

# E.E.C.



## TUTORIAL STATEMENT

NO AMOUNT of references to "the historic meeting" or "the long and serious debate" will convince the majority of workers that March 11th's Common Market renegotiation meeting in Dublin was anything but a trivial, ritual bit of wheeler-dealing.

What were its results? It was agreed that Britain did not have to harmonise its VAT rulings with the rest of the Market — an agreement which had been reached in all its details bar the signatures several months ago, but was left until now so that the impact would be greater.

### Summit

The Summit also agreed to pay back some of Britain's Common Market budget contribution if it proved to be too high. And it agreed that Commonwealth countries would have access to the EEC without being bound to return the favour.

And that was it.

The capitalist press, which is generally in favour of entry, has been trying to dress up this irrelevant small talk as if it were a hard fought and crucial political victory. "Despite heavy political pressures", records the Financial Times, "Mr. Wilson failed to secure that cheese would be included in the current review of the New Zealand arrangement. ... But the other countries finally agreed that cheese would be given 'due attention' with appropriate urgency..." And they have

been trying to convince us that the outcome of these talks plays some part in Wilson's thinking! As if his thinking isn't strictly determined by the general will of the capitalists.

But what ought plainly to be seen as farce by the left has been seen as 'tragedy' by many who call themselves socialists. The *Morning Star*, newspaper of the Communist Party, which typifies the approach of the "left" on the question of the EEC, headlined its report of the Dublin meeting "Surrender of UK interests by Wilson". Not the slightest pretence was made to look at the agreement — seeing as they thought it was important — in terms of how it affects the working class.

### Litany

Instead what we have is a litany of references to "a complete surrender of British interests" and other such nationalist clap-trap. The only interests British workers should be considering are the interests of the working class and its potential allies, the working class of other countries. For the workers of a developed, imperialist nation, consideration of so-called "national interest" can only be consideration of the interests of the princes, profiteers and parasites of industry and finance.

The omission of any reference to the working class is not accidental. The whole, tired debate is after all of no

# Workers' fight

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# 'YES' OR 'NO' — IT DOESN'T MATTER

relevance to the action of the working class. The working class has nothing to gain from a capitalist Common Market — a bosses' big business club, as it has been described. **But likewise it has nothing to gain from the only alternative being offered: a capitalist Britain.** This is no less a bosses' club — just a bosses' club with 'aliens excluded' written on the door.

The entire issue of the EEC has been a diversion —

where it has been taken up at all — from the real problems of the working class. And it has been one element in the strengthening of nationalist currents within the working class and within the left of the labour movement.

The 'Get Britain Out' campaign has been fought in the way it was bound to be fought: boosting illusions in the importance of parliament, boosting insular national pride and boosting the kind of patriotic pride

that would normally have brought hoots of laughter from a left wing audience.

WORKERS FIGHT alone has said from the beginning: the choice is not a choice for workers; it is a choice for the bosses — let them make it. Wichever way it goes our class will be fighting to rid itself of capitalist exploitation and it will be doing that in cooperation with our brothers and sisters abroad.

That was the position of

many other groups claiming to be revolutionary ... until the tide started to turn the other way. One after another these groups trimmed their sails to the prevailing wind.

So much so, that today the common idea is that "Out" is the slogan of the left.

**We unequivocally recommend DON'T VOTE. A vote one way or the other is a vote for one or another solution for capitalism.**

**UNDER** the glittering chandeliers of President Lon Nol's palace in Phnom Penh, capital of Cambodia, the dismissal of the nation's top military commander is celebrated by the guests to the popping of champagne corks. And the sacked general himself is among the guests.

Outside, the noise is louder, for the national liberation army, the Khmer Rouge, has taken the entire country except for the capital. Phnom Penh has a refugee population now twice the size of its normal pre-war population. The price of rice doubles in a week. Everywhere there is black marketeering. To make it difficult, the rice is distributed in cooked form; the US air-lifted food is supposed to go direct to the dejected troops of the government.

The government itself has ceased to function except that it is victim to the occasional desperate and irrelevant cabinet shuffle. Now all instructions are issued by the US Embassy.

## WHILE PHNOM PENH BURNS

The regime is so precarious that rats might leave it join a sinking ship. Its only friend is President Ford and his administration. Daily he makes efforts to squeeze more aid for the tin-pot dictator in Phnom Penh from the various committees and sub-committees of the US 'parliament'. A Senate sub-committee has by a narrow majority voted Ford half of what he asked for, while a sub-committee of the House of Representatives has topped it by another \$15

million, by voting three monthly instalments totalling \$45 million. The caucus of the majority party in Congress, the Democrats, has voted to refuse all Ford's requests for aid to South East Asia.

As far as they are concerned there are three reasons for refusal: their voters do not want to see more money going on a lost war; Lon Nol's regime (installed by the CIA in 1970) seems inevitably doomed; and thirdly, the level of corruption in that regime has made much of

the aid pointless. Lon Nol himself is thought to have about £100 million stashed away in Swiss banks, his side-kicks are not doing much worse, and his generals openly drive round in flashy new Mercedes which are supposed to be prohibited imports. They make their loot by inventing non-existing regiments and pocketing the allocations for their wages.

Despite the fact that the supply route to Phnom Penh along the Mekong

River has been completely cut off and that US airlifted supplies are severely restricted because of heavy Khmer Rouge bombardments, there can be no certainty about the future of Cambodia. Phnom Penh appeared to be militarily indefensible some time ago, but it wasn't taken. The leadership of the Khmer Rouge, whose titular head is the CIA-deposed Prince Sihanouk, has continually subordinated the struggle to other

world developments like the state of "East-West" detente.

Meanwhile, in Vietnam, the National Liberation Front is using the same restriction of the room for US manoeuvre to launch an as yet limited assault along a line running almost the entire length of South Vietnam. The Thieu dictatorship has officially announced the loss of Tri Tran, a district town 40 miles north west of Saigon. And this puts immediate pressure on Tay Ninh, a provincial capital of major importance nearby.

Another provincial capital, Ban Me Thuot, 150 miles north east of Saigon, is the scene of heavy fighting too.

Still the puppets' strings have not been entirely cut: the US does maintain a considerable link with both the Lon Nol and the Thieu governments. If the strings are cut, so hated are these regimes that they would immediately fall.

**Martin Thomas**



Lon Nol's soldiers go looting — while his generals pocket their wages

# AND THE HOMELESS ARE STILL THERE

**THE HOUSING** problem in some London boroughs long ago reached crisis proportions, and as less and less is being done by the local authorities to solve the problem, the crisis continues.

Meanwhile, people have to live somewhere. So despite the discomfort and harassment, more and more people are turning to squatting, and some actually see it as the solution. Tenants Control! Bingo for Council Houses! Who's in control of Housing? The Housing Lottery! These are the slogans that any visitor to Tower Hamlets will come across before going very far. The slogans are put forward by such bodies as the Faceless Homeless, the Sumner House Co-op, Cornfield Street Co-op, and the Tower Hamlets Action Group.

To get decent housing for themselves (or just shelter that enables families to live together) many working class families are now having to resort to squatting. They are finding that most laws are there to protect property, not designed to meet the needs of ordinary people. And they are having to decide to break those laws in order to survive.

## Housing list

Tower Hamlets is typical of the general situation in London. There are at least 3,000 empty properties in Tower Hamlets. It could be many more, but because of the rise in squatting, the rates department have refused to divulge accurate figures. 7,800 families are on the housing list. Movement out of the Borough is estimated to be 50,000 over the last few years, partially destroying traditional community ties in this old dockland area.

How is the Council reacting to the crisis?

While the housing list gets longer, the number of new houses built is getting smaller and smaller. Since 1970 the Council has managed to modernise only 400 buildings and last year built a pathetic 255 new houses.

Now, concerned about the exodus of young people from the Borough, the Council has come up with the 'Bingo for Council Houses' idea — a public lottery in which 160 dwellings will be drawn over a whole year. For these houses and flats, 2,500 people will be competing. And they have to fit in with various requirements to be

by Jan Wilde

eligible for the draw. Among those who can't enter the ballot are unsupported parents, people forced out of the Borough by homelessness, single people and those over 31.

Temporary welfare accommodation is another of the stopgaps provided by the Council. This includes 1,333 people living in hotel rooms in Kings Cross, 6 miles away. The cost to the Council last year was in excess of £100,000. Mothers with young children are forced out of these premises at 9 o'clock in the morning and refused entry until 6 in the evening. There are no cooking facilities. Children have to find their way to schools in Tower Hamlets, or have their education disrupted.

It is not surprising that the pressures and tensions created by these conditions have caused many families to split up.

Though these stopgap solutions provided by the Council are no more than an insult to the homeless, they are unwilling to countenance any alternative stopgaps. Since 1968, when people suffering the conditions of homelessness started squatting on a large scale, the Council determined on a policy of smashing up empty houses. And squatters are now used as scapegoats to divert attention from the reality of the general situation. The authorities try to turn tenants against squatters by accusing them of jumping the housing queue, and even have the nerve to accuse squatters of spoiling property — after vandalising their own property to prevent squatting!

What sort of property do the squatters occupy in Tower Hamlets?

Much of the Borough's housing stock is very old, and already in need of basic repairs and modernisation. On most estates not even basic repairs or decoration are done. Many estates are turning rapidly into slums; they have no facilities for children, and many young couples are crowding in with their parents.

With 75% of council income spent on interest repayments, the Council lacks finance and manpower to rehabilitate these properties. So although in many

cases the structures themselves are basically sound, those properties lacking present day essential services become classified as unfit for human habitation and are left to go derelict.

It is these properties that the squatters are choosing, and increasingly, by organising into cooperatives, they are aiming to fit them out and make them habitable.

The Sumner House Co-op, for instance, took over a large Council block and are negotiating with the Council for a lease. They reckon they can do it up cheaper than the council, ignoring certain housing standards relating to the size and height of rooms: they argue that without housing, what use are housing standards.

The Co-op has obtained expert advice, and think they are in a position to undertake responsibility for the management and modernisation of the property. Finance for the scheme would come from the Department of the Environment, who would provide 66% of the cost if it is licenced by the Council. And the cost to the Council, the remaining 34%, is in fact the equivalent of 17% of the money it would originally have had to find for modernisation, as the squatters' plans come to only half the cost of the Council's plans.

## Blind prejudice

Yet this scheme has not been accepted by the Council. Instead, plans for sabotage in the form of eviction orders for the main organisers of the Co-op, indicate the blind bureaucratic prejudice that the homeless of Tower Hamlets have to contend with.

If councils worked together with squatters on such schemes, and especially if they left many of their irrelevant rules and regulations out of the picture, things could be a bit better for the homeless. But why should people have to squat at all, even with councils' approval? The growth of squatting, with all the insecurity and inconvenience it so often entails, is an eloquent testimony to the complete breakdown in the provision of adequate (let alone abundant) housing as a public service. Last year, less than half as many houses were built by public authorities than in 1968 (a fall from 191,722 to 91,601). And this at a time when many of the late Victorian inner city houses were nearing the end of their useful life.

The bricks are there — over a million were unsold last year. The men are there to build the houses — nearly 200,000 building workers are out of a job this winter. The land is there.

And, still, the homeless are there.

# Workers' control in the pay-bed war

by JACK SUTTON, Secretary United Manchester Hospitals NUPE

**THE WAR** against private practice in the Health Service goes on. Despite the shilly-shallying of the Government on their election manifesto promises and the sabre rattling of the BMA, hospital workers are carrying on the fight to rid the NHS of the parasite of private medicine. The struggle started out in Lewisham, shifted to the North East, flared up at Charing Cross; last month in South Wales hundreds of nurses and ancillary workers struck after a private patient was admitted to Morriston Hospital in Swansea. (The patient was a Mrs. Calisandro, wife of one of Swansea's more exclusive hairdressers. Her case was urgent — but there was no reason why she should not have been admitted as an urgent NHS case. Workers saw it as a deliberate provocation and acted accordingly.)

In Liverpool recently, catering members of NUPE at St. Paul's Eye Hospital downed tools and refused to serve meals, after a surgeon carried out a private squint operation. And last week, NUPE members belonging to the United Liverpool Hospitals branch threatened to walk out unless they received a written assurance that the Duke of Westminster (exhausted after attending the Lichfield 'wedding of the year') who was admitted to the Infirmary, would be treated as an ordinary NHS patient.

The latest battle, and one of the bitterest so far, is taking place at Christie Hospital, the world famous cancer treatment centre in Manchester.

## Vetting

There are 18 private beds at Christie's, and 340 NHS ones. But in fact the ratio of private patients to NHS ones is much higher than the bed ratio suggests. Most of the private patients don't have cancer, but come to Christie's for cosmetic surgery — nose-jobs, breast uplifts and other such 'urgent' treatment — and vasectomies. They are short-stay patients, and this means that in some months they account for up to 25% of all operations.

Outraged at this state of affairs NUPE members at Christie's decided to ban private operations, except emergency cancer ones, last year at the time of the Hammersmith paybed battle. The ban was reapplied at the onset of the Consultants work to rule, and the decision taken then was that such operations would end "for all time".

In an attempt to break the ban and to split the workforce at Christie's the BMA has recently started a vicious hate campaign in the press and on the media directed at Vic Chester, secretary of the South Manchester Hospitals branch of NUPE and a senior operating theatre attendant at

Christie's. He has been branded as a 'dictator' by the consultants who claim that they are living under a "revolutionary council" because he has had the "audacity" to challenge their "clinical freedom" by insisting that they discuss borderline urgent private operations with him.

The BMA has issued outraged press statements saying that the "confidentiality of patients' medical histories is being violated" and that his actions are completely "unethical".

Nothing could be further from the truth. A statement issued by the NUPE stewards at Christie's says that at no time has Bro. Chester ever challenged a doctor's medical diagnosis and that absolutely no evidence can be produced that a patient has suffered because of his actions in 'vetting' cases. In fact the consultants were invited by NUPE to set up their own 'vetting committee' as they did during the 1973 ancillary workers' dispute, but they refused to do this.

## Baloney

All the talk by the BMA about violations of patients' rights is a load of baloney. What they are really protesting about is the fact that their wallets have suffered through the action of the NUPE members at Christie's. If they really cared about the patients, why have they allowed the accident department at Rochdale Infirmary to shut down completely at weekends — a direct result, so the BMA boasts, of the consultants' work to rule.

In fact this work to rule, another front in the battle over private medicine, is not going well for the BMA, and, judging by recent statements of BMA Secretary Dr. Stevenson, they'd gladly give it up in exchange for a government crackdown against direct trade union action to stop private practice. This action is now proving strong enough to withstand such attacks as those made on Vic Chester.

A mass meeting of NUPE members at Christie's on Tuesday March 11th, expressed overwhelming support for the continuation of the action, and the North West Divisional Officer of NUPE, Colin Barnett, has publicly expressed full support. Manchester Hospital District Committee of NUPE is also giving full support and has sent congratulations to the Christie's NUPE members, and in addition, decided to organise a picket outside the offices of the Manchester Regional Health Authority and a demonstration in Manchester against private practice.

As support and further action spreads to other hospitals, the Christie's consultants are wishing they'd kept their heads well down.

# 50 FLATS WRECKED IN AN HOUR BY COUNCIL

An empty block of flats in Corfield Street, Bethnal Green, was ignored by the Tower Hamlets Council for four years — until 30 families of squatters moved into some of the flats.

Then they started to move. A month ago they hired a demolition squad from Squib and Davies Ltd. to invade the street after dark and smash up the flats.

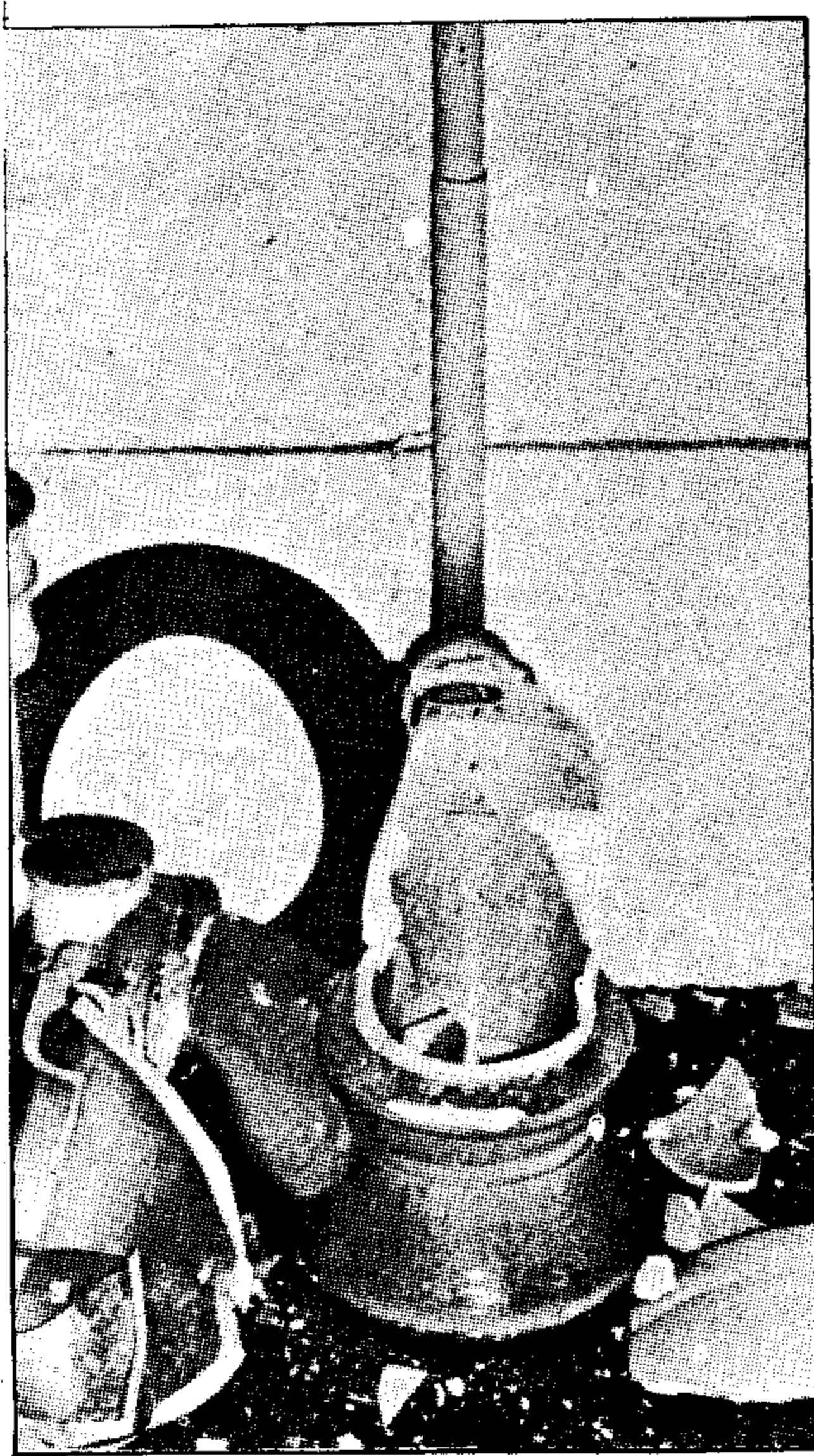
They came with sledgehammers and pickaxes and manage to gut 50 flats in about an hour. "The demolition men wouldn't explain what they were doing. They just threatened to beat up anyone who got in their way. They were just smashing in doors and window frames and hurling sinks into the street", said one woman. A young man who tried to phone for the press was dragged from the telephone box by one of the wreckers.

The police were called, and when they finally arrived 45 minutes later they said they didn't think what had happened was a breach of the peace...

Forty residents, in outrage, decided to march to the council there and then.

They found the Housing Committee in session... discussing the "housing problem". The committee blandly denied all knowledge of the demolition gang that had just wrecked the Council's own property.

Three weeks later the Council sent a bulldozer which smashed and pulverised the mains water pipe serving the flats, leaving only one tap working in the whole block. And there have also been a series of mysterious fires in hallways in the empty flats, which squatters' leaders think can only have been started deliberately. (photos, by Workers Press, show a damaged lavatory, and the residents confronting the Tower Hamlets Housing Committee.)



## finger Prints

THE left wing of the Labour Party has traditionally treated the banner of 'nationalisation' as if it were such a threat to the capitalists that it needed only to be borne into battle to strike mortal fear into the enemy exploiters.

How crestfallen they must have been if they read Roman Eisenstein's article in last week's Sunday Times Business News entitled "Nationalisation boost to Vickers". From the following somewhat smug excerpts, it would seem that nationalisation is pretty good news for... investors.

"It is time to look closely at Vickers again", writes Mr. Eisenstein "I recommended the company last October pointing out that even in the prevailing depressed market conditions the shares looked a safe enough investment. They have in fact done

better than average, especially now that the market looks on nationalisation as a bonus rather than a calamity...

"Whichever way the nationalisation terms are set, Vickers will gain... If the assumptions on nationalisation are right, the net assets per share will be around 300p — of which 100p will be in cash. This alone will be worth a much higher price in the market than today's 146p..."

WHEN Keith Joseph made his notorious speech about the dangerous fertility of social classes 4 and 5 he was roundly castigated by fellow Tories for being mug enough to reveal his real colours.

Joseph, it seems, has now done it again. On March 11th he gave a talk at North London Polytechnic entitled "How Inequality helps the poor..."

THERE is a mythology constructed by Tories like ex-headmaster Rhodes Boyson, according to which teachers are turning into "neo-Trotskyist trouble-makers". They should look at a recent poll conducted by the Times Education

Supplement, which found that about two thirds of teachers voted Liberal or Tory; of the third that votes Labour, more are likely to be found at the higher end of the educational pecking order, whilst primary teachers tend to be most Conservative; and that those who vote Labour often don't support the Labour Party on educational issues like comprehensives, school leaving age etc.

Hopefully not only Rhodes Boyson will get his facts straight, but also those supporters of Rank and File Teacher, who believe that their successes in organising a strong left caucus within the NUT have somehow percolated through to a substantial section of the membership.

THE Citizens Advice Bureau at Stepney Green has recently been refused its financial grant from the Council's Urban Aid programme on the basis that "the citizens are getting too much advice" or perhaps the wrong kind of advice: the CAB had been helping squatters with information on their legal rights and on ways of organising to get recognition and assistance from the Council.

# WHAT IS THE EEC ANYWAY?

FIRST OF TWO ARTICLES BY SIMON TEMPLE

WORKERS were suspicious from the start about Britain's attempts to join the Common Market. If the bosses were so keen to go in, surely it must be in our interests to stay out?

Unfortunately, it isn't as simple as that.

As Leon Trotsky put the problem in 1938, "The policy of the proletariat is not at all automatically derived from the policy of the bourgeoisie, bearing only the opposite sign — this would make every sectarian a master strategist: no, the revolutionary party must each time orient itself independently ... arriving at those decisions which correspond best to the interests of the proletariat."

So we must look at the fundamental nature of the EEC, and on that basis we can develop a real understanding of what it is and what to do about it.

## Task

At the end of the second World War, the USA emerged as the dominant imperialist power, on a world scale. In Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union extended its power, and later, by military-bureaucratic methods, smashed capitalism. In Vietnam, China, Korea and Malaya there were powerful national liberation struggles. In France and Italy the armed workers of the Resistance movements held effective power, and only the treacherous politics of the Communist Parties — describing strikes as "the weapon of big business" — enabled capitalism to survive.

The USA itself was shaken by the greatest strike wave in its history in 1946/47. But the US capitalist class soon set itself to the task of reviving the capitalist economies of western Europe, and, in the process, extending their own profitable interests. From 1947 onwards the Marshall Aid programme, and other American investment, led to millions of dollars flooding into Europe.

American investors found Europe more attractive than the 'third world' countries (to which the advanced countries had traditionally exported capital) because of its larger and more developed market; and there seemed to be rather less threat of social and political upheaval.

## Fewer

Throughout the history of capitalism, smaller enterprises have been squeezed out or eaten up by larger ones. The centralising and concentration of capital into the hands of fewer and fewer firms has accelerated since 1945, primarily on account of the speed of technological advance. This has meant that the amount of capital necessary to compete effectively has grown faster than ever before.

This centralisation and concentration has occurred in three main ways. Firms and whole sectors of industry have been bought out by foreign competitors. This need not be a very large proportion of the economy as a whole to have great strategic importance. Thus, even ten years ago, 80% of the Common Market computer industry and 24% of the motor industry were US controlled.

Secondly, there has been the growth of companies based in more than one country, where a process of "interpenetration" of their economies has gone on, as with the Dunlop-Pirelli link-up for instance.

Finally there has been the

creation of very large national firms, large enough to make them viable internationally, such as GEC and the recent Peugeot/Citroen merger in France.

However, American firms have been able to keep their relative superiority. This has mainly been due to their sheer size (General Motors has about the same turnover as the 13 largest German firms), which allows massive economies of scale and the creation of huge profits for re-investment.

## Drain

This has been backed by government subsidies for arms research which has provided a spin-off in high technology industries, especially computers. It has also led to better opportunities for scientists in the USA, stimulating the brain drain from Europe.

The founders of the Common Market hoped to break down the outworn national boundaries in Europe which hindered the growth of economic units capable of competing effectively on the world market. The separate European economies are incapable of supporting development in some industries, such as aircraft, on their own. In others the need to spread risks and avoid flooding a restricted market has led to international amalgamations. For instance, one European computer firm might have a hope of competing with IBM; separate French, British and German industries have not.

Even where amalgamations have not been essential, the promise of greater efficiency — and greater profits — has spurred them on. An example here is the merger between the major photographic concerns in Germany and Belgium to create Agfa-Gevaert.

Although, were it fully successful in its logical aim of creating a European super-capitalism, the Common Market would harm US interests, American big business has generally supported the EEC. This is because it has helped widen the scope for American subsidiaries in Europe.

Britain refused to join the Community at the start, because the Commonwealth seemed to provide a much greater prop for British capitalism than, say, the French Union did for France. Also, British firms such as GEC and ICI were generally larger than their continental rivals and thus did not feel the pressure so strongly to amalgamate.

## Brake

Nonetheless British firms found themselves too small to be internationally viable, and this began to force Britain into the EEC. In fact, cooperation developed even prior to British entry; the most obvious example being the long string of joint aircraft projects: Concorde, Jaguar, the MRCA.

The state, today, plays a vital role in financing and developing national capitalist progress — by government investment and such organisations as the planned National Enterprise Board. The EEC is a halting step towards a European super-state, carrying out these functions in relation to the growth of "Europe-wide" capitalist concerns. Purely national states are a brake on their development.

In fact, progress towards economic integration has been

## Getting out before the Anthem

The advertisements invited "Left right and centre (except the National Front), firms, trade unions etc" to send representatives. What else could it have been but the Quit the Market Campaign's lumbering attempt to launch itself in Merseyside.

Most of the spadework had been done by the Communist Party. But for all their efforts, only 70 people turned out: the "burning issue" produced a meeting more like a damp squib, enlivened only by the nationalist fervour of most of the speeches.

Barry Williams, leading light of the area Communist Party, chaired this patriotic circus. Introducing himself as first speaker, he launched into an eulogy of "British democracy". "The great traditions of British law" no less, had to be retrieved. (Hard to believe the same man chaired the recent Liverpool Trades Council meeting on the fight to release the Shrewsbury Two....) And of course OUR national sovereignty must be saved from the clutches of the Brussels bureaucrats.

After a T&GWU speaker who said much the same thing, someone from the floor asked if it would be possible to speak. Upon which Barry Williams said enough people had already indicated (by telepathy?) and the hall was only available until 12 midday (the meeting had started at 11am.) — and

anyway he wanted to go shopping with his wife!

The floor was now open — to some. A Mr. Rankin of Liverpool Conservative and Unionist Association told the audience that by entering the EEC, essential liberties would be trampled on. For instance, in the majority of the EEC countries they drove on the right, and Brussels might well ordain that we should do the same. If members of the Campaign were embarrassed by this infantile drivel they didn't let on — and in fact the redoubtable Mr. Rankin was later elected as Vice Chairman of the local campaign.

A Labour councillor now got up and dared to pillory the Tories as unsuitable for "defence of democratic rights". But he was firmly dealt with by Barry Williams, who leapt up from the Chair and started shouting about the need for unity, and how the Labour Party had never brought about Socialism because it was not united. Not united with the Tories?!

This set off a whole chorus of CP speakers who stressed again the need for unity, echoed by an excited Conservative who exclaimed that "I am a Christian and I'm against the Common Market, so I'm not going to bring up the question of political prisoners in Russia. WHAT WE

NEEDS UNITY".

Well, that DID produce an embarrassed silence — quickly overcome by another member of the Communist Party, Roger O'Hara, making another patriotic speech. We had, he said, all joined together under the leadership of Churchill to fight the Germans in the last War.

Ferry Harrison, of MILITANT, did his best to save something from the meeting for the left, saying that it was necessary to "campaign" for a United Socialist States of Europe. Which no doubt left the other "lefts" in the meeting, wherever they were, enjoying a small socialist glow — just so long as we didn't have to unite with the Germans or drive on the right....

Finally a committee was elected to carry on the good work, with Barry Williams as its chairman, and a number of people who hadn't even come to the meeting roped in in their absence.

While the votes were counted, there was time for another speech from Barry Williams — on the benefits of the recently negotiated Anglo Russian trade deal.

Expecting the National Anthem, or at very least Rule Britannia, to be sung at any minute, myself and some others made out getaway.

LEN COLLINGWOOD



Enoch Powell has, predictably, turned out to be the star turn on many a Get Britain Out Campaign platform. And those Labour MPs who thought it might be possible to have a "broad" campaign without making common cause with racism were rudely brought face to face with reality when Powell, in the midst of the Get Britain Out campaigning, took a night out to hold forth on his other favourite subject — "Get out of Britain" or, as it is politely called, repatriation of immigrants.

Some of these MPs have now said they won't share a platform with Powell: that is, an actual physical platform; they continue to support the same Get Britain Out campaign.

Others are unrepentant. One, named Michael ENGLISH, defended his position to speak with Powell.

As did Clive Jenkins, leader of ASTMS, whose members will no doubt have some strong words to say about that...

remarkably slow since 1958. The various capitalist classes in Europe still compete vigorously with each other, and specific national interests take precedence over general European ones. If this has been the case during a period of general prosperity, how much more will it be true during the present crisis?

Already, the capitalists in several countries are retreating from Europe, trying to barricade themselves behind import restrictions of one sort or another, saving what they can for themselves. Examples of the trend away from integration are the Italian import deposit scheme, Britain's re-negotiation of entry, and the total failure of attempts at a common oil policy.

## Growth

In its youth, in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, the capitalist class, fighting against feudalism, formed today's nation states. Where before there were dozens of petty princedoms, all sorts of local taxes and customs barriers; and restrictions on free trade, the capitalist class created a unified national market, a unified system of law, and uniform national tariffs. These measures of national unification, carried through by the capitalist class when it was a revolutionary class, were essential for the further growth of industry and commerce.

Today the giant productive



forces created by capitalism are making those national frontiers obsolete. Industry can only develop on an international scale. The capitalist classes, hesitantly, slowly, try to break through the limits of those national frontiers. But today the capitalist class is no longer a revolutionary class fighting against feudalism. It is a reactionary class concerned above all with keeping its profits and its system going somehow from day

to day, without much view to the future.

Its attempt at "internationalism" — the EEC — is a miserable, botched effort. Only the united socialist working class of Europe will really be able to carry through the international unification of Europe.

NEXT WEEK:  
"...and why it's  
not our business"

A 'secret' directive to the Royal Ulster Constabulary to limit the number of legally held firearms in Northern Ireland has been just as 'secretly' dropped.

The directive was issued last January by the Chief Constable, Jamie Flanagan, at a time when all the statelet's 106,000 privately held guns came up for re-licensing. These 106,000 guns are only a small part of the Orange Loyalists' arsenal, but straightway they set up a great hue and cry about being left naked and disarmed in a hostile land. (Evidently they still, when it suits them, see Ireland as a 32-County unit...)

As soon as news of the directive was leaked (by an RUC officer) Loyalist politicians stomped the countryside with horror stories of impending army searches — which rather shows up the one-sidedness of this 'peace-keeping' army's searches up to now. Searches for illegal firearms are alright for the Catholic areas, but God forbid they should happen to the privileged Protestants.

Finally, Loyalist leaders urged that the new directive (which only applied to a person's second licensed firearm and to firearms held 'for sentimental reasons') should be defied outright.

## Firearms

Sunday newspapers carried advice to the Loyalists from the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC) politicians John Taylor and Ernest Baird to "Hang on to your guns"; and UUUC politicians were seen touring Belfast police stations asking the RUC to refuse to take part in carrying out the directive.

It wasn't long before it was revoked. Not only revoked, but RUC men have been instructed to "look again" at the hundreds of firearms licences which they had refused to renew since January under the new instructions. "...it will be difficult to persuade anyone that the UUUC has not in fact had its way once again", comments Conor O'Clery of the Irish Times.

## Policing

In the same end of February week, the eight organisations making up the United Loyalist Central Co-ordinating Committee (and including such self-proclaimed murder gangs as the UVF and Red Hand Commandos as well as 'respectable' outfits like the Ulster Special Constabulary Association) extracted a promise from Merlyn Rees that the RUC would be sent to police the Catholic areas.

The move was led by the UDA, who issued a statement "declaring their intention of policing all Loyalist areas in Northern Ireland as a result of the failure of the RUC to operate the rule of law in all areas of the province". The RUC, which before the 'No-go' areas were set up used to take part in pogroms on the Catholic areas, and whose ranks have lately been swelled by recruitment from the Orange murder gangs, is feared in the Catholic areas quite as much as

# As civil war looms in Northern Ireland Britain backs down to Orange strongmen



UDA patrol in Belfast a week ago

the British Army (or more so, and the Provisionals say that it was a condition of their truce that the RUC should not be sent into the Catholic areas.

The RUC have attempted to send patrols into republican areas, and have tried to make arrests and provoke incidents. RUC patrols have had to be accompanied by a massive army guard, and even then as soon as they appear the dustbin lid warnings go out, and crowds gather to stone the RUC. The Republican Truce Incident Centres report that 90 per cent of all complaints they receive concern the RUC.

However, apparently Rees has now "guaranteed" that they will be sent in, after the appearance on the streets of Protestant East Belfast and other areas of uniformed Loyalist para-military 'patrols'. "Groups of between three and eight men were seen strolling through the UDA stronghold of East Belfast, often meeting each other and sometimes passing RUC patrols without incident. The scene in West Belfast was similar, and patrols were also reported in Portadown, Derry, Lisburn and Ballynahinch.

"Carloads of para-military members also toured districts in Belfast and in one case a Land Rover was used. Most of the groups contained men in UDA

combat jackets and forage caps." (Irish Times)

That the British authorities would be putty in the hands of the Loyalists was clear as soon as Rees and Wilson backed down to the Ulster Workers Council strike in the last two weeks of May last year. The failure of the British Army — some would say the reluctance of its commanders — to risk an all-out confrontation with the Loyalists, and the resulting collapse of the so-called "power sharing Executive", meant that the Loyalists were going to hold the initiative.

## Retreat

The events of the last week of February are only the latest sign of this.

Within two months of the UWC strike, in an attempt to cover its capitulation, the British government in a White Paper announced the situation in the Six Counties would require the dispatch of a special consultative force to investigate the area. But far from being a purely consultative force, the force was to be a full-fledged one, with the power to arrest and to use force. The force will be composed of British Army units and their own "home guards" (or list

of demands — against which Wilson and Rees have precious little room for manoeuvre.

Some of these demands have already been voiced. Almost immediately after the fall of the Executive and restoration of Direct Rule, Enoch Powell was calling for the restoration of the notorious B-Specials, the all-Protestant police auxiliaries who used to terrorise the Catholic areas. This was followed by Loyalist calls for a "home guard".

By September, Merlyn Rees was announcing that the strength of the Ulster Defence Regiment would be doubled, and the RUC Reserve increased by 3,500.

Recruiting propaganda for the UDR and RUC reserve openly encourages members of the UDA and UVF (the Loyalist sectarian para-military organisations) to join them. Many members of the UDR and RUC reserve hold dual membership with the UDA and UVF: a week before Christmas in a Belfast court, a UDR member shouted "Up the UVF" as he left the dock.

The RUC itself is to get another 3,000 members.

To emphasise the sectarian nature of these state sponsored armed bodies, it is envisaged that some of them will be run from "operation centres" in Protestant areas.

## Backlash

Despite Catholic fears that the setting up of the Convention could lead to civil war, the British Labour government is going ahead with its plans for early voting for seats in the Convention. When it meets, the Loyalists will present their ultimatum — a demand for nothing less than the return of complete Orange supremacy rule, backed up with the organised force of the Orange para-military outfits, the sectarian 'home guards' set up by Britain in the past couple of years, the 106,000 licensed guns in the hands of the Loyalists and, not least, the experience of victory over Britain in the UWC strike last May.

Britain has one card, its economic aid, running at some £350 million per annum.

On the face of it, the Orange para-military machine, with its widespread Protestant working class and community backing, starts favourite to win a showdown with a British Army that showed itself unwilling last May to confront it. The current British

The persecution of 14 English pacifists continues after committal proceedings last week when charges carrying heavy penalties were pressed against them for giving out leaflets to British soldiers. The leaflets contain information on various ways of leaving the army.

The British state has decided on a course of really savage repression for anyone trying to communicate with soldiers. Pat Arrowsmith was given 18 months for a similar offence. In the case of the 14 now being sent for trial, conspiracy charges have been thrown in as well: these, as people who have followed the Shrewsbury trials will know, are very difficult to refute and carry indefinite sentences.

But it is doubtful if the British government will be able to impose its blanket of silence. The organisation based on Brussels called War Resisters International has decided to campaign among British soldiers based on Germany for military withdrawal from Ireland — and they will be giving them the same leaflet that's landed the 14 in court.

THERE has been no shortage of cases in the north of Ireland where the brutality of British soldiers has stepped beyond the bounds of what's considered normal in the course of duty. It is in any event useful for the British Army to let a case come to court from time to time; it gives the impression that every incident is investigated and that apart from the things that come to court, everything is as it should be.

The general attitude in those cases is that these things happen in the ranks, who are 'not angels', and that the officers do their best to stop it.

Last week, though, a British Army captain was convicted Derrv Petty Sessions on two charges of assaulting a civilian.

The civilian Michael McNamee, was taken from his home after an army search which found nothing. He was released some hours later, and no charges were brought against him. While he was held at Creggan Camp for interrogation, he was knocked to the ground by Captain Richard McIvor Thwaites of the 10th Gurkha Rifles, and hit on the back of the neck with a rifle butt.

economic crisis favours them too, lending weight to arguments for more "ulsterisation" of the conflict, leaving a fully armed a belligerent Loyalist population cock-a-hoop and ready to take out a bloody revenge on the Catholic 'rebels'.

The British government will no doubt try to salvage as much as it can from any confrontation with the Loyalists. It will not welcome any all-out onslaught on the Catholic areas by the UDA, UVF et al, as this runs the risk of a southern backlash. But such a risk gives the Loyalists all the more leverage.

## Salvage

In desperation Britain may be tempted to give the Orangement carte blanche and rely on Cosgrave, O'Brien, Cooney and the other members of the southern Green Tory gang to keep the Twenty Six County population quiet. This would have the effect, though, of putting pressure on the only force that could possibly salvage anything from the mess — the working class of the South.

Our tasks in Britain remain much as before, with the added obligation that we are bound to resist Orange attempts to restore the pre-1969 status quo. There is also the shame and scandal of the Jenkins legislation, which amounts to a charter for police harassment of Irish people in Britain and a way of pillorying Irishmen over here who support the unification of their country. We have only until May to campaign for its non-renewal.

The need to give support and solidarity to those fighting British imperialism and defending the minority community from armed attack will all too possibly turn into an urgent practical need for immediate material aid.

**CHRIS GRAY**



RUC men with loyalist paramilitary leaders. Some have dual membership

## Zionists try again to stop film show

After successfully wrecking a film show by MERAG (Middle East Research and Action Group) at the Conway Hall a couple of weeks ago (see WF89), Zionist thugs were again in action when the film was shown for a second time at the Co-op Hall, Finsbury Park on Saturday March 8th.

The film which arouses the wrath of the Zionists is an accurate but fairly middle of the road documentary called "To Live in Freedom". Basically the film portrays the driving out of Palestine by the Israeli settlers of the Palestinians, and their continuing repression.

Such is the racism of the Zionists towards the Arabs that even this liberal film (which hardly even mentions the armed struggle of the Palestinian liberation movement) is "Arab financed propaganda" or a "Communist plot", to be physically stamped out with all the thuggery that these army-trained ex-patriate right wing Israelis are so capable of mustering.

In response to the previous week's episode at Conway Hall, five supporters of Workers Fight went along to the second showing, not only to see the film but to help stop any further antics by the Zionists. Unfortunately the attitude of the MERAG seemed to be one of 'turn the other cheek'. There were no stewards on the door and known Zionist trouble makers were allowed in.

Half way through the film a ruckus started when one of the Zionists tried to disconnect the sound. It was developing into a full scale fight when the police arrived and the situation cooled somewhat, allowing the film to continue, despite heckling and slanders from the Zionist intruders. Eventually they left.

The brothers and sisters of the MERAG will not always be able to rely on the police as they did then. At the next showing stewards must be ready and thugs prevented from entering the hall. The 'turn the other cheek' attitude unfortunately often ends in a cracked skull.

LEN GLOVER

# Campaign launched to stop anti-abortion Bill

A guide to the Abortion (Amendment) Bill sponsored by James White, T&GWU supported Labour MP for Glasgow Pollock, has been issued by the "Woman's Right to Choose" campaign, which was initiated by the Abortion Law Reform Association specially to fight this Bill.

The pamphlet set out to identify the dangers that would result if this Bill becomes law. It would make it very, very difficult for a woman to get a legal abortion. The new, and very much restricted, grounds for abortion would require a woman to prove that she faces a grave risk to her life or serious injury to her physical or mental health, by continuing her pregnancy.

The guide points out that "experts from both the pro and anti-abortion lobbies have estimated that if these grounds were introduced, abortions would be reduced by 80,000 a year. This would occur because abortions on any other grounds than medical grounds would appear not to qualify" Examples of those who could be refused an abortion are:

- \* rape victims
- \* girls aged under 16
- \* unmarried or unsupported mothers
- \* women who would have to give up

their jobs to have the baby

- \* women aged between 35 and 45, where the risk of having a handicapped child is greater because of age

- \* women who would face severe financial difficulties if they had another child or a first child

- \* women whose marriages for one reason or another are threatened by pregnancy.

Because doctors and their assistants would face great risk of prosecution for carrying out abortions, many doctors will refuse to do them except on unassailable medical grounds.

There are also a number of provisions that would produce delays. "In the 1967 Act, the consent of two registered medical practitioners is required for every abortion. This can mean two GPs. The new Bill would require that the two doctors must have been practising for five years, and that they are not employed in the same practice.

"Obtaining the consent of a second doctor outside a practice might delay abortions, making them less safe as the pregnancy progressed, and the five year practice requirement would prevent some doctors, from being able to treat their patients."

It would also become illegal to publish news and information leading to the identification of women that had been aborted, sought advice on abortion, or who had given evidence in a case of criminal abortion. "This section of the Bill amounts to blanket censorship of information essential to women and would restrict the freedom of women journalists to write about their own experiences. If it came into effect it would shroud abortion in the same secrecy which used to clothe it before 1967."

Controls on abortion advice are also included in the Bill — Citizens Advice Bureaux, paid workers for women's groups etc could be prosecuted for referring women to their family doctor for an abortion. Parents would have to be called in before discussions could be held in schools on abortion.

## T&GWU

The pamphlet includes a list of the members of the parliamentary Select Committee studying the Bill and provides information about their well known views: 10 out of the 15 are well known for their anti-abortion views. There are a number of actual SPUC supporters. Of the Labour members on the Committee, 5 of the 8 are for the Bill, and besides its sponsor, there is one other MP supporting the Bill who is sponsored by the T&GWU, Kevin McNamara (Hull Central).

The Campaign is in favour of a legally enforced right to abortion up to 12 weeks, and says that the only grounds for refusing an abortion after that time should be if it posed an unacceptable risk to the woman's health. The pamphlet has a number of useful appendices, giving model letters and resolutions against the White Bill, though in general these are geared to purely written protests aimed at influencing newspaper readers or MPs.

More information and copies of the pamphlet from Sally Hesmondhalgh at 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1, Tel: 01-278-4575.

Jan Wilde

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**OVER 100 people met in London to discuss ways of fighting to stop the Abortion (Amendment) Bill. Suggestions included pickets of hospitals and doctors' surgeries, speaking tours around the country with the sympathetic MPs on the Select Committee, demonstrations and industrial action. Others, worried by the success of the Society for the Protection of the**

Unborn Child in lobbying MPs, wanted to adopt similar tactics from a pro-abortion standpoint.

But it was felt that mass working class support could be gained by getting across the fact that the raw deal women get at work is a direct result of women being at the mercy of their bodies and that though contraception had done much to overcome this, the right to abortion was necessary to cover for the very common failures of contraception.

The Bill, many people stressed, would drive many women (tens of thousands a year) to backstreet abortionists; already the price for a non-NHS abortion has risen to £1,500 in anticipation of the passing of this Bill.

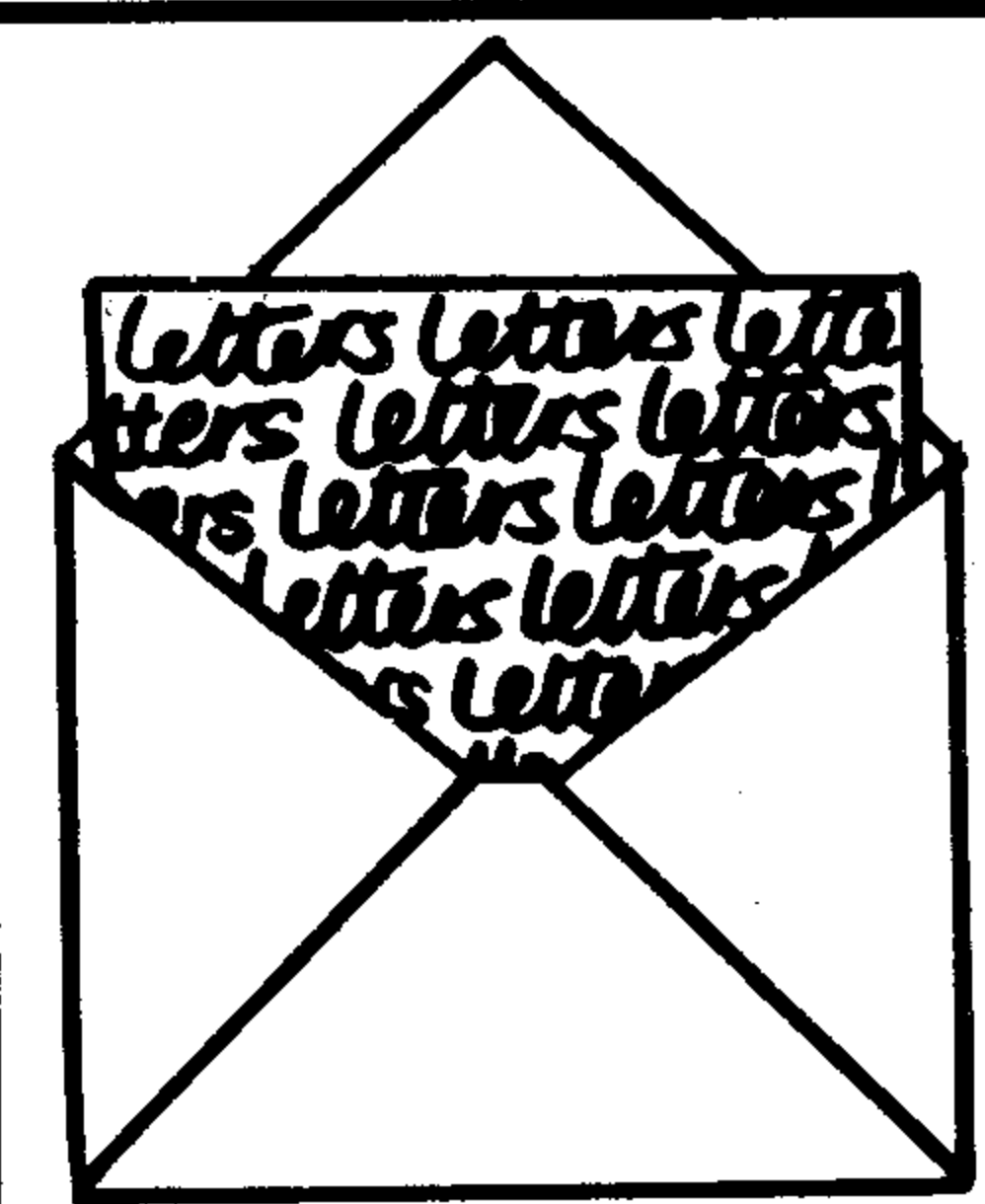
The meeting also stressed the importance of solidarity with women in other countries fighting for abortion on demand. James White's Bill would stop women coming to this country for an abortion, which is blatant discrimination against women, seeing that people are free to come here and get other kinds of medical treatment on the NHS or privately.

## Abortion law in some other countries

(date of last law given)

- Austria: abortion on demand up to 12 weeks. (1974)  
 France: abortion on demand up to 10 weeks (1974)  
 West Germany: Parliament has declared abortion legal, but the ruling is about to be challenged by the constitutional court. (1974)  
 Sweden: Abortion on demand, but counselling compulsory after 12 weeks (1975)  
 Italy: Rome court ruled in February that the law saying abortion is illegal is unconstitutional. (1975)  
 Holland: abortion technically illegal, but fairly freely available up to 12 weeks.  
 Switzerland: abortion law under review.  
 Norway: Parliament defeated abortion on demand by one vote last November  
 Denmark: abortion on request up to 12 weeks.  
 Finland: abortion up to 16 weeks on medical or social grounds.  
 East Germany: abortion on demand up to 12 weeks (1972)  
 USSR: abortion on demand up to 12 weeks providing medically safe and no abortion within previous six months. (1955)  
 Yugoslavia: abortion on social grounds. (1969)  
 (However, in some USSR satellite countries, social grounds for abortion have been restricted recently to cover only certain categories, such as unmarried women, women over 39 years old, women with two children etc. This follows a very high abortion rate in those countries. One reason for the high rate may be the poor supply of contraceptives, e.g. only condoms are widely available in Romania.)  
 USA: abortion on demand up to 12 weeks or 24 weeks in some States, prohibited in others. (1972). The law has recently been challenged by a Boston court ruling that abortion to a foetus aged 18 - 26 weeks is manslaughter. The case is being appealed.

In the past few days the West German Courts have reversed their previously relatively progressive abortion legislation, bringing it closer to the law in Italy. (Guide prepared by ALRA)



## Not as soggy as you say

Comrades - I attended the 'Democratic Defence' conference in Manchester on February 16th as a delegate from Bolton Anti-Fascist Committee. I do not advocate the same flat rejection of the organisation as we find in WF88. According to that report the conference, and the organisation set up from it, is a "lib-lab, broad based, flat-bottomed, hot-air mish-mash". In fact the report contains more hot air and mish-mash than did the conference.

In the first few paragraphs we find a series of scathing verbal swipes at Paul Rose's attempt to build a 'popular front' and the Young Liberals' opinions on free speech for fascists. We get the impression that the majority of delegates were getting up and talking about 'persuading the fascists by rational argument'. Nothing could be further from the truth. There were approximately 150 delegates at the conference from trade union branches, trades councils, Labour Parties, LPYSs, Jewish organisations, NCCL, revolutionary groups, etc. ....and, yes, the Liberal Party.

Yet out of all these delegates only one, Ruth Addison, Young Liberal chairman, advocated giving freedom of speech to fascists. In fact a resolution, which contained a clause denying the use of platforms to fascists, was passed overwhelmingly by the conference.

The blanket dismissal advocated in WF88 is senseless idealism. "...if Democratic Defence grows" we are told, "it will only channel energies from a real and meaningful working class fight against fascism into a hot-air shop for opportunists like Rose ... a political mish-mash aimed at defending some vague concept of democracy".

If Democratic Defence does indeed grow, it will grow from working class involvement in it. The prophet who wrote the WF article apparently has it on good authority that this working class involvement will be diverted from the real and meaningful struggle by opportunists like Paul Rose. And indeed it will, if we follow the advice of the writer of the article and stand aloof from the organisation because it doesn't right now happen to recognise us as its unchallenged leaders. - Neil Duffield, Bolton.

## Women's Rights Conference So vague as to be almost useless

"You might criticise the TUC's Women's Charter", said Stuart Mackenzie, TUC South East Regional Council Secretary, at the Women's Rights conference the Council organised on 8th March. "But I'll say one thing — it's better than the one we produced ten years ago".

Roll on 1985!

That just about summed up the approach of the platform of that conference. 300 delegates, mostly women from white collar unions, attended, through the lack of a creche prevented others from coming.

### Active

No resolutions whatsoever were allowed, so there was no possibility at all of the conference planning any activity. Even the TUC Charter, presented at the conference, was not voted on.

The TUC Charter completely leaves out the question of abortion on demand; it says nothing about organising women and fighting for women to take an active part in trade union struggles; and many of its demands are so vague as to be almost meaningless. The Working Women's Charter is not a perfect

document, but compared to the TUC Charter — obviously designed to displace it — it is vastly superior in every way.

Speakers from the Working Women's Charter Campaign pointed this out, and also attacked the idea that the Equal Pay Act would solve all women's problems. You can't begin to talk about equality until you make progress on the demands for free nurseries, abortion on demand, equal opportunities in training, adequate maternity leave provisions, and so on. And you can't deal with the position of women in the family and the position of women at work as if they are two entirely separate problems; they are closely interlinked, with oppression in each sphere reinforcing oppression in the other.

### Menial

One woman spoke about the low pay and complete lack of organisation of many black workers doing the most menial jobs. Did the conference take this up and discuss how to fight for a national minimum wage and the organisation of the unorganised?

No: Jack Dunn, the chairman, told the speaker to come and have a chat with him about her particular problem during the lunch break: "If there's anything that you want, if there's anything I can do..."

### Qualms

Shirley Summerskill, the first main speaker, went on about how good the Equal Pay Act is. When questioned on abortion, she said it should be left to the individual conscience of Labour MPs. (Perish the thought that they should vote in the interests of working women instead of resting on their moralistic qualms...)

She was also asked about nurseries. All she could say was that the Department of Health and Social Security was not covered by the White Paper on sex discrimination. What that had to do with it was that it was something to say without mentioning the swingeing cuts that have dealt massive blows to hopes of more nurseries.

Ken Gill of TASS did give an informative speech about how employers had got round the Equal Pay Act. But his only perspective was one of things being

done by union officials.

The main lesson from the conference was the disastrous nature of the strategy put forward by the Communist Party (of which Gill and Mackenzie are members) for the Working Women's Charter. The CP is saying that the Charter should be "rooted in the Trades Councils", the initiative being taken out of the hands of the present ad hoc organising committee or the Working Women's Charter campaign, and put into the hands of the trade union bureaucracy.

The conference showed what we can expect from the trade union bureaucracy — a talking shop which will stifle activity.

### Forum

The Working Women's Charter is holding its second London delegate conference in May. This Conference must launch the Charter campaign into a real movement organising at rank and file level. A national bulletin should be started with the aim of linking up the Charter campaign in different areas and as a forum for discussion on the way forward.

Alan Haslam Pat Longman

# LONDON DOCKERS VOTE TO STAY OUT

London dockers at a mass meeting on Monday 10th March voted to stay out until Port of London Authority management agreed to three conditions: 1. no disciplinary action; 2. all ships and cargoes diverted from London during the strike to be worked only in London; and 3. that the men should be paid for the last two days in February.

The London men have been out for over two weeks, and they have no intention of lifting their black on the container depots and certain road haulage firms on the "Cherry Blossom" list of blacked firms. But the London dockers failed to get full support from the NPSSC when it met in Birmingham last Saturday (March 8th).

by **Stephen Corbishley**

Even though the NPSSC was well attended, with Liverpool, Ellesmere Port, Manchester, Goole, Hull, Southampton, and London present, the delegates would only agree to black some of the firms of the London dockers: "Cherry Blossom" list, and refuse to handle ships diverted from London.

The NPSSC also agreed to draw up a charter, but this will probably only contain the points from the 1972 nine-point charter which were never conceded by the bosses. The meeting did not discuss the ways and means of linking up with the road haulage men in the container depots who are now facing

cutbacks and speed ups, as trade falls off.

Without this link up, any campaign could end up as the 1972 campaign did — under the control of Jones and the bosses.

The jobs crisis on the docks is enormous. For the last two weeks at least, 2,000 Liverpool dockers have been 'stamping', and half Manchester's dockers have been 'stamping'.

Manchester dockers are at present demanding an extra £15, a 40% increase, and the bosses have offered £3.02, with a possible extra £1 if negotiations are pushed. Certainly the increase in 'stamping' could fuel the wages fight with a determination that may break the Social Contract.

## POSTAL WORKERS' DEAL SENDS OUT THRESHOLD MESSAGE

**JUDGING** from the hysterical reaction from the Labour government over the recent Postal workers' wage settlement, it would have been quite in order to conclude that the UPW had driven a horse and cart through the social contract. However, on closer inspection of the settlement, the facts tell a different story.

Remembering that this deal covers 1974, then the consolidation of thresholds plus a paltry 8 to 9% doesn't even compensate for last

year's price rises. No worry there for Michael FOOT AND HIS MATES AT THE Department of Employment. So what really bothers them?

Apparently it's the threshold agreement that gives the postal workers a massive 1% increase for every 1% rise in the R.P.I. above a trigger point of 10%. What this really means in terms of hard cash in the pocket is about 22p for those on top rates for every percentage point above the 10% trigger.

Surely this can't have caused the convulsions amongst defenders of the social contract. After all, the postal workers have to wait until their standard of living has dropped by 10% until they get their first 22p compensation payment.

No, quite simply, what gives these "socialists" sleepless nights is that the more powerful sections of the working class are either in pay negotiations or drawing up their claims, and the postal settlement could give them ideas about incorporating threshold agreements into their settlements.

Hopefully it will: but hoping is not enough: the rank and file of these unions, such as the railwaymen, engineers, and local government workers, must demand that their executives negotiate thresholds. Not similar to the postal workers, but starting from a nil threshold and with an across the board payment of 60p for every 1% increase, thus giving more help to those on lower rates who are hardest hit by inflation.

As for the postal workers, they must reject this and demand that Jackson renegotiates the threshold agreement along similar lines. Otherwise by the time 1976 rolls round they will have suffered a severe drop in their standard of living.

**John Rose.**

## Lightning strike after consultant refused to treat Union staff

AS A RESPONSE to the consultants' "work to contract" in National Health Service hospitals, staff at Brook Hospital, Woolwich, have reimposed a ban on all private patients, excluding emergency cases. There was a meeting where doctors attempted to pass off their action as "just another trade union struggle" with nothing to do with private practice, but such a transformation of the BMA was too transparent for the trade unionists at the

hospital. Their judgment was proved correct when, the next day, one of the consultants refused point blank to treat members of the staff who were in the union. An immediate strike lasting one hour made management and the consultants eat humble pie and reverse this policy. The present situation is that the ban is effective and support is being sought throughout the area.

**Bob Sugden**

## CAS backs Newsham Hospital management

the dismissals of Mr. Gregory and Mr. Phillips and replacing them with single final stage written warnings as an act of grace.

These recommendations should be treated with the contempt they deserve. Every serious trade unionist knows that the two stewards should not have been sacked, whatever the CAS might have to say, and a campaign must be started immediately to get the stewards reinstated unconditionally. The greatest pressure must be brought to bear on the NUPE leadership to get their fingers out over this vital issue, or managements all over the country will feel free to sack and discipline stewards and to tear up national agreements at their whim. The stewards are the backbone of any union and they must be protected from this sort of attack at all costs.

At the same time, the lessons of using such bodies as the CAS should be learnt by all health service trade unionists. Indeed by all trade unionists. The way to win such issues as the Newsham dispute is by using our strength and unity at the grass roots level, not by relying on 'justice' from

above handed down from so-called independent bodies. Such strength and unity was shown in the first place by the NUPE members at Newsham and other Merseyside hospitals when they took immediate strike action in support of the stewards — until it was dissipated by NUPE agreeing to conciliation.

Which is the whole idea of the CAS!

As a footnote to the Newsham dispute, the scabbing tactics of certain COHSE officials during the strike must be utterly condemned. In a complete betrayal of trade union principles they were seen openly going around the picket lines, trying to persuade NUPE members to drop out and join COHSE instead! COHSE members should demand an immediate explanation from their officials in relation to their scandalous affair.

**JACK SUTTON**

**INSIDE:** The latest battleground in the private patients dispute. **JACK SUTTON** writes about the struggle at **Christie's Hospital, Manchester.**

Traditionally, the South East coast has been a stronghold for fascist and extreme right wing views.

Over the past six months, the Sussex anti fascist committees have been unable to halt the National Front's growth. It has been able to hold meetings at places such as Horsham, Crawley, Hastings, and Brighton. Only last week a member of the International Marxist Group was attacked by Front members, and taken to hospital. This took place outside a "Get Britain Out" meeting which was being covered by BBC Panorama camera.

Sentences were recently announced on nine anti fascist demonstrators arrested outside a Front meeting at Hastings in late

## 'Left's' tactics make Sussex fascists bolder

January. Many of those arrested had been scuffling with what appeared to be belligerent Front members, but turned out to be plain clothes policemen.

Three students were sent to detention centres for three months; one teacher was given a two year suspended prison sentence; fines totalling £310 were given to five others. At a previous anti fascist demonstration, in Horsham, three demonstrators were arrested and are still awaiting trial. Despite the fact that a local union militant was hit over the head by a banner, no proceedings were taken against any of the NF thugs.

The role of the Communist Party should be noted. Their Sussex branches have not mobilised for any of the recent Front meetings, neither have they agreed to use any of their considerable influence in the local Trades Councils to assist the defence of the nine sentenced.

Meanwhile at Sussex University, the CP, supported by 'Militant', have pushed through a policy, whereby the students' union can only mobilise against fascists if its members agree

to abide by the discipline of the labour movement. Although this may sound reasonable, what it in fact means is that: 1) the Students Union agrees to act only when the local Labour Parties and Trades Councils act against the fascists (which is rarely); and 2) the union will be bound by the 'peaceful picket', that dearly beloved tactic of Labour reformists, CP members, and liberal vicars, which is of course completely contrary to the policy of "no platform for fascists, by any means necessary".

There is a crying need to strengthen the local anti fascist committees and particularly their roots in the local labour movement. The Front are setting up regional offices in Brighton. A week ago in Crawley 150 Front members assembled, ostensibly for a meeting, but in fact purely with a view to confrontation with a small anti fascist picket. Clearly socialists in Sussex must use more effective tactics in future (e.g. occupying Front meetings before the fascists arrive), and must prepare defence of our own meetings against fascist attack.

**Elaine Keep Paul Hoggett**

## TEACHERS' NEWS ROUND-UP

The five Hackney teachers victimised by the ILEA for supporting the TUC lobby on the Shrewsbury 2, have now gained support from Hackney Trades Council, Hackney Central Labour Party, and Clipstone (Nottinghamshire) NUM. (The NUT Executive have refused to give any support). The Board of Governors meeting on 13th March will be picketed, and Hackney NUT have published a pamphlet "Teachers' Rights Under Fire — The Case Of The 5 South Hackney Teachers" — available, price 5p, from the Secretary, Hackney Teachers' Association, 58 Allerton Road, London N16 5UF.

Teachers at Phoenix and Garret Green schools have been victimised for taking unofficial strike action against Houghton. Picket of Phoenix board of governors meeting, 6pm Wednesday 19th March, at Phoenix School, 49 Bow Road, London E3. Check with East London NUT Defence Committee, 01-9868719.

John Warburton — the gay teacher victimised for discussing homosexuality in the classroom — has received support from Hackney and from East London NUT. The chairman of the Board of Governors at Holland Park Comprehensive, together with the headteacher, has written to the Inner London Education Authority saying that they would be happy to have Warburton on the staff with no signed undertaking not to mention homosexuality (as ILEA are demanding). Messages of support to, and petition forms from, Gay Teachers' Group, c/o 11 Birnam Rd, London N4 3LJ.

Teachers' April salary claim: points arising from the teachers' panel claim include abolition of any maximum of senior teachers for schools of group 10 and above, and abolition of the ceiling of £559 on higher scale increases. 10% increase at the top and £363 at the bottom means Scale 1 teachers lose out again, with differentials widening, and it would now take ten years to reach the average male earnings (under Houghton it was nine).

Compton School is being closed because of falling rolls. It is being sold to be turned into a Roman Catholic primary school. Local primary schools, already with classes officially at 30 to 33, are being expected to take Compton children. The NUT at one these schools is refusing to take them, and will need support to oppose the Head. Meeting, 7.30pm, Monday 17th March, at Compton primary school, Compton Street, London EC1. Phone Jeff Hurford, 01 607 8067 to check.

"Rank and File" teachers' National Committee, Saturday 22nd March, at Sidney Stringer School, Coventry. IS proposes to change the banner for "Rank and File" paper from "paper for socialist teachers" to "paper for classroom teachers".

**Ian Hollingworth**

## Support the Liverpool 12

LIVERPOOL members of the National Union of Teachers still face possible expulsion from the union — because we stood up to attempt to make a Union meeting more democratic by asking that the meeting, rather than the chairman, should decide on what to discuss!

The disciplinary hearing due on 15th March has been put off, after protests from the 12, from union members including from schools outside Liverpool, and from LPYS branches. We have been asked to take part in a disciplinary procedure which in many ways does not comply with Union rules, and we have insisted that we will not take part in any hearing unless it is according to rules.

The attempt at victimisation of the 12 is an attempt to stop the discussion of issues, including salaries, and to prevent democratisation of the Union. It affects all union members — all members should demand that the charges be dropped. Support is urgently needed. Trade unionists (not just teachers), Labour Party members, etc. should send messages of support and donations for the defence to Mr R Pooley, Secretary Liverpool 12 Defence Committee, 160 North Hill Street, Liverpool 8. Petition forms, leaflets, and more information are available from the same address.

**Cynthia Baldry**

Last Saturday's planned mass rally in Hyde, Cheshire, called by the fascist National Front, had the final blows put to it by a large anti fascist picket, organised by the North West regional anti fascist committee.

Earlier in the week the Front, who had brought up their three big leaders, Read, Tyndall, and Webster, were banned from holding their rally in Hyde Town Hall by the Council. They then boasted that they were still going to hold their rally, with some 500 fascists, in the main square in Hyde. When the actual time of this mass national turnout came, Read, Tyndall and Webster and about fifty hangers on were confronted with the mass anti fascist picket occupying the centre of the square, holding their own, successful public rally. After hanging around for a while, the fascist speakers stood on a mound near the edge of the square, surrounded by a few tatty union jacks, and tried to hold a sort of meeting. This attempted meeting was howled down by jeers and booing throughout and eventually the miserable fascists went home looking completely stupid.

Considering the NF street corner rabble was supposed to be a National rally to which they had gone to the trouble to bring Read, Tyndall, and Webster, the fascists were most disappointed.

**Jon Riley**

## Granada workers strike for union recognition

OVER 100 ASTMS members are due to strike from Monday at Granada publication in Frogmore, Herts., over union recognition.

Although well over the necessary 50% of the 200 or so staff are ASTMS members, the company, which is owned by Lord Bernstein, is refusing even to hold an audit of the members, let alone give recognition.

Furthermore, the group secretary is being victimised.

having been accused of using company mail for union purposes, and being consistently late for work.

The union members voted by an overwhelming majority of 74 to 7 to go on strike, and their move has been made official.

Messages of support and donations to Ms J Harrison, Flat 4, Frogmore House, Frogmore, St Albans, Herts. Picket in London every day from 9 to 5.30 at 3 St James St, Soho, the London office of the company. **A.H.**

## MEETINGS

CHILE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN — National Demonstration. Assemble 12.30pm, Islington Square, Liverpool: **SATURDAY 15TH March.**

London Workers Fight meeting: **The Struggle in Portugal.** Speaker: Alvaro Miranda (Portuguese Workers Coordinating Committee). 8.30pm, Sunday 23rd March, at the

"George", Liverpool Road, London N1.

Workers Fight Revolutionary Marxist Current: Joint pre-conference towards regroupment — Saturday and Sunday 22nd and 23rd March. Agenda includes: Strategy for Revolutionaries; Ireland; The Labour Party; Revolutionaries and the Working Class. If you would like to have more information, write to WF at 98 Gifford St, London N1 0DF.