, Manchester Poly Students Union, Cavendish St, All Saints. Adm. 60p.

Friday 14 January. "For Workers' Democracy, Against Frame-Ups and Slanders". Speakers: Ernest Mandel, George Novack, Pierre Lambert, Michel Pablo, Tim Wohlforth. Chairman Tariq Ali. 7pm at Friends House, Euston Rd, NW1. Admission 50p.

Sunday 18 January. International Communist League public meeting on "Building a mass working class women's movement". Speaker: Pat Maclean. 7.45pm, 'The Roebuck', 108a Tottenham Court Rd.

Monday 17 January. Manchester Workers' Action readers' meeting: "Ireland and the British Labour Movement". 8pm, People's Centre, Moss Lane East, Moss Side, Manchester 16.

### ADVERTISEMENTS

#### INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST

No. 2-3 now out: The new Race Relations Act; The International; Discussion on the Programme. 30p + 6½p postage from G. Lee, 98 Gifford Street, London N1 0DF.

Out now: December issue of Workers' Power 3 with articles on the Labour government and the crisis, the split in the I-CL, Ireland, China, Portugal etc. Available from WP, 1A Camberwell Grove, SE5.

Just out: WOMEN & REVOLUTION 13 (Fall 1976). Articles on Gay Liberation, Soviet Art before Stalin, 'Socialist feminism', women as scapegoats for unemployment, and more. 35p from IST-M, BCM Box 4272, London WC1.

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## STEEL JOB FEARS IN SHEFFIELD

In the last few weeks before Christmas the local Sheffield papers carried a lot of coverage of the proposed takeover of the Dunford Elliott steel group by the giant steel group Johnson Firth Brown (JFB). Most of the affair has so far been acted out in the boardroom and in the High Court. The implications for the workers concerned have not received such great attention.

Dunford Elliott are a large steel and engineering group covering a number of scattered works in and around Sheffield. Altogether they employ about 6,000 workers. The two largest plants in the group are Dunford Hadfield Ltd., and Brown Bayley Steels. Brown Bayley was taken over by the Dunford Elliott group in 1973, just before the recession in steel, and as a result of this and other factors the Dunford Elliott group is in a critical financial situation.

The rivals in this Board room encounter, Johnson Firth Brown, are a giant firm employing 10,000; they are the largest firm in the private steel sector, and one of Europe's leading producers of Forgings and special alloy steels. If these two groups were to merge then the resultant complex would be one of Europe's largest private sector steel groups.

JFB took over another Sheffield firm called Jessop Saville some time ago. At the time the directors of JFB GAVE ASSURANCES THAT THERE WOULD BE NO REDUNDANCIES. But today only 15% of the original workforce is left. Donald Hard-

wick, head of the JFB steel division, has given the same 'assurances' to workers in the Dunford group. Hardwick should be told in plain simple language where to get off. After all, you can't fool all the people all the time.

Shop stewards at two Dunford works in Rotherham, Greasborough Street, and Forge Lane are already worried that their works will be among the first to go — a loss of about 400 jobs.

The response from the Dunford Elliott Shop Stewards Committee has so far been confined to a hope that the Government's National Enterprise Board will step in to rescue the ailing Dunford group with financial aid. With this aim in mind shop stewards have met representatives of the Department of Industry. The Government however adopted a 'wait and see' attitude and now appears to be IN FAVOUR of the merger as a strengthening of the still scattered special Steel industry.

For the workers on the shop floor the basic issues seem reasonably clear: security of employment, decent wages, better working conditions and shorter working hours are of prime importance. Whether or not these are provided by Dunford Elliott, JFB or Uncle Tom Cobbley seems to matter little. The argument FOR or AGAINST the takeover is not really the issue.

The issues do need to be brought out into the open.

At the moment the workers on the shop floor have very little information of what is happening. Together with white collar workers they should press for an end to business secrecy and closed Board room meetings where decisions are taken that effect the lives of thousands of workers. Elected representatives of the workforce should have free and ready access to the accounts and books of the group and minutes of all meetings. In this way the fog can be cleared and the workers can judge the issues for themselves,

"Samaj in'a Babylon" no. 3 now out. 10p from Samaj, 98 Gifford St, London N1 0DF.

I-CL Public Meeting

"Building a mass working class women's movement"

Speaker: Pat Maclean. 7.45, Sunday 16 January, at the 'Roebuck', 108a Tottenham Court Road.

instead of relying on the local press. Industrial action should be pursued if management will not concede to this demand.

Local Sheffield MP Martin Flannery has already called for nationalisation of both Dunford Elliott and JFB "...to secure jobs and to further production." His call for nationalisation should be taken up, not as some sort of 'socialist' panacea (if anyone still thinks nationalisation equals socialism look at the redundancies in BSC over the past few years) but as a step forward to overcoming the anarchic goings on and 'dealing' by bringing the two groups into line with the rest of the steel industry. This will also aid the link up of workers from plant to plant — something still sadly lacking in steel whether private or nationalised sector. The call for nationalisation must be linked with the issue of workers control as the only lasting solution to the problems of unemployment.

Most of all though at the present moment when things are still unclear, the workers in the Dunford Elliott group should be prepared. Prepared to FIGHT if jobs are threatened, whether in a takeover or not, particularly in the smaller works such as Greasborough Street and Forge Lane in Rotherham. Workers at the large Dunford Hadfield plant should not fall into the trap of saying 'our works are profitable, the others can go down the river' — an attitude which has been expressed in the past towards the ailing Brown Bayley Works. The disastrous consequences of this 'ad you I'm alright Jack' policy have already been demonstrated in other areas of the steel industry, when works such as Shotton, East Moors and Newport Tubes have all used this 'tactic'. Far from helping them it isolated them and split the already divided ranks of the steelworkers even further. In the end it didn't save any jobs at all.

John Cunningham (AUEW, Dunford Hadfield)  
Lol Duffy (Boilermakers, Brown Bayley Steels)