

# CHARTIST

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## Common Market Referendum

# LABOUR MUST SAY 'NO'!

BY 16 VOTES TO 7, the Labour Cabinet has recommended a 'Yes' vote in the Common Market referendum. In so doing, it has defied the wishes of the Labour Movement. It has ignored the views of Labour's National Executive Committee, and ignored the decisions that will be made at the special Labour Party Conference.

The Cabinet majority knows full well that the NEC and Conference will reflect the instinctive hostility that millions of trade unionists feel towards the Common Market.

Already Ian Mikardo has voiced this hostility. He correctly listed all those who back the EEC: half the Labour MPs, nearly all Tories, all Liberals, politicians who want patronage from the Prime Minister, the Confederation of British Industry, 'who believe what's good for General Electric is good for the nation', the City, the Tory press and 'the vast funds of the European movement, largely contributed for their own interests by the British multinational combines'.

### HOSTILITY

The hostility from the working class, which Mikardo expresses, is absolutely justified. The Common Market can do nothing for the working class. It will not provide us more jobs. It will not provide us more homes. And for a simple reason. The Common Market in an organisation of Big Business dedicated to the preservation of capitalism at the expense of the working class.

In supporting the Common Market, the Labour Government is lining up with the employers against the trade union movement. No wonder Harold Wilson got the praise of the CBI, which declared that 'Industry now hopes for a decisive vote in favour of membership in the June referendum to end the uncertainty of the past year'.

The big monopolies are at present four-square behind the Common Market. They hope membership will provide them with a framework to rationalise and restructure their capital so as to compete more effectively with the United States and Japan. The CBI will be contributing at least £50,000 to the campaign for continued British membership. The main pro-Market organization—the European Movement—had a balance of £575,000 at the end of the last financial year. And money is now pouring into its coffers. The European Movement's headquarters off Park Lane has been lent by the building giant McAlpines. It is these elements whom Wilson and company are now lining up with.

### BLACKMAIL

Wilson is also attempting to wave the big stick against all those anti-Marketees in the Labour Party. Mikardo and Benn have been accused of going far beyond the 'agreement to differ'. This is nothing short of blackmail of EEC opponents by

## FOR EUROPEAN WORKERS UNITY

Party who at every turn are breaking elementary Labour movement democracy.

The coming special Labour Party Conference must make one thing quite clear. When Wilson, Callaghan and Roy Jenkins speak in favour of the EEC, they speak for themselves, and for their friends in the Tory Party and CBI, but they do not speak for the Labour Movement.

### CONFUSES

At the same time the Labour Movement must equally reject the methods by which leading Cabinet members, such as Wedgwood Benn and Foot, are leading the struggle against the Common Market. Benn has said that 'Britain's continuing membership would mean the end of Britain as a completely self-governing nation.' This talk of defending 'national sovereignty'

totally confuses and derails the anti-EEC struggle. It is also highly dangerous, and ends up with scandalous situations, such as Clive Jenkins sharing a platform with Enoch Powell—bitter enemy of the trade unions.

### REACTIONARY

The solution of 'Britain alone' is totally reactionary and points no way forward for the struggles of the working class. The Labour Party must come out clearly FOR the unity of Europe—not with its bankers, industrialists and landowners in the EEC—but for unity with the working class organisations of Europe. It must recognise that national boundaries dividing Europe ARE obsolete and must be broken down. The criticism of the EEC is not that it attacks 'national sovereignty' but that it is incapable of achieving the unity of Europe, which is impossible on a capitalist basis, and which can only be achieved by the united struggle of the European working class.

If it were possible for the capitalists of Europe to transcend the limitations of the

productive forces by integrating and planning the economies of the whole continent of Europe then we would have to support their effort. The reason why we oppose the Common Market is precisely because European unity on a capitalist basis is impossible.

It is not a question, as Ian Mikardo would have it, of renegotiations falling 'far short of our minimum aims'. The Labour Government's policy on renegotiation was a fraud from start to finish. You cannot renegotiate terms of entry to something which is fundamentally opposed to the interests of the working class.

### INTERNATIONALIST

Instead of sharing platforms with Tories Labour leaders should be developing links with labour and trade union organisations in

France, Italy and Germany in order to mount a really socialist internationalist struggle against the Common Market.

### CAMPAIGN

The special conference must be the beginning of this campaign around the following points:

- No to the EEC. Reject the Cabinet recommendation. It is they who are splitting the Labour movement, not us.
- Organise public meetings and canvasses throughout the country. Demonstrate the real voice of the Labour Party.
- Mandate the MPs to follow the decisions of Labour Party Conference. It is they who must conform with us, not the other way round.
- For European workers unity. For an all European Conference of Labour organizations to plan a united struggle against the Common Market of the monopolies.
- Struggle for a Labour Government prepared to take on the power of the capitalists in Britain. Fight for a Socialist Britain, as a base from which to struggle for a United Socialist States of Europe.



## Glasgow: TROOPS OUT!

THE IMPORTATION of the army into Glasgow by the Labour Government at the request of the Labour-controlled Council represents an enormous betrayal of the working class.

The purpose of the troops is to break the nine week old dust-cart drivers' strike and enforce the social con-trick.

The dust-cart drivers are out for a pay rise of £5 a week which will give them parity with Heavy Goods Vehicles men in private industry. At the same time, Glasgow Corporation electricians are out officially with sparks in the private sector.

These actions—if successful—would give the green light for wages battles throughout Britain. That is why the Labour Government is determined to smash them. The use of troops is a most sinister move and fore-shadows a much more frequent army involvement in strike struggles.

### ISOLATED

Not that this bothers the T.U. leaders. Alex Kitson, National Officer of the Transport and General Workers Union, stated that the consequences of bringing in troops were 'very grave'. This has not made him declare the strike official. He prefers to leave the drivers isolated so as to force them to return to work more easily.

The electricians on the other hand are preparing to call for concrete solidarity action. The electricians strike committee chairman, George Kelly, has said, 'Our struggle is completely bound up with that of the dust-men'. The mounting of joint pickets at the refuse depots shows how the strikers understand this.

But what of the army? It is there to fulfill its role: to defend the interests of the ruling class. The ruling class needs the social contract. The army is enforcing it. Northern Ireland has come to Britain.

The biggest health hazard is the stench emanating from the betrayal of the so-called Labour Council there which will not even negotiate with the drivers and the electricians.

### SOLIDARITY

Solidarity action is now essential to force the Council to concede the claims and force the Government to withdraw troops. The Communist Party dominated Trades Council avoids doing this. Stalinist Trades Council Secretary John Reidford has said that the Trades Council is backing the official leaders who are doing precisely nothing. This policy must be resisted and militants should call for the following:

- General Strike in Glasgow until the troops are withdrawn!
- No retreat on the full claim!
- Thousands strong pickets at every depot!
- For a full trade union and Labour Party enquiry into the actions of the Glasgow City Labour Council.

TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT: demonstration 5 April. Assemble 1.30pm, Clerkenwell Green, march to Whitehall, London.

# THE CHARTIST

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## How not to fight the EEC

IS LABOUR'S left-wing group of MPs, the Tribune Group and its allies like Wedgwood Benn, really serious in its opposition to the European Economic Community—the Common Market? We think not. The basis upon which they intend to organise their campaign of opposition to the Market could not imaginably be more remote from the real issues, and the real dangers that surround membership of this bloc of European capitalist nations.

The Tribune case for getting out of the Market was revealed at a meeting of Tribune MPs and leading "Britain outer's" in the London Co-op and elsewhere in a Committee room of the House of Commons in March. "They need us more than we need them", was the theme proposed by Norman Buchan MP and heartily seconded by veteran left, Ian Mikardo.

### IMAGE

The image of 'Brussels bureaucrats' bumping up the price of our food was seized upon with great enthusiasm as being something which would "win the support of the housewife". The notion of 'our Parliamentary sovereignty' being taken away from us by the EEC Commission was expected to win the votes of the... well actually, no one really seemed too sure of who that would win the votes of, but anyway, it would go down well with Enoch Powell and Clive Jenkins.

The speaker from the Britain Out Campaign said that we needed a new party for the purpose of

this referendum campaign; one that would embrace people from "all walks of life and all political persuasions." The Tribune-ites of course agreed with him. And when a speaker from the floor said that he had spent all his life fighting against Tory supporters of the capitalist system and didn't see why the Labour movement had any need of their support in order to rally a working class vote against the capitalist Common Market, Ian Mikardo said that he felt insulted because this person had told him to fight like a socialist and not like some gross addition to the political outlook of J. Enoch Powell.

But the real issue behind the Tribune "Britain Out" campaign, is that these people cannot muster a single effective argument that is likely to convince those tens of thousands of British working class people who are currently threatened with unemployment, declining living standards and savage attacks on social services like health and education, that they would be any better off outside the Market.

When these left MPs try to build up a case for saying that the EEC increases Britain's trade deficit, causes 'dear food' prices, and threatens unemployment, they are defeated at every turn by the Wilson-Callaghan wing of the Labour

Party. They point out that Britain is less competitive than Europe, and is growing poorer all the time. The future of Britain lies in the Common Market, these people assure us, but omit the important fact that the EEC has no future at all. Because of the capitalist squabbling of the leading countries of the Nine, European 'unity' will spring apart like a busted piece of clockwork.

As we said in our last issue of the Chartist (March):

"...Now that recession—growing unemployment, industrial stagnation, together with unbelievably high rates of inflation are ripping through the Nine countries, European unity is being exposed for what it has always been: a unity of thieves squabbling over the share of the spoils."

When the Market finally goes bust, the capitalist promoters of British membership will find a great need for the arguments of the rightwing about "Greater Britain", and "pride in our thousand years of history". The monopoly capitalists will have need of these arguments just as they will have need of the people who use it: the extreme right Tories and the fascists of the National Front, to physically smash the organised labour movement in Britain, as they did in Germany and Italy before the War. We say that the

Labour left is disarming the working class in the face of this threat by giving credence to nationalistic arguments about the "...proud British", "British independence", and "Parliamentary sovereignty".

The way to fight against the EEC is by explaining the bankruptcy of capitalism in Europe as well as in Britain and by making sure that an "out" vote in June is backed up by determined class action and leadership in the months afterwards. This means struggling in solidarity with the working class across Europe, from East to West. This is why we call on the Labour Party leadership to oppose the Common Market on the following class-struggle basis:

### POLICY

- No shared platforms with Tories and the ultra-right! Let the Labour movement stand on its own feet in opposition to capitalist Europe.
- Take up the fight in Europe! Fight for the convening of a conference of European labour movements to hammer out a strategy for uniting Europe under the rule of the working class.
- Negotiate equitable trade relations with the developing world. Extend trade relations with Eastern Europe, Russia and the other bureaucratised workers' states.
- Take up the fight in Britain! Open the books of industry! Work or full pay! A rising scale of wages! No cuts in welfare services!

## Labour council scabs on Leeds electricians

by Graham Durham

AS THE LEEDS COUNCIL electricians strike enters its eighth week, the Labour Council has called in private contractors to man emergency services and operate lifts in high-rise blocks.

The man responsible for the decision to employ scab labour is Cllr. George Mudie, himself a full-time official of NUPE.

The 150 men on strike are part of an official national action by the EEPTU claiming an increased basic rate for Council electricians from 73p an hour to £1.23p an hour. The claim would bring works department 'sparks' into line with those in the private sector and prevent council electricians being used as cheap labour.

The decision to employ scab labour has come after a vigorous campaign by the local press regarding the dangers of non-maintenance of lifts and the inconvenience to pensioners living in high-rise flats. However, as the CHARTIST discovered when we interviewed Harold Best (ETU exec. member for Yorks. and Humberside) the decision was made during negotiations with the union for more emergency servicing in addition to the cover already being provided.

In a clear attempt to defend his scab role Mudie has falsely claimed that the electricians

are refusing to provide emergency servicing. But as Harold Best pointed out - "How a full-time trade union official can organise strike breaking is beyond me! He should have resigned. There is no history of either Tory or Labour councils scabbing on strikes in Leeds in this manner. In terms of deceit, Labour is setting a precedent by bringing in private contractors in the early hours of the morning."

At an angry meeting of Leeds Labour Party General Management Committee, Mudie accused 'communists' of leading the strike and failing to make the real negotiations known to the men. But as Harold Best says - "The strike has been solid throughout the seven weeks. The only workers to have gone back have done so on my instructions, because since reorganisation, they are no longer employed by Leeds Public Works Dept.. The two CP members have been the most moderate. One of them, Ken Smith, has been deposed as strike committee chairman because the men thought he was

attempting a sell-out."

Clearly, the implications of the actions of the Labour councils are extremely serious. Both in Glasgow where troops have been called in to break the dustmen's strike, and in Leeds, the Labour Party must deal with its representatives. In addition, the NUPE members in Leeds must call Mudie to account for his action at branch and district level. We must make it clear that the Labour Party and Trade Union representatives are in their positions to lead the struggles of workers and not to break them.

DONATIONS AND MESSAGES OF SUPPORT to: Electricians Strike Committee, c/o Leeds Trades Council Club, Saville Mount, Leeds 12.

## LABOUR RETREAT ON CLAY CROSS: DAVID SKINNER SPEAKS

AS WE GO TO press, the Government is putting through Parliament its Housing Finance (Special Provisions) Bill. The Bill exempts those Labour Councillors who defied the Tories' Housing Finance Act from surcharges totalling more than £1 million. It also removes from the Clay Cross councillors a five year ban on standing again in local elections. But the Bill does not lift the surcharge already imposed upon the Clay Cross Councillors.

The CHARTIST interviewed DAVID SKINNER, one of the leading Clay Cross councillors who was disqualified.

"This Bill is a disgrace. It is not carrying out the Labour Party Conference decisions of 1972 and 1973, the latter was passed almost unanimously—calling for all penalties to be retrospectively lifted. This Bill does not do it! There were about 400 Labour

councillors in about 20 local authorities, such as Camden, who refused to implement the Housing Finance Act at various stages. They ran up deficits in the Housing Revenue Account totalling about £1½ million. All this Bill does is to prevent the District Auditor in those authorities from surcharging them and stopping them from holding office.

That's good as far as it goes, but it doesn't go nearly far enough.

In Clay Cross, we've already been surcharged and disqualified. Our disqualification is removed, but we've still got the £7,000 surcharge hanging round our necks, as well as £5,000 costs. Never mind about this Special Fund. Who's going to pay? It will be Labour Party and trade union activists who will pay a fine that was imposed as part of a vendetta against Clay Cross Council and the working class as a whole.

The Labour Government should carry out Labour Party Conference

decisions. It should remove the penalties at a stroke. And it should remove the £1½ million owed by the local authorities. Otherwise the rent-payer and the rate-payer will have to pay.

We in Clay Cross Labour Party demand this course of action. Harold Wilson is trying to dictate to Transport House and to Labour Party Conference—just look at his behaviour on the Common Market. But the day of reckoning is near. We at rank and file level are the Labour Party, not Wilson, Callaghan, Jenkins and Prentice, and not well-to-do trade unionists like Jack Jones either. These are the people who have allowed two pickets to stay in jail.

We must move forward to the Labour Party Conference in October. Our first job is to get out of the Cancer Ward of the Common Market—then we'll remove the cancer from our own party.

You've asked me my reactions. I'm bloody disgusted!!!

## Women's TUC say yes to abortion on demand

BY ELIZABETH LAWSON

THE WOMEN'S TUC Conference at Hastings on 13 and 14 March considered far wider ranging topics than in previous years. The pretext was International Women's Year: the fact is, growing pressure from the whole women's movement has forced the TUC to discuss these broader issues.

The way in which the Women's Advisory Committee (some members sit on the TUC General Council) lags behind was shown by the carrying of increasingly radical amendments without their endorsement. Discussion ranged from the EEC, home-workers, transport, and housing, to abortion and contraception which had never been raised at this conference before. Quite an achievement!

It was Pat Knight of Croydon Trades Council who brought up the question of abortion. She asked why the TUC's "Twelve aims for women at work," unlike the "Working Women's Charter," does not include demands for the rights of abortion and contraception. She was brusquely informed by Marie Paterson from the chair that she should restrict her remarks to the TUC Charter which, however diluted and amorphous it might be, was the only official document for discussion by Conference.

### UNDERLINED

Ethel Chipchase, for the WAC, underlined this further by stating that the TUC could not possibly come out on such a "controversial" issue when there was no consensus in the individual trade unions. (And there certainly never could be without discussion!) The time arrived to debate the amendment which was ably moved by Judith Gray on behalf of ASTMS Medical Practitioners Section. The platform attempted to force her to remit. She refused. And what had originally been a motion calling only for increased finances for the NHS was amended to become an overwhelming demand that the TUC should seriously campaign for full contraception facilities and abortion on demand.

Unfortunately, what people like Chipchase steadfastly refused to recognise is that however one talks endlessly on equal pay and women's rights, none of these can even begin to come about without women achieving the freedom to decide whether or not they want children.

Simply regarding women as beings who sadly are burdened with the vast majority of household tasks and treated as second class citizens and must be helped in their misfortune and treated deferentially is not sufficient.

The TUC must launch an immediate fight around the demands contained in the Working Women's Charter. All militants should ensure that the demands are transformed from mere words on paper into the living struggle of working women as a whole.

# WELFARE STATE ON THE ROCKS

by Martin Cook

IN THESE DAYS of developing economic crisis, most workers see the attack on their living standards firstly in the obvious forms such as inflation. But there is also a more subtle danger. The "Welfare State", created after the last war in response to mass pressure by labour, is being bled dry by Government policy. The expanding capitalist economy of the 50s and 60s could afford some "welfare" crumbs for the people, but now public expenditure is seen as a mere "burden" on the "productive" free enterprise sector. Basically, the capitalists want enough social services to keep their workforce in one piece, and precious little more.

Denis Healey's last budget called for a limit of 2½ per cent real increase in public spending, a drastic cut from the 7 per cent growth rate of recent years. The recent Government White Paper makes it clear that this period of stagnation is to last till 1978-9 at least. So much for the argument of the "Social Contract" that we have our wages kept down in return for better social services! The cuts are being operated right across the board, often through pressure on local authorities.

## National Health Service

This is on the verge of collapse. In December 1973, £111 millions were slashed by the Tories. At the same time, drug firms announced record £353 million profits. Labour's Social Services Secretary, Barbara Castle, has restored less than half the cuts! Yet the British Medical Association reckons that £800 millions are needed to maintain, let alone improve services. Meanwhile, as the money-grubbing consultants grow fat from their income from private practice, hundreds die for lack of modern equipment and facilities that could save their lives.

## Housing

Homelessness and poor housing get worse and worse, especially in the big cities (a million Londoners live in overcrowded accommodation). Yet house building is being cut to the lowest level for years. The Greater London Council has just seen over half

## NO LEAD FROM LIASON COMMITTEE

ON SATURDAY, 22nd March the Liason Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions met for the first time in over a year. The LCD TU, which is firmly controlled by the Communist Party, was convened to outline a campaign of "struggle" to free the 'Shrewsbury Two' and against the Social Contract. The appalling attendance of 250-300 was a reflection of the manner in which the CP is at present organising to free the 'Two'.

No real attempt was made to mobilise the working class or indeed the CPs industrial membership. As usual, a declaration was presented to the conference, but no alternative proposals were permitted and discussion from the

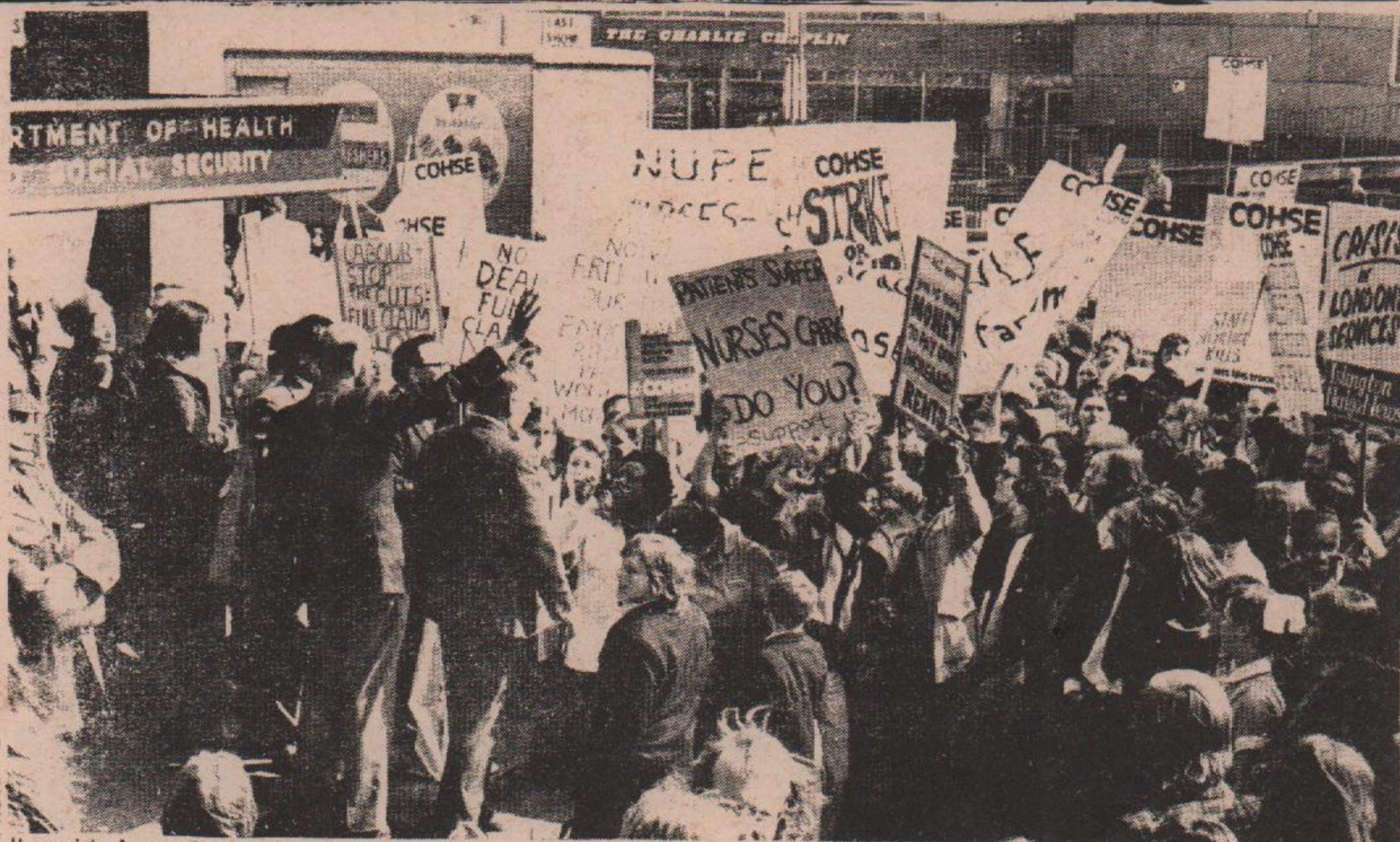


Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (report)  
Hospital workers fight against the cuts

of its requested cash for renovating council houses lopped off. This will mean virtually no new schemes will be started, leaving thousands on pre-war slum estates in misery. And rents will soon be upped by up to £1 per week on Housing Minister Crossland's instructions.

## Transport

Remember all the talk about getting people to use their cars less by subsidising and improving public transport? Well, just as the cost of petrol forces many of us off the roads, the Labour Government has decreed that the subsidies for local bus transport must be halved in the next two or three years. This means, 1) more drastic fare increases, 2) goodbye to more of the handful of remaining routes in country areas. London Transport fares have just gone up by 36%—so much for Labour's policy of free fares!

## Education

Again, most of the Tories' swingeing cuts in finance have not been re-instated by Reg Prentice. In London alone, the school building programme has been cut from £5 million to £700,000. Antiquated Victorian schools will remain in use even longer. Local education authorities will be unable to implement proper comprehensive schemes without new buildings. Teacher shortages will mean more part-time schooling.

Those in the greatest need will not be spared. Especially in the case of the True Blue Tory Councils like Bexley. They tried

to charge 50 pence for free O.A.P.s bus passes, until the GLC took them back. Instead of giving pensioners in Bexley a meal a day for nine pence, they will get one a week for 21 pence. One councillor said that the old people, because of only getting one meal, would enjoy it that much more! This sort of penny-pinching is becoming the rule all over the place.

The fight against the cuts must not be seen as a series of 'single issues'. In the first place, it must be linked up with the struggle of rank and file members of public service unions like NUT, NALGO, NUPE and GMWU to defend their wages and conditions.

## Freezing

The 'freezing' of job vacancies in Tower Hamlets, for example, has left 445 jobs out of 2,291 at the Town Hall unfilled. The local NALGO branch decided not to do work caused by these vacancies. Furthermore, we must not let people be conned by gutter press propaganda about 'overpaid and under-worked' local government workers. Living standards of public service workers have been falling behind for years.

Secondly, the rates issue must be taken up. Many ratepayers are working and middle class people who can ill-afford 40% or 50% increases on top of existing inflation. Their justifiable indignation can be used by fascist groups like the National Front as a battering ram to further bludgeon local authority services.

The answer is to avoid a fake 'choice' between higher rates and worse services and oppose both. This needs a campaign by unions and Labour Parties for the big city councils to defy the Government on this issue, and mobilize support from tenants AND ratepayers.

The Government will reply that 'we can't afford' to bail out local councils. The answer is clear: to NATIONALISE THE BANKS, which swallow a third of local authority income in debt charges. Or, to put it another way, 90% of council rents is the equivalent of the sum required to pay the interest on money loaned from the finance houses. We can further ask, how is it that a Labour Government can afford massive handouts to the police and private industry but reduce expenditure on social services to a nil-growth level?

floor was stifled.

by John Quirke

The Conference called for a "Day of Action" on May 1st in order to free the 'Two', but gave no indication of how this was to be organised. The call was placed on the TUC but no meetings were planned to ensure a massive strike on this day.

The poor organisation and lack of perspective from this conference goes hand in hand with the winding up of the North Wales Shrewsbury Defence Committee. Many CP militants along with thousands of other trade unionists will be asking: while Des and Ric are still behind bars how can the struggle to free them be run down?

THE FOLLOWING article has been submitted to the CHARTIST by a member of Newham North East Constituency Labour Party. It shows the extent to which the fight to remove Labour Education Secretary, Reg Prentice, from his Newham seat has advanced. Since the article was received further significant developments have occurred in Newham N.E.

On March 13, the CLP Executive Committee met. Of the numerous resolutions on the agenda critical of Prentice a motion expressing no confidence in him was passed by a substantial two-to-one majority. As we go to press the General Management Committee meets, with Prentice in attendance, to vote on the recommendation. If passed it will mean Prentice has lost the support of his local Party.

But this does not mean the automatic removal of Prentice or the loss of his seat. Three obstacles stand in the way. Firstly, Prentice himself. He has stated on several occasions that he will never be driven from public office. Even to the point of defying the decisions and wishes of Labour Party members.

Secondly, a motion of no confidence will start the process whereby Newham N.E. will be

brought into conflict with Transport House and the Party NEC. The NEC can refuse permission for the reelection of another candidate.

Finally, under the Labour Party reorganization proposals, Newham N.E.'s new structure has not received the approval of the NEC. Prentice could well go to the Regional Committee on this basis and declare the vote unconstitutional and therefore null and void.

What is clear is that Prentice's days in the Labour Party as an MP are numbered. It is high time that the fate of Prentice became that of those other fifth-columnists, Mayhew (ex-Labour MP for Woolwich East and Taverner (ex-Labour MP for Lincoln).

Prentice though, is merely the tip of an iceberg of Labour Party politicians who have long ago abandoned (or never possessed) any commitment to socialism or working class interests.

At a time of deep-seated crisis for British capitalism the Labour movement needs a consistent socialist leadership. A leadership which will not collaborate with our class enemies but will carry the struggle for state power and a workers' government through to the end. Prentice and many more in our Party stand in the way of this fight.

## An Inside Report from Newham N.E. Labour Party

THE inevitable removal of Reg Prentice from his sinecure in the Cabinet has now come about in all but fact. The time and manner of his departure must now be matters which are at the forefront of Harold Wilson's mind. There have been comments from some sections that this demotion might well be the cause for rebellion by right-wing groupings of MPs within the Parliamentary Labour Party. The strength of this argument can best be explored by examining Reg Prentice's standing with the Party members of his Constituency.

Towards the end of 1973, following demands by Reg Prentice such as calling for "moderates to stand up and be counted", he was confronted by a growing tide of criticism and censure from Constituency members. Indeed, during the course of a massively attended G.M.C. (Labour Party Management Committee), a formal vote of 'No Confidence' was narrowly defeated by just 4 votes. One would have thought that, in view of this, Prentice would have taken steps to reconsider his political stance and standing. However, not to be content with his ongoing carping and sniping at the active trade unionists in the country, he actually went on to say in his October '74 Election Address that what this country needed most was "A Government of National Unity", (nothing here about a Labour Government!). Again, whilst continuing to show a monumental inability for his own Departmental responsibilities, he had continued to fire his broadsides at both our trade union comrades and his Cabinet colleagues.

### Shrewsbury Pickets

Remember his attitude to the Shrewsbury pickets and our comrades still imprisoned on charges of conspiracy? Our Reg displayed absolutely no concern with their imprisonment or about the principles involved. His only action was to refuse to meet any delegations who wished to speak to him on the subject, no matter what their views on the issue might be. His only major public statement on the matter was to go on to say that any attempt to free the comrades involved was just going to turn them into "working class heroes".

As a result of his comments and attitudes on the Shrewsbury pickets and his own constituency Party members, the Newham N.E. L.P. received numerous motions from trade unions, Trade

Councils, Young Socialist groups and other Constituency Parties calling for his dismissal, votes of censure or No Confidence, and expulsion from the Party.

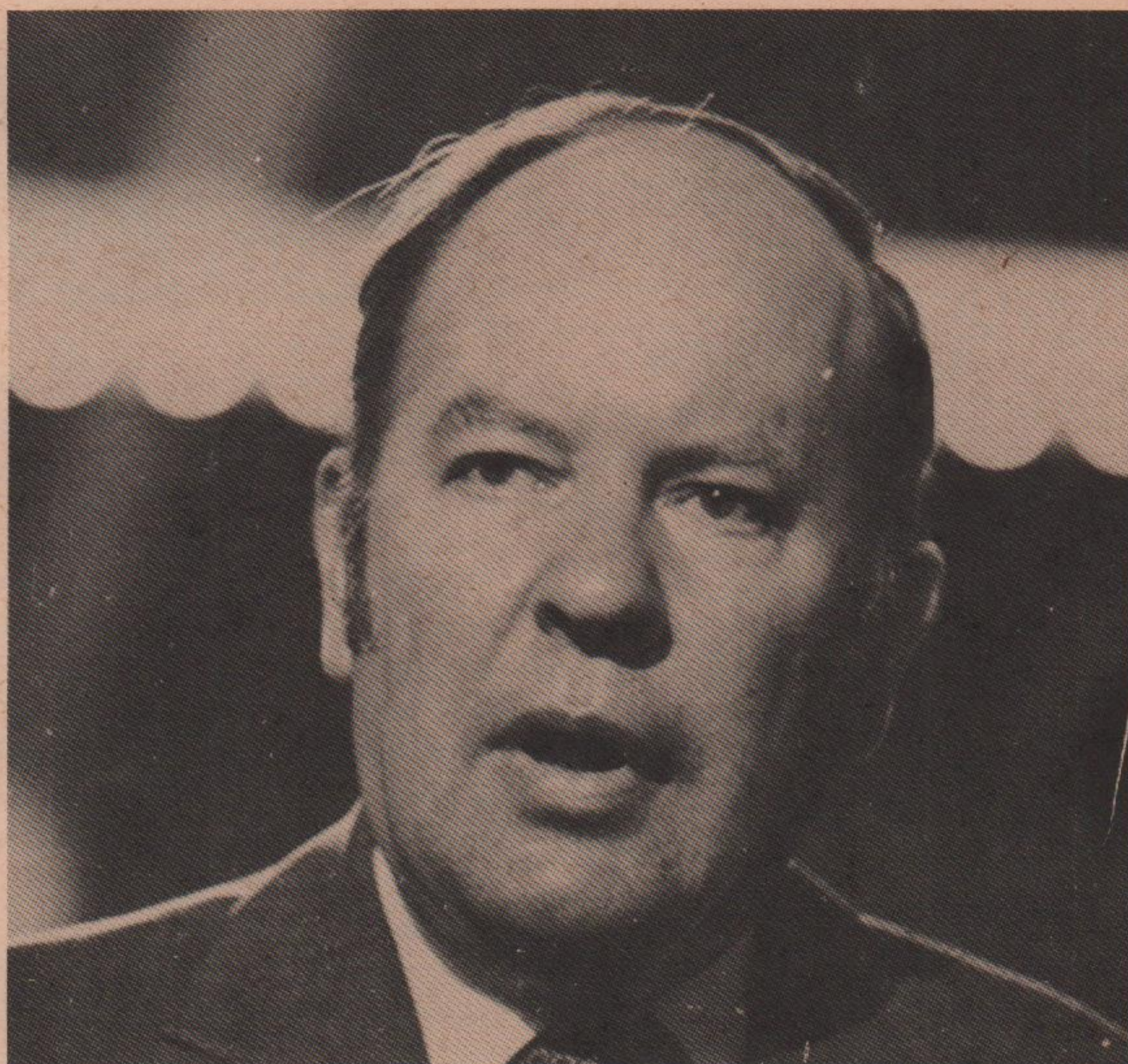
In view of the outrage which existed at the time, there can be no doubt that Prentice was treated very leniently by the Newham G.M.C. On this occasion, the G.M.C. unanimously moved a motion of Severe Censure on him. Once again, one would have thought that anyone, with any degree of common sense, would have paused to reflect on not only how suited was he to represent a Constituency whose views were so markedly different from his own but, also, were the policies and programme of the Labour Party the most apt platform from which he should be displaying his political views.

Needless to say, because of his political views, it wasn't long before he had blundered himself into yet another highly embarrassing situation. Following on the heels of the vote of censure by the Newham G.M.C. in January of this year, comments were passed in various wards about his suitability to represent the Constituency as a Labour MP.



Prentice refused to see workers who had marched to Parliament to demand the release of the Shrewsbury Two.

As a direct result of such comments by members of Central Ward, it was proposed by one of the senior members of the Ward that Reg Prentice be invited to attend an informal meeting with the Ward members. The underlying purpose of such a meeting being to establish a better relationship between Prentice and members of the Constituency Party. In compliance with the members' wishes, Tony Kelly, the Ward Secretary wrote to Reg Prentice and invited him to meet



# CAN NEWHAM REMOVE PRENTICE?

local Labour Party members and talk to them for a short space of time on a subject to be chosen by Reg Prentice. The date of the meeting was also largely left to Prentice in order that he should not be too inconvenienced by it.

The topic which he chose to talk about for the evening was "The Current Political Situation". The Ward officers accepted both his choice of topic and his suggested date (28th February). In order to preserve the informal and local nature of the meeting for the night, the Ward elected to regrettably turn down requests to attend which had been sent to the Ward Secretary by other Labour Party members.

On the night of the meeting, Prentice talked on his chosen theme (The Current Political Situation), in the course of which he touched on education, unemployment, inflation, the EEC referendum and, in passing, the Social Contract. This talk lasted for some 35 minutes and was given to an audience of three Ward Officers and nine members. Hardly a venue you might think for major pronouncements on aspects of policy, or criticism about progress on his own Department, let alone a Department which is the responsibility of a Cabinet colleague.

To further compound his political mis-judgement, he did not, in fact, deliver his infamous "welshing" speech at all. He simply announced to the national press his intention to do so! Whilst he made a brief comment during the course of his talk to the effect that a press release had been "previously" issued, he did not inform those present that it was supposed to contain the address which he was giving that evening. The actual text of the press release

was never revealed to the members at any time during the evening!

Feeling that he had got away with a highly dubious piece of in-Party back-stabbing, our Reg was riding on the crest of a wave until his most ardent supporters read their Saturday morning Daily Expresses. Here, they thought, was a 'Trotskyist-inspired plot' imputing Reg with having said outrageous things about the Social Contract and our trade union comrades. They knew better! They had been to the meeting and listened to him gloss over a whole range of subjects without going into any of them in any sort of depth. What they had considered to be a highly solid and non-controversial talk.

### problems

Here was where Reg's problems really started! The first to complain about the press release which he had given out were those who, under other circumstances, would normally have given him their support. They could not believe that Reg could have let THEM down by doing such a thing behind their backs!...and not to have made the speech as well!

Subsequently, a press statement was issued by Tony Kelly on behalf of the Ward. The statement indicated that the main reason for having called the meeting was an attempt to reduce the growing ill-feeling towards Prentice and to improve his standing amongst the Constituency members. Furthermore, that whilst the Social Contract had been mentioned in passing, there had not been any major pronouncements on it and, the term "welshing" was never used in the presence of members.

# Just Following 'Our' Leaders!

by Graham Bash

"It is no good blaming the declared enemies of the social contract... The fault lies with those who allow them to get away with it. Every member of the TUC should stump the country in support of the social contract. Every leading figure at district and branch level should give the same message. Every individual trade unionist must accept his personal share of responsibility. The contract was agreed by his delegates in his name."

"The Government have kept their side of the bargain. The trade unions must not waltz on theirs".

REG PRENTICE, Education Secretary. February 28th.

THE Labour Government's social contract policies have opened the door to dangerous attacks upon the trade unions from all wings of the Labour leadership. Harold Wilson, Denis Healey, Anthony Crosland and Michael Foot—all these are calling on workers to accept wage cuts to preserve the profits of the employers. And all these are intimidating trade unionists by using the threat of mass unemployment.

## 'Economic Illiteracy'

Reg Prentice is merely the most blatant exponent of these crude anti working class policies. Yet Michael Foot, himself a passionate supporter of the social contract, accused Prentice of "economic illiteracy". He declared that it was "economic illiteracy for anyone to talk as though the wages problem is the only problem, and that other parts of the social contract are irrelevant."

The CHARTIST is always very pleased to see those on the Left stand up for once, and attack outright enemies of the working class such as Prentice. But we cannot help asking Foot—just how much of a fight are you putting up, and what alternative strategy are you putting forward? It's no use whatsoever attacking Prentice, and then at the same time accepting the main premises of his argument.

The basis of Prentice's argument is that wages cause inflation. But the price of labour power (wages) is only one of many commodities which are rising in price and to put the blame for all other price increases on one particular commodity—namely labour power, flies in the face of reality. Moreover, the working class has no control over prices. It is the big monopolies and commodity speculators who control and continue to raise prices in an attempt to boost profits.

Instead of leading a struggle to take power from the capitalist monopolies and developing the fight for workers' control of production—the only way to end



"No Government even in ordinary times, let alone a time of world economic crisis, could have gone further in fulfilling the terms of the contract. That is why we, all of us, have the right now to ask that the lead given by our partners in the original contract finalised two years ago—the TUC General Council—be followed and their guidelines observed and honoured".

HAROLD WILSON, Prime Minister. March 3rd.

inflation, Foot absolves the capitalists and tells workers to make sacrifices.

Foot, by attacking merely the form of Prentice's arguments on the Social Contract, and not the content, accepts his conclusions.

## Big Lie

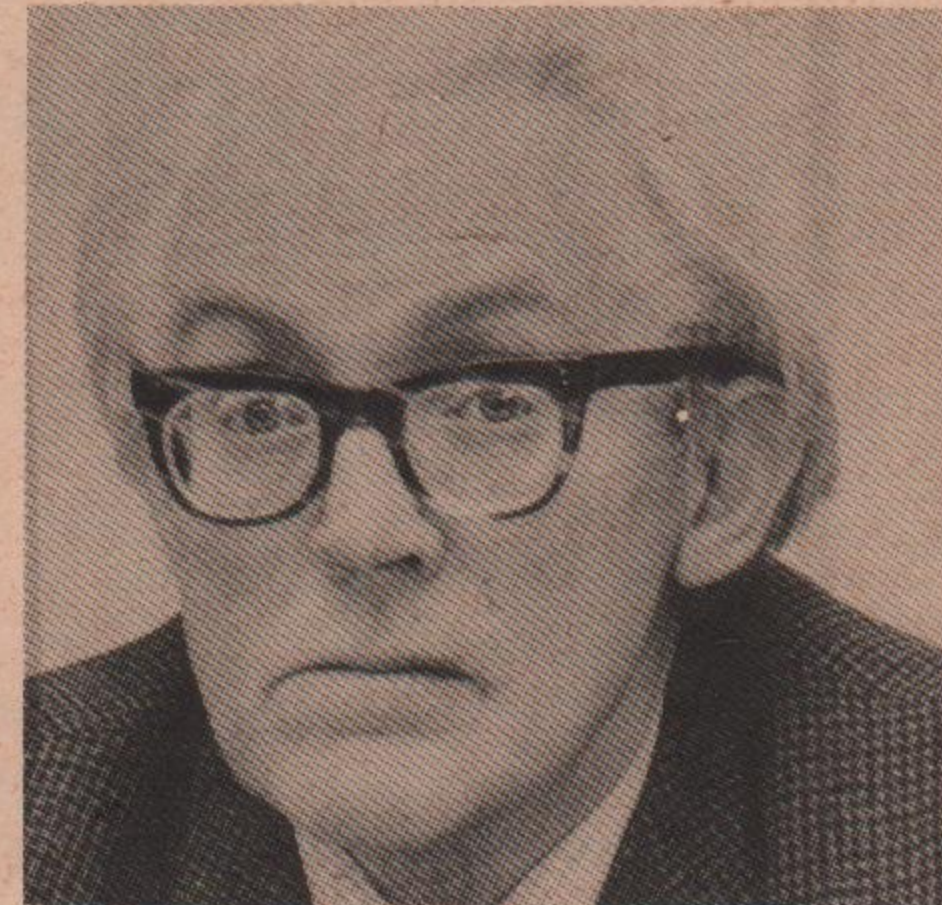
The big lie that wages are responsible for inflation must not be accepted. Even official figures show this to be false. The recent publication of February wage rises by the Department of Employment shows an annual average increase of almost 30 per cent. This has been eagerly snatched up by the capitalist press. "Wages running ahead of prices" the headlines screamed.

Even by using the 'average' figure of 30 per cent which disguises the fact that low income workers do less well in achieving wage rises than highly organized workers, we can see wages are running well BELOW the rate of inflation.

Figures published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) showed that prices in Britain rose by 2.6 per cent in January. This is an annual rate of 32 per cent. Clearly wages are already behind. But when we deduct increased tax, insurance and loss of earnings-related benefits wage increases are much closer to the 20% mark. Overall it is incontestable that

"The Social Contract remains our best shield against worsening inflation and rising unemployment".

MICHAEL FOOT, Secretary of State for Employment February 14th.



"It is better that more people should be in work, even if that means accepting lower wage increases on average, than that those lucky enough to keep their jobs should scoop the pool while millions are living on the dole".

DENIS HEALEY, Chancellor of Exchequer, January 10th.



HEALEY



CROSLAND

"There have still been too many groups which have settled outside the Contract. In doing so, they damage the country and ultimately they damage themselves... I am a strong supporter of the Social Contract, for the only practical alternative now available would be either deliberately to create or openly to tolerate large scale unemployment".

ANTHONY CROSLAND, Secretary of State for the Environment. February 24th.

the value of real wages — even according to the social contract dictum—are not keeping pace with the soaring cost of living.

## Emotive Language

Foot, ignoring these points, attacks Prentice, above all, because the latter's emotive language makes it more difficult for Foot to persuade trade union leaders to accept wage restraint. As the Financial Times put it, "Mr Wilson is known to be furious, however, at the emotive phrases used by Mr Prentice which he believed have made Mr Foot's delicate relations with the unions harder to maintain." Foot had made some progress, particularly with trade union leaders such as Len Murray who had promised that "It is not our policy that unions should base claims on anticipated future price-increases."

Michael Foot should realise that in order to produce a strategy for fighting inflation it is first necessary to understand what causes it. No serious analysis of price rises could conclude that they are produced by workers fighting for a better standard of living. We reject the sort of "economic illiteracy" which says that one man's wage increase is another man's dole queue. We call upon the Labour Government, if they wish to maintain this view, to provide the Labour movement with the actual facts and figures of the case by opening the books of industry.

On the basis of this concrete information the fight for a cast-iron defense of living standards—a rising scale of wages and a sliding scale of hours without loss of pay can immeasurably be strengthened. It will also reveal that workers can accept no responsibility for inflation and the capitalist crisis.

The entire Trade Union Movement has been deeply outraged by the continuous insults which he has directed at them, and he has now gone beyond the limits even of the extraordinary degree of tolerance which has been shown him by his own union the T.G.W.U. At a Regional Meeting to be held this month, a decision as to whether he should be excluded from the list of sponsored M.P.s is being put up for consideration. When Prentice is dropped from the T.G.W.U. list of M.P.s he will be in a position whereby, should he still wish to stand as a candidate, he would have to fund his own campaign entirely.

Judging from Prentice's latest press statements he is already aware of the almost inevitable chain of events which must now follow. When confronted with the question of his suitability to be a Labour Party M.P., he replied by saying that whether or not he became an M.P. or not rested with the electorate of some 60,000 people. Of course this would be so if he now intended to fight the seat as an independent candidate in any forthcoming General Election against an official Labour Party candidate!.. This threat coming from a sitting member of our present Labour Party Cabinet!

## Resignation insufficient

Reg Prentice must go!... His resignation is no longer sufficient! He must not be allowed to continue to expound his cancerous views from within the ranks of the Labour Party! It may well be that he intends to leave the Party of his own accord, but we must not wait for this decision to be made on the basis of how politically advantageous it is to Reg Prentice.

His immediate expulsion from the Labour Party must follow his rejection by Newham North-East C.L.P. Make sure that your comrades in Newham know that they have your total support in the task that is before them! Harold Wilson is not faced with the hard choice that on first glance might appear to have to be made. The scalpel is in the hands of our comrades in Newham North-East; the task must fall to them to remove this alien parasite from the body of the Labour movement. There are political parties which might be able to contain political views such as his, but the LABOUR PARTY is not one of them!

## Prentice and the Tribune Group

UP TILL 1972, Reg Prentice was very much a nonentity as a Labour MP. During the 1966-70 Wilson administration he had been a junior Minister of Education, Minister of Public Building and Works and then of Overseas Development. He resigned from the government in 1969 in peculiar circumstances. Benn said at the time, "People like Reg Prentice are the soul of the Labour Party."

But in 1972, as shadow Minister for Employment, he made his notorious attack on the five dockers gaoled in Pentonville prison under the Tory Industrial Relations Act. This, and other statements attacking trade union-

ists fighting for their rights, laced with defence of the "rule of law", brought him into prominence.

These events tended to obscure a far more serious development. For in November 1972, the Tribune Group adopted Prentice as a candidate for the Tribune slate in the Shadow Cabinet elections. As a result of this sponsorship, Prentice came top of the poll. So at a time when Prentice had provoked the anger and hostility of the organised labour movement he was being embraced and promoted by the ostensibly left Tribunites.

The circumstances of this at first sight bizarre event was Prentice's reputed opposition to

the Common Market. Vouched for by Fred Peart - now a pro-marketeer - as "rock-solid" against the EEC, Prentice was seen as a valuable ally.

Now an ardent supporter of the Common Market and an even more outspoken critic of the trade union movement, he point-blank refused to see a delegation from his East Ham constituency on the Jan.14 TUC lobby for the Shrewsbury 2. His adoption tells us more about the Tribune Group than about Reg Prentice.

Many Labour Party members and supporters will be asking how many more Prentices lurk in the cosy confines of the Tribune Group?

# PORTUGAL: After Bank Nationalisation

## WHICH WAY NOW?

By Chris Knight

LAST MONTH, the workers of Portugal shook the world. On March 11, at 11.30 in the morning, supporters of former-fascist General Spínola, including most of the Portuguese air force, attempted a military coup. What happened next was perhaps the most important development in Europe since the war.

### WORKERS' RESPONSE

As planes and paratroops attacked the barracks of the First Light Artillery Regiment (well-known for its left-wing sympathies) on the outskirts of Lisbon, workers all over the country were roused. Factory sirens began wailing continuously in Barreiro, an industrial district south of Lisbon. Workers streamed out of the factories and formed barricades and pickets across all the main roads. In Sacavem, near the bombarded barracks, four bulldozers and tons of cement blocked the main road. Outside the bombarded barracks a crowd began to mass. The "Spinolist" paratroops, surrounded, were shouted at: "The people are not with you!" Defeated and confused, they began handing out their weapons to the crowd.

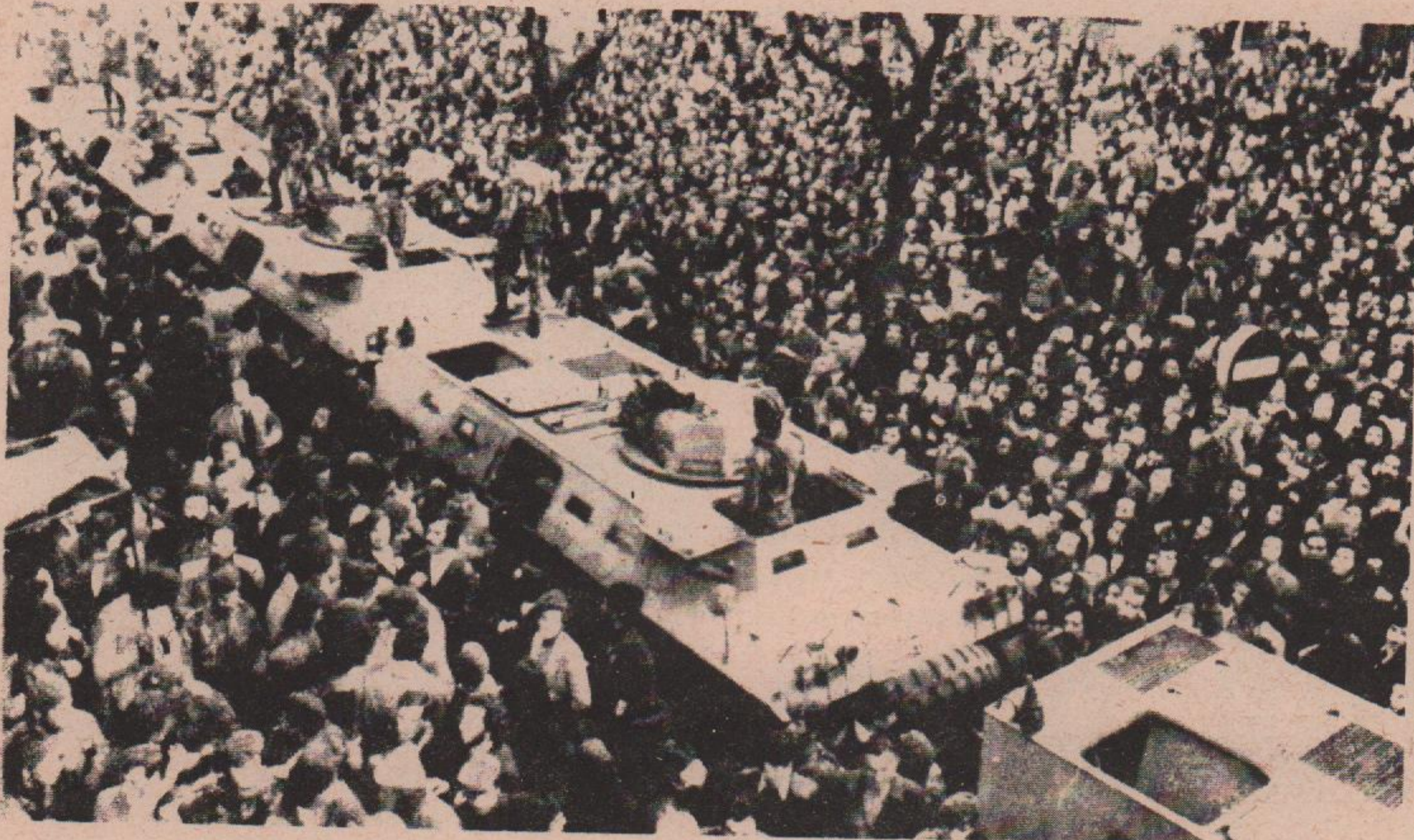
### DUAL POWER

Within the state, a new force was arising—a "state within a state"—with its own armed forces and instruments of rule. All over the country, known fascists and their financial backers were arrested by groups of armed workers. Cars were stopped and searched. The frontier roads to Spain were blocked. Newspaper workers printed special editions of the main papers, and thousands of leaflets were distributed. Huge demonstrations jammed the streets of the main cities.

The bank workers went on strike to prevent the capitalists from transferring their money abroad. Ignoring the rules of capitalist "confidentiality", they published documents showing to all how the bankers had been secretly financing fascist parties and pocketing huge sums for themselves and their relatives into the bargain. The bank-workers refused to return to work unless the banks were immediately nationalized, many of them even threatening to seize the banks themselves if this were not done.

The workers' official leaders were helpless. Ever since the "democratic" revolution of April 25 last year, the Communist leaders had been against arming the workers, against strikes and occupations which threatened the "stability of the economy", against exposing the capitalists' books and secret documents, against nationalizing any major sectors of the economy. Now they looked on helplessly as their own rank-and-file supporters outstripped them and power slipped into the factories and streets.

Eating their former words, the "democratic" Army officers and Communists in charge of the Provisional Government had to bow to the new power. They had to nationalize the banks—an enormously



THE STRUGGLE FOR PORTUGAL IS REFLECTED IN THIS LISBON STREET SCENE: ANGRY CROWD BESIEGES NATIONAL GUARD HEADQUARTERS

important step in Portugal where the banks have a large stake in all sectors of industry and the economy. They had to imprison 39 military officers and most of the country's top bankers and financiers who had been arrested by groups of workers and soldiers. And they have had to leave workers holding, in some cases, arms, and in many cases a large share of control in many of the largest factories in Portugal.

### THRUST FROM BELOW

Ever since the revolution first broke out on April 25 last year, the pattern has been the same: it has been the ordinary workers and rank-and-file soldiers who have forced the pace, while their leaders have tried to hold them back. It was so when the fascist regime was overturned: General Spínola completely opposed the revolutionary "coup" carried out by junior officers, who themselves acted only to contain the mounting anger of the lower ranks and of the working class throughout Portugal. It was so a few weeks later, when the workers exercised their new-found freedoms with a tremendous strike-wave, which the Communist leaders denounced as "the first offensive of fascist reaction". It was the same pattern again in July, when President Spínola dismissed his Cabinet and attempted to give himself "Gaullist" presidential powers. The Armed Forces Movement and the Communists acted only at the last moment, when it was clear that failure to do so would have led to an explosion of anger from the working class. And the pattern was repeated in September, when a right-wing rally linked with a coup attempt was foiled by tremendous workers' demonstrations and the refusal of a battalion of paratroops to obey Spínola's orders.

### FAR-REACHING

Last month's attempt at counter-revolution—the third in less than a year—has had the most

far reaching effects of all. The Army is now deeply split, with the overwhelming mass of the lower ranks on the side of the workers. There can now be no question but that the workers could take power quickly and with little or no bloodshed if only their leaders wanted to.

### UNITY WITH LIBERALS

What arguments can the Communist leaders now put up against fighting to take full power from the capitalist state? The need for unity with the Catholic and Liberal parties? Last May, the Communists insisted that "the most urgent tasks at the moment for Portugal are the unity between Communists, Socialists, Catholics, Liberals and others." (Morning Star, May 18). This was used as an argument against demands for nationalization. But the workers have now forced the banning of the so-called "Liberal" and "Christian Democrat" parties, along with the "Centre Democrats" and others. These parties were led by former fascists and found to be storing weapons and engaging in armed fascist conspiracies. This was bound to be the case, because in a backward country like Portugal, the capitalists are too weak to be able to contain the power of the working class by democratic means.

### FREE ELECTIONS

This is exactly the reason why all the other Communist arguments about the need for unity with "democrats" in the common struggle for "democracy" are nonsensical. In relation to the question of "free elections", a real Communist party in the present situation would put forward a perfectly clear and consistent argument. It would declare that if all the workers' parties and organizations—including the lower ranks of the Armed Forces and any officers elected by them—were to destroy the remnants of the fascist state now, along with the capitalist class it protects, the way to free elections would be made not harder but easier.

Of course, when even the ruling class itself is forced to concede elections—however sham these may be—it may be useful to participate. Unfortunately, the elections planned for April 25 will be unusually meaningless even by usual bourgeois standards. The ruling army officers of the so-called "Revolutionary Council" will continue to hold real power, whoever "wins".

### ALTERNATIVE

Instead of fostering illusions in this charade, a real Communist party would be the foremost advocate of genuinely free elections, insisting on complete freedom for all parties except, of course, those engaged in armed attempts to restore the fascist regime.

### UNITED FRONT

What is needed now in Portugal is a united front of all the workers' parties, not only to defend the democratic gains of the revolution but also to take full power from the remnants of the fascist state apparatus and the class it represents. The seizure of power by the jointly-organized workers' parties could only be carried out in an atmosphere of fullest workers' democracy. To unite the various parties, genuinely democratic councils of workers should be formed on the model of the original Russian Soviets of 1917. Only the united efforts and initiatives of all the workers' parties could establish and defend such councils. The only possible grounds for expulsion from them would be the use of violence by a party against a fellow working class organization.

### REAL DEMOCRACY

The transfer of power to these councils would enable the whole working class to choose for itself its own future. Which industries to nationalize, when and how to do it, how to manage the various industries—all these questions could be decided by the workers themselves in elections held in every factory and work-place in the country. The workers would naturally insist on the right immediately to recall their representatives at any time. And they would insist that those elected should have real power to act and carry out decisions directly.

### WORKERS' POWER

The Communist Party insists that the fundamental prerequisite for all further progress in Portugal is democracy. They are right. What they obscure is the fact which all recent experience in Portugal has proven—that the only class with a real interest in democracy is the working class, and that only when the different parties and organizations of the working class have full power can a genuine process of "democratization" begin to unfold.

# INDOCHINA: Liberation forces near to victory

THE AMERICAN puppet governments in Cambodia and South Vietnam have suffered severe military defeats since the beginning of the year. In fact, it was on New Year's Day that the Khmer Rouge - a 75,000 strong mishmash of Hanoi aligned stalinists and supporters of deposed President Sihanouk - launched their new offensive which has given them control over virtually the entire length of the Mekong river from the South Vietnam border to the capital Phnom Penh. They have also now surrounded the capital which, though poorly defended in places, has not yet received a direct assault.

## air-lift

The neighbouring airport of Pochentong has for weeks been under rocket and artillery attack. This has hampered to some degree the airlifting of arms and food by the U.S. government. It is only this air lift which is prolonging the life of the present Cambodian government under Lon Nol.

This regime came into being in 1970 after President Sihanouk was overthrown in a CIA directed coup. Now there is almost no question of U.S. troops being

by Clive Pullinger

sent in as in 1970 two months after the coup. The American government wants to continue pouring money in to prop up the Lon Nol regime but is facing opposition from the U.S. Congress.



Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan and Sihanouk

The most dramatic turn of events has come about in adjacent Vietnam. The NLF and North Vietnamese armies following on from their capture of Phuoc Long province in January have taken the Central Highlands town of Ban Me Thuot. A widespread rout of government forces fol-



Guerrilla troops of the Khmer Rouge

owed with the abandonment of key towns like Quang Tri, Pleiku, Kontum, and An Loc with the old imperial capital of Hue under siege as this paper goes to press.

The NLF now entirely controls nine out of South Vietnam's 44 provinces. With Highway One, the main road connecting Saigon with the North of the country cut, the government troops in the North around Da Nang will have to be supplied by air and sea.

The political strategy of the NLF and Khmer Rouge is the same. Phnom Penh is surrounded but the Khmer Rouge have not attempted to take it. The military situation around Saigon is pointing in the same direction. Liberation forces in both countries are trying to bring pressure on what they see as the more progressive elements amongst the ruling class to bring about coalition governments and what the U.S. embassy in Phnom Penh now also wants, an 'orderly transfer of power'

It is unlikely that Prince Sihanouk will be returned to power by the Khmer Rouge in the way King Michael of Rumania was by Stalin at the end of World War II. Sihanouk is too shrewd and knows such a popular front government, given the present balance of forces would only be a temporary step towards the formation of a deformed workers state. Hence Sihanouk's offer to become a "roving ambassador" for a Khmer Rouge government.

Clearly what the stalinists in Moscow, in Peking and Hanoi fear most is the possibility of a mass uprising which would undermine the present bureaucratic leadership of the Indochinese workers and peasants and lead to the formation of a democratic workers state. Even if a revolutionary socialist leadership does not emerge in Indochina during the next period it would be wrong to ignore the significant defeat the formation of even deformed workers states in Cambodia and South Vietnam would be for American imperialism.

## REVIEW: Alternative White Paper on Ireland by T.O.M.

THE PUBLICATION of the "Alternative White Paper on Ireland" by the Troops Out Movement (TOM) is a significant contribution to the campaign against British imperialism in Ireland.

Beginning from a recognition that the central question is the withdrawal of British troops, the TOM pamphlet attempts to set the current manoeuvres of the Labour Government in their overall historical context. In this way, it provides socialists with an arsenal of information which can be used to combat the anti-Irish nationalism that is rife in the Labour and trade union movement.

## artificial

The pamphlet draws detailed attention to the thoroughly artificial nature of the six-county Northern Ireland statelet, explaining that the partition of Ireland was "clearly a totally undemocratic act, being against the expressed will of the overwhelming majority of the Irish people," who had given a decisive verdict in favour of independence in the 1918 General Election by returning 75 Sinn Fein MPs out of a total of 103 seats. The response of British imperialism to this expression of Irish national aspirations was to try using the "Black and Tans" to murder, torture and burn the Irish people into submission with tactics which Hitlerite fascism was to learn many lessons from. The Irish people organised militarily through the Irish Republican Army (IRA) to defend themselves and eventually inflict defeat on the British Army.

At a time when British policy was in tatters, the bourgeois nationalist leaders of the IRA

# 'TROOPS OUT' IS THE MESSAGE

by  
Peter Gold



helped it off the hook by signing the 1921 Treaty which established John Bull's political slum—the Ulster statelet.

Since 1921, all British policy has been devoted to cobbling together a political justification for this reactionary partition of Ireland and maintaining, when necessary, with force, the Protestant Ascendancy which buttresses it. The pamphlet shows very effectively how this was done up until 1968 through "gerrymandering", that is, fixing the electoral boundaries to achieve the desired results: "The Unionists had a majority only in an unbroken area smaller than two counties.

Of the one and a quarter million people of the six counties at the time of Partition, more than half were concentrated in the city of Belfast, in County Antrim and the northern half of County Down. In this area there were 552,000 Unionists, and 149,000 Nationalists. In the four and a half remaining counties, there were 281,000 Nationalists and 268,000 Unionists."

Thus, despite the fact that the republican population had the dominant part of the population

in 4½ of the six counties, the Unionists gave themselves an in-built majority by fixing the electoral boundaries.

Since 1945, the bulk of British investment has been channelled into the twenty-six county Republic which has led to a diminishing role for the six counties in the overall designs of British imperialism. Southern Ireland is now British capital's third largest market. The Protestant Ascendancy nowadays gets in the way of this. As we said in the January issue of the Chartist:

"The Loyalist-Protestant monster has got out of control and has the power to upset the plans of its British creator...it is a major obstacle to long-term British imperialist policy in Ireland, which rests on the cultivation of profitable economic relations with the whole of Ireland...The determination of the Catholic workers to defend themselves and the refusal of the protestants to accept any reduction in their illusory privileges now grip the ruling class's policy like the jaws of a vice."

Since 1970, four attempts have been made to solve this crisis — all backed by the force of the British army. Stormont failed; Direct Rule failed; the short-lived Sunningdale Executive failed — brought down by the Ulster Workers' Council "strike", and now direct rule has been restored.

All these failures testify to the fact that there can be no "British solution" for Ireland, which is why all socialists should recognise the importance of the fight for the withdrawal of British troops and for Irish national self-determination. The pamphlet correctly asserts that only the recognition of Ireland's right to total independence can provide any answers for the Irish people.

The first step towards this is the immediate and complete withdrawal from N. Ireland of the British army which is not and never could be neutral. To build a mass movement in the working class for these internationalist demands against the Labour Government's treachery is now an urgent need. It is not a question of the troops "gobbling up the public money" nor of "letting the Irish kill each other".

The interests of Irish and British workers are identical. For that reason, we must stand in full solidarity with the struggle against British imperialism. It is essential that British socialists understand the real history of imperialism in Ireland and the need to get the troops out. This pamphlet will help us all in the fight for that understanding.

Available from Brixton Books Service,  
82, Loughborough Rd., London, SW9, price 15p.

# young socialist NEWS

## WHICH WAY FOR Y.S.?

THE 1975 Conference of Labour Party Young Socialists provides working class youth with an opportunity to thrash out some of the central questions confronting the Labour Movement. The struggles against wage-cutting inflation, mass unemployment, the cuts in health and education, the struggles in Ireland, the fight for womens' rights, against racialism and ultra-right reactionary groups that are emerging, and the fight for a United Socialist States of Europe, will be under discussion. These are the questions that will shape our movement as we take up the struggle for socialism.

The YS National Committee has prepared, in its document "Perspectives for Britain" an analysis of past events: "The experience of every Labour government since 1924 has been that either a Labour government must break the power of big business or else big business rapidly breaks the Labour government on the rocks of economic crisis." The future facing a Labour government that confronts big business is also clearly spelt out: "The ruling class, with a million threads joining them to the police and army chiefs would attempt to provoke disorder and call on the army to

### A WOMANS RIGHT

#### TO CHOOSE BY LIZ ADAMS

AT A WEEK-END conference held in Nottingham on the 23-24th. March, about 150 delegates from womens' groups and political organisations met to discuss abortion and contraception. The most urgent item on the agenda was the discussion of a united national campaign against the proposed new Abortion Bill.

At present doctors can interpret the 1967 Abortion Act to allow NHS abortion on social grounds. This new bill sponsored by Labour MP James White would virtually outlaw NHS abortions on anything other than medical grounds. This would encourage back-street abortions and a continuation of unwanted pregnancies for women who can't afford the exorbitant cost of private abortion.

This restrictive and repressive bill must be opposed before it becomes law. The conference decided to launch over the next three months an extensive campaign to include petitioning lobbying MPs, leafleting and demonstrations. In addition, it urges Labour Party members to support the position of four women Labour MPs who are campaigning against the minority representation

settle accounts with the working class." The job of the Labour leaders is also clearly defined: (they should)....."mobilise the millions of trade unionists and Labour supporters.... appeal to the rank-and-file soldiers, the workers in uniform, to come over to the side of the Labour movement and its government..."

But what is to be the role of the YS? What are we to do in the coming months? On this the document is completely inadequate: "It is really a question of convincing every GMC of the need for a thoroughgoing socialist programme.....of vetting every single MP..."

In reality the socialist programme means nothing unless it is concretely related to the living struggles of the working class in defence of jobs and living standards. The programme must become a weapon used by every worker in strikes and occupations and in the struggles against rent, rate and fare increases. This must be tied up with the struggle against right-wing MPs in the GMCs. The GMCs themselves must be turned into organisers of local trade unionists, community militants and tenants. This fight involves a struggle against all forms of class collaboration in the trade unions and Labour Party. It involves the fight to build a new, revolutionary leadership in the Labour movement, to put flesh and blood into the ideas in the programme. It is around these perspectives that the Conference must organise.

of women on the select committee considering the new bill. Conference urged all working class organisations to give active support to this campaign by supporting the slogan: A woman's right to chose!

### Free the 14!

THE two week long committal proceedings against supporters of the "British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign" came to an end in Mid-March with the magistrate deciding to press ahead with 28 out of the original 29 charges levelled against the 14 defendants.

The 14 are now awaiting trial at the Old Bailey on charges relating to their distribution amongst serving soldiers of a leaflet entitled "Some information for Discontented Soldiers". The leaflet addresses itself to soldiers who do not wish to serve overseas in the six counties of Northern Ireland presently under British

## FREE DESMOND TROTTER

DESMOND TROTTER, activist in the Movement for a New Dominica, has been sentenced to hang for the alleged murder of an American tourist. At the same time Dominican secret police and agents of the big banana plantations owned by Van Geest, shoot starving Dominicans who, suffering under 60% unemployment, resort to stealing food.

(except the Free Masons!) and in particular "that society or association of persons commonly called - THE DREADS." Anyone suspected of being a member of such societies was (and is) liable to arrest and imprisonment, with the police being given wide powers of arrest and entry.

It was with the shooting of an American tourist that the Domin-



This is the situation in Dominica and most of the Caribbean states - cheap labour markets for international big business administered by corrupt 'Labour' governments. In fact there is a total absence of development (typical of British colonial rule in the West Indies). Most homes have no running water, no proper sewage system, poor roads and drainage. Most productive lands are owned by a few big estate owners and are non-productive as far as the needs of most Dominicans are concerned. The profits from the citrus fruits and bananas, Dominica's main exports sail straight out of the island into the coffers of Van Geest.

It was to end this situation that the Movement for a New Dominica got under way. Organised mainly around unemployed youth, who wore their hair long in defiance of the authorities, they became known as the "dreads". The so called 'Labour' government of Dominica acted against this Movement. An Act was passed - the Prohibited and Unlawful Societies and Associations Act. This outlawed "secret" societies

army occupation. It suggests various ways in which a serving soldier might leave the army, including claiming conscientious objection on religious grounds and also 'buying' oneself out.

The bulk of the 28 charges now outstanding are brought under the "Incitement to Disaffection Act" of 1934 and the Army Act. They carry sentences of imprisonment for an unlimited period, possibly months or years. Conspiracy is, as usual, another of the charges, carrying with it the possibility of further indefinite gaol sentences.

These charges should not be treated lightly by the labour movement. Theoretically, there is no reason why the same charges should not be brought against labour movement activists trying to recruit servicemen and women into the trade union movement.

Every effort should be made to gain support for the demand to

ican authorities decided to use the incident to make an example of two suspected members. One of these was released due to insufficient evidence. The other, Desmond Trotter was sentenced to hang on some pretty dubious evidence.

At the moment the appeal is being heard. It will probably come before the Privy Council in London. The British Labour and trade union movement therefore has a very concrete role to play. Our Labour MPs and the Labour government must be forced to work for the release of Desmond Trotter. The Movement for a New Dominica must be allowed the right to organise and agitate. This Easter's National YS Conference must accept the emergency resolution from Surbiton YS. Black and white youth must be mobilised to free Desmond Trotter and for full independence and rights for the Dominican people. BY KEVIN MOORE

### £300 FIGHTING FUND

SEND in the money as quickly as possible as we are getting behind in the fund. Our readers will note the improved typing techniques used in this issue of the CHARTIST. We aim to make further improvements in future editions, but new equipment costs money - money which we need desperately. At the half way stage we are only just over the £100 mark, and we've got to reach £300 by July 1st.

SPECIAL THANKS THIS MONTH TO:  
B.T. £5. J.C. £10. "A.P. £1.

and to a number of comrades in the London, Leeds and Manchester areas. But the funds must come in. Send your contributions to:

CHARTIST TREASURER,  
82 Loughborough Rd., London, SW.9

unconditionally release the 14 and also, for the move undertaken by Maureen Colquhoun, the Labour MP for Northampton North, calling for the repeal of the "Disaffection Act".

CONTACT the 14's Defence Group for speakers at meetings etc. and further information about the Defence campaign at:  
BWNIC Defence Group, Box 69, c/o Kings Cross Rd., London WC1.