# No. 75 Nov. 2nd to Nov. 9th 1974

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The judges have now given made to free the Shrews- their verdict, and have sent bury pickets after they Des Warren and Eric Christmas last year: one finish their three year and two from Pentonville jail in less out of their clutches.

by Rachel Lever

But the working class has and their Government would lame response of the organ- get in soon and free these the top judges of the still to make its voice heard have given a lot to have a nice, bosses' state. The other and its power felt to release regular appeal procedure to go through. Instead, they had In 1972, that voice and that to resort to a feeble and trans-

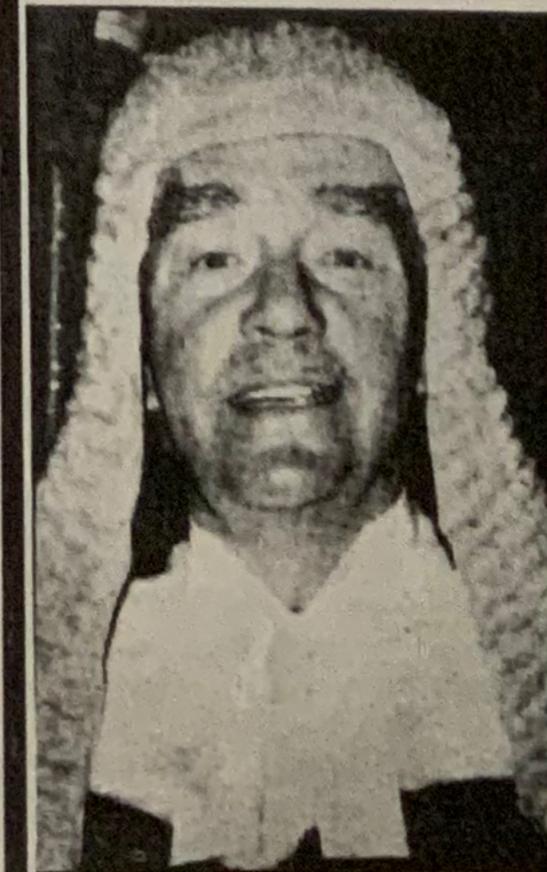
did not take the opportunity judges. of releasing Des and Eric through the 'normal channels' of the Appeal.

Nor were they interested in the legal arguments If the trial itself was a complete farce, an open bosses' conspiracy to try to smash militact picketing, then the Appeal was even more so: so much, that Judge Widgery blatantly defined the purpose of the sentence, on men whose only crime was normal trade union activity, as a deterrent.

His aim was "total quietness", and any reduction in the sentences, or repudiation of the verdict of 'Conspiracy', would "undo all the good that had been produced."

Widgery and his class hate and fear militant picketing. They want it restricted by law and controlled and battered by the power of special police

struggle.



frighteners on.

But for too long now, action was kept to a bare minimum. In fact, at official Tomlinson back to jail to power released five dockers parent excuse to let these men level, it was non-existent. At first, there was the excuse that than a week. Then, the bosses It speaks volumes for the a Labour Government would ised labour movement since victims of Tory 'justice'. It the jailings 10 months ago didn't. Then, a softly softly (and since the arrests a year approach was adopted in the before that), that the judges hope of sweetening the appeal

### Rats

Now the chips are down. If we don't act now, all the yellow rats who have left things get to this stage will be heard to utter soothing words about how soon Des and Eric will be able to get parole!

UCATT Gen. Sec. George Smith, who opposed any campaign for the Shrewsbury victims and said they were criminals (and that was even before they were convicted!) now has the nerve to say he is shocked. Too shocked for action, of course...

A lot of others, who have the power to act, are doing a lot of talking.

#### Scruff

But already workers are on squads. And they have used strike, workers who are not This was the principle they the Shrewsbury show trials to prepared to let the empty talk wanted to establish, the thin frighten and intimidate go on any longer. Up and down the country, workers at Unless the working class building sites, and some factacts to frighten and intimidate ories too, are letting it be At the last negotiations, the the bosses' state into freeing known that this is their issue union managed to push the Des and Eric, then Widgery's and their fight. They are still figure up from 50% to 65% for "good work" will continue to few: but this time, instead of non-face workers, but they reverberate through the class just lobbying and marching, they are going to other sites and works, to docks and industrial estates, to GET OTHER WORKERS OUT.

The North Wales Defence Committee, the mainstay of the campaign so far, has called for action "on an even larger scale than was used in releasing the Pentonville Five". Every trade unionist, they say, must stand up and fight.

That means first, strike action here and now, irrespective of the inaction or vague promises of the trade union leaders and officials. And it means taking those leaders by the scruff and insisting that they call the official action that's been missing up to now, and that could mobilise the vast power of organised labour.

## Manchester builders give a lead -HOW GET THEM OUT

ON FRIDAY, Nov. 1st, four Manchester building sites staged a half-day stoppage, called by Pochins (Oxford Road) Manchester Polytechnic site.

Pochins was one of the the few sites in the country to go into action BEFORE the Appeal, only to be told "confidentially" by local Charter members that they "had it on good authority" that the outcome of the Appeal was already 'fixed' and the lads' sentences would be suspended.

On Friday, the men knew better. At a mass meeting of the strikers, Ian Heyes - site convenor at Pochins - proposed a further half day stoppage on Tuesday Nov.5th, with a mass meeting to plan further action. Several other sites would be leafleted to come out, as well as the 3,000 strong Direct Works Dept.

#### Strike

A motion from Charter to have a whole day strike and no mass meeting (instead, for people to go to the lobby of UCATT head office in London, and attend the Charter meeting on the Wednesday night at Hulme Labour Club), was heavily defeated. and some irreverent individuals were heard to ask what had happened to the famous suspended sentences.

Ian Heyes pointed out that the mass meeting wouldn't prevent anyone who wanted to from going either to the London lobby or the Charter meeting, but that a full day stoppage (although it may sound more militant) would put the dampers on full participation at the mass meeting.

At this mass meeting the Pochins men intend to propose an all-out stoppage until Des and Eric are freed. "Whether we succeed", Ian told Workers Fight, "will depend on how much work we can put in before Tuesday". If they do succeed, the majority of Manchester's building workers will be on strike from Tuesday.

#### Docks

But that's not all. Harold Youd, a leading shop steward on Manchester's docks, spoke at the meeting on Friday and said that, given a strong lead from the builders, there was a good chance of dockers coming out too.

On Friday the 8th. moreover, the Manchester and Salford Trades Council has sponsored a big meeting to discuss action for the jailed pickets. It's hoped that delegates will come from Manchester's major Trafford Park engincering plants.

If the builders have already committed themselves to action, that will strengthen the hand of those who will be calling for all-out local sirikes.

And that's just the picture in one city. With actions like these going on all over the country, Des and Eric could be out of jail in no time at all.



# MINERS AVICTORY SOLIDARITY

in a coalfield ballot to be national productivity. held in two weeks' time of the NCB's productivity proposals same, with the tremendous particularly as the main

in the negotiations with the variations in mechanisation) Leicester and Nottingham NCB was miners' unity as a locally measured productivity fields, while its main opponwork force, as well as miners' would vary from pit to pit. ents come from the big Yorkliving standards and Originally, the NCB had shire and Scottish fields. conditions.

THE DECISION of the by pegging their pay rises to the previous decision and 1.M. to recommend reject- pit productivity rather than made the outcome of the

in a victory for solidarity variation from coal field to advocates of the NCB offer What was crucially at stake coal field, (as well as are the relatively small

offered the local productivity NUM leader, Joe Gormley, At every stage of negotiat- scheme and a system whereby made no bones about his dision, the chief objective of the non-face workers would appointment with the new NCB has been to widen the receive 50% of the bonus paid decision. That is his right. But gap between the 86,000 face to the face man. They the attack he launched on workers and the 144,000 other conceded that this would be Communist Party Industrial miners, underground and calculated at the national Organiser, Bert Ramelson, is surface workers, and, this level, but still insisted on the a sign that the behind - the done, to disintegrate the hard local productivity measure- scenes battle could be a very won unity of the face workers ment for the faceworkers. dirty one indeed.

end of the wedge that could workers as well. lead to the effective dismembering of the NUM.

accepted the pit-productivity principle.

Its rejection last Thursday by a vote of 14 to 12 reversed forthcoming ballot almost With no two seams the certain to be favourable -

WIDGERY - putting the

"FINALLY, and without having consulted the General Council, Mr. Murray undertook that it would unanimously press for all the eight points in the TASS resolution to be implemented if Mr. Gill would withdraw his motion, an assurance which was rapturously received by the delegates. Mr. Scanlon and Mr. Gill exchanged a long hard look across the hall, and then went off for a private conversation. Somebody suggested a five minute adjournment, but the chairman, Lord Allen, failed to take the hint and all was nearly lost. But just as he was putting resolution 49 to the vote, Mr. Gill reappeared and ... agreed to withdraw it. The day had been saved for the Labour Government."

That, according to one employers' paper, is how the Social Contract was clinched. It is now a matter of sheer speculation to wonder whether the Social Contract started out as a simple manoeuvre to get more votes, or to get a pay pause which would encourage the capitalists to

# THE NECK-TIE OR THE NOOSE two ways of 'controlling' the bosses' breathing

put their faith in Labour and their money ito industry, or whether its transformation into a kind of national plan was envisaged from the start. Certainly, the TUC's enthusiasm for it arose from seeing it as more than just a cover up for wage restraint.

#### WARNINGS

In the words of the TUC itself, "The Social Contract is the TUC's anti-inflation charter ... the Social Contract is a strategy for economic success. Out of this, greater social justice and better wages

and conditions can be won."

It is a fact that many trade unionists and even militants for some patent 'cure' for the frightening spectre of inflation. So perhaps, after all the urgent warnings to ignore the Contract as a con-trick, it is time to examine the other side of its face.

Right from the outset, the Social Contract was seen by its champions in the labour movement as the "social side" of a national plan whose economic side was laid out in the White Paper "The Re-

have tended to look at the Contract in this way, hoping by Jack Price

British generation Industry", sired by Anthony Wedgwood Benn.

This is hardly surprising since roaring inflation has always been the occasion for "national plans" — both of the Left and of the Right. And like any other plan, the Social Contract/Industrial Regeneration plan explicitly committed itself to control.

That the control which is envisaged is more far-going than any other recent proposals is not because of any sudden conversion to Socialism or anything else so subversive of Labour values. It is because of the grave situation facing British capitalism. The clear prospect of widespread bankruptcies, company collapses and even slump does not act on the capitalists like a cold shower. On the contrary it leads to ever greater chaos in the ranks of capital, increasing speculation, swindle, refusal to spend money on new machinery and refusal to produce. In short: panic.

#### CONTROL

At the same time these, as well as other tendencies within the system (like the decline of certain industries like ship-building and aircraft) threaten the working clace with not only the decline in value of wages, but with mass unemployment.

To protect the system from its masters, therefore, its cunning servants devise a plan. They say to the workers without the masters you will have no jobs and therefore no wages" and they say to the employers "without control you'll have a revolution round your ears".

It is quite clear, of course, that not too much attention is being paid on either side. But the fact that control — any small amount of it — over the bosses has met with their strong resistance, means that any proposals to assert such a plan appear almost revolutionary, and will certainly need to be fought for.

#### **PROPERTY**

It is in this context that the argument about "hand-outs" has arisen. The employers are demanding that the Government funnel about £3,000 million into their pockets as "industrial investment". Harold Lever, Labour's millionaire Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and chief economic advisor, has gone some of the way to meeting them by suggesting a "float" of £1,000 million to be doled out through the banks; while Dennis Healey, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has already hinted at agreement with the CBI on a number of tax concessions and price changes that are worth about bosses.

a further £1,500 million to the All this means that those who have brought us (and in some cases even themselves) to the brink of rum are to be rewarded by massive cash hand-outs — with neither control, conditions nor

The "Left", in turn.

scrutiny.

demand that there be at least some guarantees that this money will go into industry. They point out that the last time the big businessmen got any 'incentive to invest' they didn't invest in industry at all. For instance, when Tory Chancellor Anthony Barber removed credit controls in 1971, the increased money supply was invested in property and commodity speculation, not industry.

#### DESTROY

insurance companies and pension funds alone had £3,248 million invested in property. This figure is now over £4,000 million. Benn himself motivated his proposals to increase control over the operations of the industrialists by reference to this same tendency: "In 1971, investment for each worker in British manufacturing industry was less than half that in France, Japan or the United States, and well below that in Germany or Italy. In spite of the measures to encourage investment [the removal of credit controls and the Tories' 1972 Industry Act] taken since then, it hasstill lagged behind; indeed it was significantly less in 1973 than it was in 1970."

That meant one thing: the capitalists were not to be trusted. "This requires" concluded Benn "a closer, clearer and more positive relationship between Government and Industry." It was to achieve this, not to dismantle capitalism or destroy it, that he proposed the National

rate bonanzas for the employers but an extension of nationalisation and control of foreign trade, the TUC followed this up the very next day with a statement "that any further financial assistance to industry should be selective and should be coupled with accountability by the firms to the Government and with public participation in their control, and that the assistance should not be through the commercial banking system."

Likewise, control is the main point of the TUC's comments on the Labour Government's consultative document on the proposed

Employment Protection Act. The TUC, in addition to proposing a number of useful but still inadequate reforms which in no way limit the freedom of action of the capitalists (like extending the paid period of maternity leave to 12 weeks), proposes that "a worker appealing against a decision to dismiss him should retain his job, or be suspended on full pay until his appeal is dealt with; regional arbitration committees should be established by the Conciliation and Arbitration Service ...;" and, most important, "redundancies IN HIS letter to Workers F should not take place without the approval of the Department of Employment."

It also repeats its demand for control over handouts, whole question. If it is take presses the Government "to deal with the Lump" which it describes as "bogus selfemployment" and demands that Labour "prohibit private fee-charging emproyment





BLMC workers occupy in the fight against redundancies at their Basingstoke factory.

Enterprise Board, workers' participation and the Government's right to investigate the accounts of privately owned industry.

The fact that these proposals are inextricably linked with the Social Contract has made the TUC General Council line up against the Levers and Healeys in the Labour Party who repudiate such accountability. For it is their preparedness to leave out any practical accounting that undermines the Social Contract from the other side of the class fence.

When the Tribune MPs told Wilson at the first Parliamentary Labour Party meeting after the election that there should be no bargainagencies.'

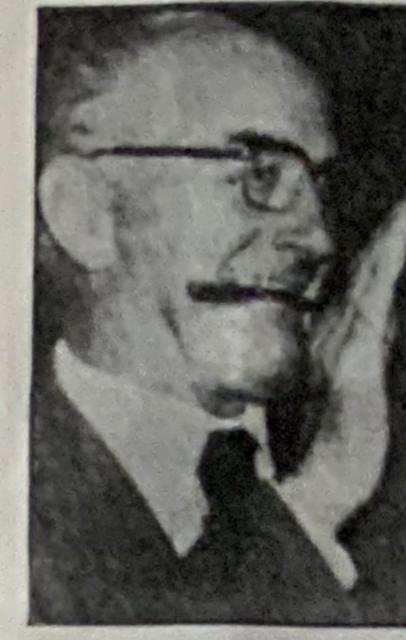
The division between the right wing Healey - Lever Jenkins group and the Benn Tribune "lefts" is thus a very real one. But this division is small compared with the gap between what this "left" proposes, and what is really

called for. Their conception of "plan" essentially envisages a completely passive working class. The link between the plan and the Social Contract | controls merely poses serves to bring this out most reform clearly: the workers' side of the Social Contract is, when all's said and done, lying are not down and keeping quiet.

class will engage in every kind in getting rid of it altogeth

Parliamentary obstru the face of restriction traditional freedom o Unless concerted a taken against them, it repeat of 1964, when ditched its program feeble reforms bec opposition from the b

This has already s number of co. (Pilkingtons, British onian and others announced their re carry out previous



Scanlon - a long hard

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(No.72) John O'Mah argues that any 'meaning price control is imposs under capitalism. The w 'meaningful' here begs mean that no capitalist gove ment can rationally plan allocation of labour ti between the various differ needs of society, then he is course, correct If this w little point in publish Workers Fight.

#### False

If however the point is th is impossible for governme to influence prices, then argument is false. Qu obviously governments and do influence prices such measures as subsid (which were mentione taxation, monetary policy the setting of prices nationalised industries. Th not to say that the law of va no longer functions. It is to that it functions in a very m modified form from 1 described by J.O'M. In steel industry, for exam prices have been kept down a matter of government pol which is very much to advantage of those capital who buy steel.

J.O'M. again correctly sti that socialists should advocate price control. But article in WF did not do I Rather it pointed out how Labour government backing down in the face capitalist opposition to p controls. Of course, if it re is impossible for governme to influence prices, then headline "Healey backs do on price control" is nonser But then if it really impossible for government control prices, why are pitalists clamouring to be droppe

ald they not prefer to ke for the window-dress purpose, which was of cou the principle aim of exercise anyway?

within capitali without mobilising working class for overthrow of capitalism. concerned W advocating this or t Meanwhile, the capitalist variation of capitalist rule. of Parliamentary and extra- The demand for a sliding so

## WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER Issues the national conference must tackle

DELEGATES turned up last Saturday (Oct. 26th) to what many thought was to be the first national conference of the Working Women's Charter Campaign. However, in no sense was it such a conference.

though some members of the Steering Committee had thought it was to be a national conference, others had been under the impression that it was to be a London meeting. Because many delegates had come from outside London, it was decided that they should be included in the voting, and a further vote allowed observers to vote as well.

However, because it was not fully a national meeting and many areas had not received invitations, it was decided that amendments to the Charter could not be discussed.

The confusion over the extent of the Conference meant that further time was taken deciding whether an organisational structure should be determined before strategy was worked out, or vice versa. Because it wasn't a proper national conference, structure had to be forsaken. even though a proposal had been made from the organising committee.

At last a debate on strategy was opened but the large number of people wishing to speak meant that time for contributions was soon cut

down to 2 minutes per person, and the conference ended hastily with a decision to reconvene the conference on a definite London basis to prepare for a proper national conference.

At such a reconvened meet-First, it turned out that ing, or before, the following and organisation, with areas should be discussed.

I.Preparation for the national conference, with delegates from all bodies working around the Charter, political groupings supporting it, and interested organisations of the labour movement, and in particular, representatives from recent women's struggles.

#### Methods

Such a conference should be prepared and preceded by full circulation of documents on methods of work and amendments to the Charter. Given the often vague and un-specific nature of many of the points of the Charter, this could provide a really useful way both to movement and to push for the involve grassroots organis- inclusion of the Charter's ations in a constructive discussion on women's needs, and claims, and to agitate at local also to bring in new ideas. and municipal level for the Already, there have been provision of nurseries and proposals for very necessary other facilities. enlargement of the demands for nurseries and other there is no reason why the publicly provided facilities to Working Women's Charter take a great deal of the burden Campaign cannot make a real of housework and childcare impact in the liberation of off the backs of women; and for a fight to equalise

women's rights and status within the labour movement Other amendments could include more specific demands in relation to

women claimants, etc.

2. The setting up of a permanent national structure centralised publications which would be a focus for information gathering and research work, for publicising successes, backing up women's struggles, organising demonstrations and pickets and bringing the demands of the Charter to the attention of meetings and conferences of the labour movement through resolutions and leaflets; and finally, getting the Charter Campaign affiliated to other bodies and organisations. such as the National Rank and File organisation.

3. Methods of local organisation and work, to include initiatives for factory groups and branches to help women to organise themselves within the trade union demands in regular pay

Given such an approach, women today.

Sue Leigh

s for the employextension of on and control of de, the TUC up the very next statement "that financial assisttry should be selould be coupled tability by the Government and participation in

commercial control is the of the TUC's n the Labour consultative the proposed Protection Act. in addition to number of useful

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investment plans unless the Parliamentary obstruction in Government backs down the face of restrictions to its traditional freedom of action. Unless concerted action is taken against them, it will be a repeat of 1964, when Labour

#### PASSIVE

And the workers aren't prepared to be passive. Quite apart from the upsurge of struggles over wages and conditions, Benn has received dozens of requests from factory convenors to meet them to discuss nationalisation of the firms they work in.

This is a hint of the fighting power that could be called up to defend a Labour Government that was prepared to stand up to the capitalists.

Thus both sides are shaping up for a struggle.

But it is a struggle that the Labour Party, both right and left (as well as the TUC) is not prepared to wage. Even while the left Labourites counterpose themselves (in words) and their plan to the will of the employers, they counter-

pose themselves and their working class and its loyal plan (in fact) to the struggleactivity of the working class. And it's not even as if they just refuse to involve themselves in and encourage the extraparliamentary struggle. The performance of the lefts in parliament is no less miserable than their performance outside.

And yet any control worthy of the name is something that only the working class can - and only the

directly and elected should representatives excercise.

the record, the Labour lefts, like the TUC General Council, have shown a greater loyalty to maintaining a "favourable bargaining situation" (that is, a booming capitalism) than they have to the working class.

The nationalisation and state control we have come to know has meant vast, often inefficient and always bourgeois-minded bureaucracy. Even if the Government were an extremely left one and full of good intentions, what is really needed is control by workers over industry and distribution through shop committees, trade unions and other workers' organisations.

#### CREDIT

Moreover, the new regime the Social Contract fraudulently promised to herald should not be burdened to death by 'compensation' debts. This sort of "socialism" on the never-never will never never be socialism. So — no big compensation for business.

The present debate on Government handouts basically reveals the inadequacy of all solutions, however well intentioned, that fall short of a nationalisation of all the banking, credit and financial instit-

utions. That is the only way to control investment and simultaneously submit it to a plan working in the interests of, and decided on by, the working class. Nationalisation and centralisation of these these institutions should be done on the basis of a restoration of the savings of the small investor but not a penny to the banking and big business grandees.

#### ACUTE

What the industrialists are presently clamouring for is nothing less than money with menaces. If they don't get the money, they say, there will be mass unemployment. (Mass unemployment, that is, at a time of acute shortages: food shortages, housing shortages, shortages in manning of public and social services and so on.) If they dare either to carry out their threat of redundancy or attempt in any way to sabotage attempts to introduce even half hearted controls, their firms should be occupied by workers and they should be thrown out. While demanding the expropriation of such companies "from above", workers should not wait, but act "from below".

Steps toward control of the industries in which we spend our lives working and on which our livelihoods depend are necessary, and they should be done as a right, and not purchased as part of either a phony con-trick or a

real contract.



ditched its programme of

feeble reforms because of

This has already started. A

(Pilkingtons, British Caled-

announced their refusal to

carry out previously made

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number

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Scanlon - a long hard look

goes

IN HIS letter to Workers Fight

(No.72) John O'Mahony

argues that any 'meaningful'

price control is impossible

under capitalism. The word

'meaningful' here begs the

whole question. If it is taken to

mean that no capitalist govern-

ment can rationally plan the

allocation of labour time

between the various differing

needs of society, then he is, of

course correct. Il this were

otherwise then there would be

little point in publishing

False

If however the point is that it

is impossible for governments

to influence prices, then the

argument is false. Quite

obviously governments can

and do influence prices by

such measures as subsidies

(which were mentioned),

taxation, monetary policy and

the setting of prices in

nationalised industries. This is

not to say that the law of value

no longer functions. It is to say

that it functions in a very much

modified form from that

described by J.O'M. In the

steel industry, for example,

prices have been kept down as

a matter of government policy,

which is very much to the

advantage of those capitalists

J.O'M. again correctly states

that socialists should not

advocate price control. But the

article in WF did not do this.

Rather it pointed out how the

Labour government was

backing down in the face of

capitalist opposition to price

controls. Of course, if it really

is impossible for governments

to influence prices, then the

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But then if it really is

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Workers Fight.



Trades Union Congress - voting for the Social Contract

Jane Gordon

## Price control – the debate

on back page of wages not only presents an immediately practical way in which the working class can defend its living standards, but also provides a demand which can mobilise workers towards

More letters

the overthrow of capitalism. Likewise on Northern Ireland. We do not demand that British troops do this, that or the other. We demand that they get out. However, when we point out how the Labour government backs down to the backward Orange bigots, does that logically imply that we are endorsing the presence of British troops, if only to strike at the Loyalists? Of course it doesn't. Or, to take another example, when Labour came to power in 1964 it did so on the basis of an expansionary policy for British capitalism. It was very soon forced to climb down by international finance. Of course socialists don't go around demanding 'an expansionary capitalism', but when the Labour government backs down on this, is it not quite correct to point out the fact and explain it? Andrew Roberts

## Not the whole story

J.O'M.'s letter (WF72) is quite right to warn against the misleading aspect of the headline 'Healey backs down on Price Control'. To suggest that a government running the capitalist system can do to intervene effectively in the basic market forces of capitalist anarchy would be wrong in fact, and could indeed detract from the need of workers to intervene themselves in the best way of all - by pushing wages up.

But his letter failed to make one important qualification. All too often the question of prices is treated in terms only of this (entirely right in itself) Marxist understanding of capitalism, failing to take account of a reality which has been somewhat modified. A very large proportion of

workers' income is spent on things like fares, rates, gas, electricity, rent and taxes (not just income tax, but also the notoriously regressive purchase tax - now VAT and other tariffs that greatly affect the price of alcohol and tobacco). Then there are school dinners, dental and health charges, radio and TV licences, nursery facilities (if one can find them!) etc.

To say that a Labour government has no control over all these items is to let it off a very big hook indeed. That state or municipal controlled goods and services should be cheaper or free rather than being run on a profit-making basis, is a

demand which revolutionaries should not be 'above' making. It is of course a demand for reform, but only sectarians would ignore it or deny the need for it. After all, higher wages, pensions and benefits, better housing, health and education are also 'reformist' demands, but they all form part of the general struggle to improve workers' living standards under capitalism.

IT REQUIRES effort to tear through the shrouds of scholasticism covering the figure of John Milton, who died 300 years ago. But the effort is worthwhile, for the voice of Milton is that of the first openly revolutionary poet in English literature, and of a man whose life and art are inseperably bound up with the process of the English bourgeois revolution between 1640 and 1660.

Milton was deeply involved in the events of these years, and his great work Paradise Lost in particular gains its power and authority from his intense grappling with the history around and within

The forces of the English revolution, in breaking the fetters of the established Church and Monarchy, drastically altering society for the benefit of developing capitalism, had produced, over a long revolutionary period, a ideology, Puritanism.

#### Free will

Expressed in the terms of the religious struggle, this represented in essence the idealised will of the bourgeois in struggle against the institutions of a feudal past. Puritanism combined two features that are vital in understanding Milton. One was predestination — the idea that God had pre-ordained the victory of the righteous Parliamentarians over the reactionary forces in the Civil War; the other was free will - expressing the individualism of the brouegsoi revolutionary who believed that by his own efforts and on his own responsibility he could create the conditions he required, and thus fulfil the 'word of God'.

The most radical of the Puritans, including Milton, believed that their victory in the Civil War, the elimination of King and bishops, and the breaking of barriers between the self and God, would usher in the 'Kingdom of Christ on earth'.

These hopes were dashed by the reality of the

# Lament Lost ideal

300 years after the death of the poet John Milton

class struggles in the revolution. The splits within the Parliamentary forces between the upper strata of the bourgeoisie, the Presbyterians, and the petty bourgeois masses behind the Independents, the use of the mass movement to defeat the King's forces and then the eventual crushing of the radical Levellers and Diggers, the consolidation of power under Cromwell and the later compromise of royal restoration, carried through a partial bourgeois revolution most effectively. But it did so at the expense of the lower middle class and artisans who had borne most of the fighting, and of the ideology of a biblical millenium which had done so much to sustain them in it.

#### Poetry

Their aspirations were for a kind of "classless" in fact, petty bourgeois democracy that was incompatible with further productive development and the bourgeois need for a political and economic framework in which to consolidate their rule.

Milton himself was hostile to the democrats, believing the interests of the revolution in the 1650s to lie with a few individuals round Cromwell. But with the restoration of the monarchy, the 'spiritual' revolution was finally betrayed, and Milton's poetry, working through the widest historical and philosophical field of reference, attempts to come to terms with this, the defeat of all his hopes.

Milton never saw his art contradicting his revolutionary activity. He saw poetry as a mode of action, interpreting and communicating essence of human experience in relation to the universe, to educate and

elevate that experience. Combined with his passionate, proud nature and his massive energy, this produces a majestic poetic style, forged in

by the striving for the individual "paradise within". Thus are 'God's ways' justified to man. But none of this can explain the revolutionary energy and dynamism of Paradise Lost, because this

so the fight for the earthly

paradise of the revolution-

aries is replaced, in defeat,

energy all goes through the figure of Satan, who fills the poem with a tragic spirit of revolt, the striving the individual will against a corporate tyranny.

It is Satan who dares to pit his will against God, who dares to declare total war and create the "evil" which Adam and Eve then choose to accept, and which brings man out of the luxurious parasitism in Eden into the long toil of productive labour, at the end of which is promised rest in Christ.



Satan - a heroic energy

defiant, blind solitude and structured in the form of epic, the breadth of which he needed to render a fallen world comprehensible in terms of the Christian myth.

The defeats of the revolution caused him to think that the majority of mankind, on their own responsibility, incapable of attaining the 'grace' requisite "Christ's Kingdom". This was attributed to the Fall. Only the Elect could overcome this, by their own efforts of reason and will, whereas the majority will always be sinful and imperfect. incapable of fulfilling "the word of Christ". And

Thus is the myth. But for Satan there is no rest, and his surging power is such that the rebel Milton almost denies the reassurances of Christianity even while striving to assert them.

In Satan is the spirit of individual revolution which cannot succeed, but beats savagely, heroically against the omnipotent. It is that spirit which Milton cannot subdue in himself. no matter how much he exalts "reason" as the light of the elect. And it is that crucial core of Milton, with all its tragic limitations in the bourgeois consciousness, that we need to point to in order to do justice to his memory.

# We

ON October 28th, the women Wingrove and Rogers. They had won their strike - there was no doubt about that. They had won the bonus payment and threshold that the bosses had refused to pay up, and Wednesday October 17th. they can be sure there won't be any monkeying around by the committed to in November, and the £2 due in March under the national AUEW agreement over Equal Pay.

One clause that it is hoped will remain as worthless as the paper it's written on, is that militants around to keep them isolated.

But as long as the strong organisation that's been built up in the strike is kept up, it will be possible to fight against such meddling.

which had unanimously to work. Defenceless men (MPs; the Irish Labour Party is accepted the agreement, talked to three of the members of the strike committee.

Rita, who is a shop steward, explained why she thought they'd won: "Partly because of the threatened one day strike of AUEW workers in Liverpool. Mainly because we knew we had a fight on our hands with Wingroves, and we were determined to go on for 12 months if necessary. That's why we won."

#### Power

They had also had support. Fight meeting. "The need for Joan told me they'd been helped by "blacking from firms throughout the country. Support on the picket line; donations from almost all factories in Liverpool." And Rita added "We also got donations from the Women and Socialism Conference in Birmingham, and from the Working Women's Charter in London."

Kathy added: "If we are forced to go on strike again, we will know what to do from the start. We won't just sit around and wait for the union officials. We'd go around and get blacking and support. We realised that the power of the unions is ourselves. And another thing. We learnt never to believe what the papers say, the Daily Express and the Liverpool Echo. And we learned about the police."

It was Joan who summed up the feeling of these new, yet now seasoned and experienced, working class militants: "We learned the true meaning of a union. The need to stick together: that WE are the union. The union is the only protection that working class people have."

JOHN BLOXAM

victory. They have gained the future.

ivity deal. Mos firms operate in gross pay).

ant issue - most drivers work for parity.

much longer hours anyway. Simon Temple

their main demand of a £40

They then tried to make the

a mileage bonus, under which

a driver gets paid one hour's

to be raised. This too was

Fault

employers wanted this

rejected.

rejected last week.

NOW FOR PARITY!

THE Scottish haulage drivers But with a severe recession

have won a considerable starting it will be important in

basic (as opposed to around that it provides no protection

£28 previously). The bosses against inflation, apart from

attempt to pay out in two existing threshold deals -

stages, and include the exist- due to expire next month.

ing thresholds within it, was This will mean the rapid

rise conditional on a product- (about a 40% average increase

wages for every so many miles drivers, and demands for

(usually 28) he goes; the parity will play an important

## REPRESSION WORSENS IN

A NATIONAL contingent of WORKERS FIGHT joined the 5,000 strong demonstration on Sunday 27th to demand: TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND NOW!

The week before, another who'd been on strike for 17 600 British soldiers had been weeks went back to work at flown over to Ireland, to through the mud by their legs; resulting from heavy beating Labour Party, tenants relieve their hard-pressed and run around barefooted, or and kicking. Some can hardly exhausted comrades who made to kneel on stones. must indeed have needed a rest after their labours of list of injuries from just 4 of and another is coughing troops out of Ireland. They

> British soldiers invaded Long serious dog bites, 6 with they had to be hospitalised. Kesh to show the prisoners rubber bullet wounds, 25 with As snow begins to fall in the who was who.

#### Gas

First, they rained down CS agreeing to total flexibility of gas from helicopters, and then labour. It would mean in they went in on foot, firing practice the bosses splitting rubber bullets, and rounded people up and moving up the republican prisoners onto the football pitch.

less all over, (after a savage Curragh Detention Barracks in mauling from the Army's the south of Ireland have issued a dogs, and with most of the statement warning against the men spreadeagled up against effects of the 1974 Prisons Bill, After the mass meeting the perimeter fence) they went the support of the Labour TDs were mercilessly kicked and part of a coalition with the Tory beaten; dragged along Fine Gael).

technic Union, Aytoun St.

ENFIELD College. Workers

revolutionary regroupment"

Speaker: Andrew Hornung.

1pm, Monday 18th November

Room 242, Enfield College.

## Brutal assaults at Long Kesh

the twenty odd cages included blood. For it was on that day, at 5 men with concussion, 25 injuries, and 40 with wounds are still sleeping in gutted "Clothing Fund".)

walk; a man hit in the throat to join the growing number of At the end of five hours, the by a rubber bullet can't talk, those who say: Get the British

dawn, after the fires had died with broken or fractured a doctor was seen, except by purchase clothing for the ically perfect: fascists will not bosses when it comes to down to ashes, that 3,000 bones, 19 suffering from those so seriously hurt that prisoners in Long Kesh. Send

cuts, 13 with head and face north of Ireland, these men

huts, wearing the clothes they had on them when they burned down the camp in anger at the breaking of every promise by the British authorities.

COLDITZ WAS NEVER LIKETHIS!

### Fund

Give YOUR support to these men behind the wire. Get your trade union or mobilisations since then in association or trades council, have no right to be there!

For two days after that, not (A fund has been opened to your donation to Eire Nua Bookshop, 170a Falls Road, Belfast, marking the envelope thing found in the occasional

## CURRAGH WARNING round-up of militants!

And when it was more or POLITICAL prisoners at the

struggle in the coming period. up. In preparation for this, the inframing it and voting it in! army and gardai (police) have been almost doubled in strength

in both men and equipment. before Special Courts, convicted where the experience of internon little or no evidence and ment gained by the British state thrown into military prison forces will no doubt before long interim rise. camps which are ready to stand them in good stead in is the real reason for the Prisons militants. The Shrewsbury trials Bill that allows civilians to be are part of this process. imprisoned in military camps. ... These attacks on the working why we cannot turn our backs on class, both north and south, must he Irish struggle. be defeated and firm action J.G.

The legislation allows for a against Cosgrave (Irish PM) will further 3 year period of military show the workers in the north ised at Enfield College detention. It is, say the prisoners, that they have a common cause Students' Union on Saturday not only aimed at Republicans, because they are struggling 9th November, for all students but also at left wingers and against capitalism to obtain a supporting the original line of militants in the labour move- decent standard of living."

ment, in the anticipation of a They say that the first step is to severe shaepening of the class get the Labour leaders to Student Unions and Socialist withdraw from the Coalition and Societies across the country "Top level meetings concerning fight with the trade unions have been invited to send large scale arrests of militants against this repressive legislation delegates. have been held and blueprints for — which may be a bit hopeful, as such operations have been drawn they have themselves had a hand

However, their statement is

Which is just one more reason

either that the fashion industry

as it exists is desirable, or that

it would be any less male

chauvinist in its outlook and

of the clothes, or that women's

aim should be primarily to 'get

However, it is a fact that

even in jobs that this patriar-

chal, male chauvinist society

would designate as "women's

with women.

TEACHERS are preparing for a fight over the Houghton Committee's enquiry into teachers' pay. Already over "Militants will be dragged quite significant for us here, 2,000 teachers are on strike in Scotland, demanding an immediate £15 per week

NEWS

BREF

ON JUNE 15th the National

Union of Students stepped

down on its decision to

oppose fascist and racist

speakers "by any means

The major National Front

Leicester and in London point

up the need for socialist stud-

ents to make sure the NUS

moves back to a firm anti

Not that the original NUS

resolution, or some of the

actions based on it, were tact-

be defeated simply by small

groups of militants disrupting

meetings. Far less so will

racism: racism is not some-

meeting, but running deep

through almost every part of

clear "by any means necess-

ary" clause is included in NUS

policy, so that students who

do take action have clear

opposing fascism and racism

"by any means necessary".

A conference is being organ-

But it is important that a

necessary".

fascist policy.

society.

backing.

The Educational Institute of BRIGHTON Workers Fight accomodate large numbers. This dealing with working class Scotland reports "payment as a result of the Houghton Inquiry is unlikely to take place until well into the New Year" — and Scottish teachers are not prepared to wait. In taking this action, they are firmly rejecting the Social Contract. English teachers must also make sure that the NUT Executive does not use the Social Contract as a letout. as they did last February In effect if women designed more dropping their claim from 25% and 7% and pleading that they had to under Phase 3.

> Any campaign round teachto the top' merely in jobs to do ers' pay must include the demand for full restoration of the £180 million education cuts, plus extra to take inflation into account. The National Union of School jobs", such as cooking and Students in reacting to the sewing, the only jobs carrying cuts by calling a demonstration of students, parents, and status and prestige, are teachers, on Sunday, Novreserved for men. Thus men as ember 3rd. Socialist teachers chefs do creative, highly paid should support this, and Rank cooking, and men as 'fashion and File, the militant group in house' heads carry out the the NUT, should take this creative and prestigious side opportunity to forge links with the NUSS by calling joint these as a basis for helping to set up more school branches was that if this is so in such of the NUSS. spheres, how much more is

NUSS demo against the cuts: Assemble 2pm Sunday November 3rd, Charing Cross Embankment.

points:

community is being dest-

royed, people are scattered.

this type of redevelopment is

expensive and not always

necessary, and it would be

So far, the group has

to stop it being gutted, and

unionists to support them.

## OF ALL the sights that most

following

original houses.

outrage a Londoner conscious of the terrible pressure of homelessness, it is that of perfectly good houses cleared of their tenants and left standing year in, year out to and dynamism associated rot. The question being asked in snobbery, the overwhelming Station Ward, Finsbury Park, is: is it really necessary. And a Housing Action Group has been formed of squatters and residents, who make the

preferable to have renovation

## Dynamic

Incidentally, although the fashion industry as it exists is sexist, there is no reason why liberated women should be against the change, variety with it - free from the commercialism of its 'built in obsolescence' and the emphasis on 'femininity', the imaginative design of clothes would be a perfectly harmless

press on this issue must not be "Haunted by the shadow of The other objection, that of forgotten the next time there is Home", when speaking of how the decadence of such frivolity a hullabaloo about 'leftist anti- women take a secondary role in a world where people starve. May I also call your readers' in jobs, you say that "they even is not confined to fashion but part in future struggles in the attention to the case of the 100 model women's clothes is a general feature of and rehabilitation of the road haulage industry. Russian Jewish families at designed by men". This capitalism and imperialism. Indeed, 800 drivers working present in Vienna, who left implies that if women with fashion as just one picketed a house in an attempt for state owned companies Israel more than a year ago designed the clothes it would symptom. And it has nothing and have been demanding the be alright, rather than attack- whatever to do with it being they call on tenants and trade

# thers letters letters.

Zionists admit pressure on Jews

MEETINGS

MANCHESTER Workers Fight LONDON Workers Fight for-

readers' meeting. "The case um. "Popular Front and Popul-

for a revolutionary regroup- ar Unity: Spain and Chile".

ment". Speaker: Martin Speaker: Bas Hardy. 8pm,

Thomas. 8.30pm, Wednesday Sunday November 3rd, at the

(near the Angel)

Sussex Union.

6th November, at the Poly- 'George', Liverpool Road, N.1

settle in this country, I have London. est to your readers.

Warsaw Jewish family wiped Israel). out by the Nazis - was held at The Buyers and Mr. Mikhail ently "bewildered" by his det- going back.

The other fault of the deal is

erosion of even the substant-

ial gains won from the strike

However, the deal is a big

(Scottish Road Services and

victory for the Scottish

FURTHER to your excellent 11th after being 'persuaded' to article onthe Labour Govern- return by Mr. Yitzhack Mayer, ment's refusal to permit head of the Jewish Agency Russian Jewish immigrants to Immigration department in

readers' meeting. "The case

for a revolutionary regroup-

ment". Speaker: Sean

Matgamna. 1pm, Friday 8th

November, at the University of

obtained additional inform- On their return to Israel, ation which might be of inter- they staged a sit-in at Ben Gurion airport to demand One of the would-be imm- fresh emigration facilities; igrants, 47 year old Mr. Yosef (they have since, according to Buyer - the sole survivor of a news reports, agreed to stay in

claimed that he had comm- and his eldest son became itted no crime and was appar- violent at the prospect of

ention! Four members of a Before returning to Israel, family named Tsirinsky were the Tsirinskys telephoned sent back to Israel on October Soviet Embassy diplomats from Heathrow in an unsuccessful attempt to enlist Scottish drivers win their aid.

Jewish relief and welfare organisations in London refused to help any of the families on the grounds that they could not be classified as refugees, their original place of refuge being Israel.

The Jewish Chronicle, which reported all these facts, nevertheless did not see fit to voice an opinion on the matter. Is the Jewish community leadership against the free immigration of Jews, West Indians, Asians etc into Britain? The despicable silence of the Zionist organis-

was for a guaranteed 45 hour been offered £35.66 as part of

week, whether work was a national pay deal. Their Campaign for Homosexual available or not. Up till now struggle should be made the Equality. Demonstration this has not been an import- lever to spread the campaign against legal restrictions on homosexuals. 2pm, Saturday IN USING the particular which included that point

refused to eat for two days. He return to Israel and Mr. Buyer their demand and have even, of the fashion industry, while in their desperation, attacked in each case women play a public meetings and using the Soviet Embassy (which subordinate role. The point promptly called in the Austrian riot police to get rid of them!)

These stateless people are this subordination in force in living in absolutely appalling occupations which are conditions, as the Zionist organisations have refused to supposed to be 'masculine'. give them a penny. Socialists in this country have a duty to raise their case, and to demand that they be allowed to go back to Russia. **ALAN ADLER** 

### WHO SHOULD DESIGN WOMEN'S CLOTHES?

ations and the pro-Zionist IN THE ARTICLE in WF74 pursuit. The only demand not met on strike, as they have only hunger strikes in support of chauvinist attitude towards responsible for that part of the what women wear. SUELEIGH

example. I was not implying RACHELLEVER

article: for practical reasons the other signatories were unable to check the final draft

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Eric

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