

**Counter - Demonstration**  
2pm Hyde Park, London Sept. 7th.



**STOP THE NATIONAL FRONT NOW!**

A MASSIVE turnout of 5,000 to 6,000 socialists in Leicester last Saturday (24th August) was the answer to the march by the National Front. The Front's march, which mustered no more than 600, had to be re-routed and was heckled all the way. Despite police protection, some of the marchers were attacked by counter-demonstrators.

But the police managed to keep the main from a safe distance from the National Front, and — somewhat ingloriously — they did manage to march.

Next Saturday they are going to have another try. They've got Orangemen coming over with their bowler hats and sashes, and they're marching together to demand that Irish republican sympathisers be harassed even more than they are now in this country.

There has been more time to organise for a counter demonstration on September 7th. The turnout should be massive. Thousands of leaflets have gone out, and many trade union organisations have resolved to bring their banners (Bishop Stortford & Harlow AUEW District Committee is circularising all branches in the district urging attendance; Merseyside Anti-Fascist Committee has leafleted docks and car works, and is organising coaches).

Leaflets and posters can be obtained from Workers Fight, 98 Gifford Street N.1.

**COME YOURSELF** — and bring everyone you can. This is a most important demonstration. This time the fascists must be STOPPED.

(Assemble Hyde Park 2pm.)

# DOLE QUEUE DANGER TO WORKING CLASS

- Occupy factories threatened with redundancy and put them under workers' control.
- Demand nationalisation, without compensation; where workers' control has been won, we must fight to keep and extend that control under nationalisation.
- Push for workers' enquiries into the full background of any proposed closures or sackings. All the facts, including interest paid to moneylenders, should be brought out. Don't waste time asking for government inquiries into 'viability'.

But to build a united movement, we need more than the spectacular actions like occupations. For most workers, unemployment creeps up unannounced. Rather than a whole works closing down (which tends to unite all the workers in action) it's more often a matter of some workers going, some staying, which makes it easy to divide us. Even occupations, without the necessary groundwork, may be nothing more than a gesture.

We must therefore campaign for the trade unions, at all levels, to take up an active policy against unemployment. It should include at least the following considerations.

- The 30-hour week must become a central part of every union's claim; not just for show, or as a disposable

bargaining counter, but as something to be fought for. No more productivity dealing. We are not against efficiency and technological advances; but the benefits should come to the people who produce the wealth, in terms of a shorter working week all round. Employers will be trying to take what advantage they can of the recession by "shaking out" the labour force, reducing manning levels, and introducing speed-up.

## Overtime

- No overtime. It is scandalous for some workers to be doing long hours of overtime while others can find no work at all. To make it possible for every worker to have a reasonable living wage without overtime, we must fight for: straight increases in basic wages of around 30% this autumn; automatic, open-ended, zero threshold agreements, covering price increases adequately (at least 60p increases for each 1% rise in the cost of living), and based on a working class cost of living index; and a national minimum wage of at least £30, rising with the cost of living, and applying to everyone, employed or unemployed.

- International trade union links, especially international combine committees. These links become vital as the line "we'll move

THE OFFICIAL unemployment rate is already 635,000. This winter it will probably be one million.

Some of the experts predict 2 million unemployed by the end of 1975. Another forecast, published in the Sunday

Times, expects an average of 700,000 unemployed in 1974, 850,000 in 1975, and 930,000 in 1976. A year round average of 930,000 unemployed will mean something like one and a half million out of work in the winter months.

The official figures underestimate real unemployment — for example by leaving out housewives who would like to work but do not register unemployed. If Britain's figures were calculated on the same basis as the USA's, a figure of one million on present reckoning would come out around one and a half million.

## Need

In the building industry the recession can already be seen. A number of jobs have simply closed down, unfinished, because the funds to finish them off are not forthcoming. Contractors have opted out of contracts, fearing they may end up unprofitable.

And this is happening while there are still hundreds of thousands homeless! The reason for unemployment is not that there is no need for houses to be built or goods to be produced. The need is there. In a rational, socialist, society there would be no question of unemployment. But, under capitalism, production is only done for profit. And if capitalists do not expect sufficient profit, they do not produce.

## World

In the 1960s, "normal", "acceptable" unemployment was around 200,000. Now, 500,000 is rock bottom. Why? Simply because the booms of capitalism have become more feverish, the recessions sharper. The world recession now brewing will be the sharpest since the second world war — in fact, almost the first since the second world war to be a simultaneous world recession. World-wide, it will bring unemployment for our class. In the last few years, workers in Britain have rediscovered a

powerful working class tactic against sackings and closures — **factory occupations**. These occupations are a practical expression of the truth that the evil of unemployment cannot be cured without workers taking industry out of the hands of the capitalist class. Not that workers occupying their factories deliberately set out to overthrow capitalist power. Not at all. But they do know that if they leave control in the hands of the boss, then they will soon be on the streets.

In some places, like UCS, workers have concentrated on showing how 'viable' they can make the enterprise, for the sake of capitalists who may be persuaded to buy it up. In others, like Fakenham or Meriden, the plan has been for a workers' cooperative.

## Lip

Others have taken a more positive attitude towards turning out and getting support throughout the labour movement. The LIP watch factory in France is the best example. This approach doesn't guarantee success — the LIP workers were in fact defeated, in the end. But it's the only approach that begins to come to grips with the problem of closures.

As long as it is each group of workers on their own, the logic is that we end up cutting our own wages and speeding up our own work, in order to prove the enterprise "viable" (that is, profit-making) or keep it going on capitalist terms as a co-operative. We end up doing the capitalists' work for them.

Whatever the circumstances, our only strength is in self-reliance and class unity. These are the key to our strategy for fighting unemployment.

# workers' fight

3p

No. 67 — August 31st to September 7th

# 'MILLION

# JOBLESS

# THIS YEAR'

# HOW TO FIGHT IT

the work to another country" is heard more and more often from the big monopolies. Policies like calling for bans or restrictions on steel imports, as an answer to redundancies in the steel industry, must be opposed. All they can do is get the working class caught up in "protectionist" squabbles between rival capitalist classes, and disrupt any chance of international working class unity.

- In the same way, calling for your particular area to be named a "special development area" only serves to split you off from workers in other areas. Benn recently put £25 million into making

certain areas "special development areas". But the 'depressed areas' are still depressed'. Merseyside, for example, now has 5.7% unemployment.

The main effect of the "special development area" policy is to put money in the pockets of capitalists who move into the depressed

Continued on back page

# Little let-up in Indo-China peace

ACCORDING TO the Saigon authorities, the war on the ground in South Vietnam is fiercer now than at any time since spring 1972, and the fighting is nearer Saigon than it has been since the 1973 Paris Accords. Casualties are counted certainly not in occasional ones and twos, but in thousands.

The Paris Accords, signed on January 24th 1973, have not brought peace to Vietnam. The Accords provided for a cease-fire, banning of the import of new military materials to the South, the establishment of democratic liberties in the South, and finally for free elections to decide the future of South Vietnam.

In fact, the fighting continues; the US gave \$750 million in munitions to Saigon just before the Accords were signed. \$1,650 million worth in the year after, and plan \$700 million aid in the coming year. Thieu's regime remains a police state. Anyone attempting to make public propaganda for the NLF would be rapidly bundled off to prison, and even the doctored opposition that Thieu does allow are making loud complaints about Thieu's rigging of elections.

But no-one, least of all the US government, thought that Thieu actually would introduce democratic liberties. The US government did not expect and did not intend the Accords to bring peace. What they did hope to achieve was a cooling and consolidation of the situation.

That has, in some measure, been achieved. And, despite the fighting, despite the shaky state of all the governments in Indochina (except North Vietnam), the cooling and consolidation looks likely to hold for a while longer.

## Laos

Certainly, the situation in Laos is the most delicate link in the chain. As a result of the Vientiane agreement of 22 February 1973, which followed on the Paris Accords, a coalition government has been formed between the royalists and the Pathet Lao, under the leadership of the royalist Prince Souvanna Phouma.

The coalition cannot last indefinitely. There are two separate armies in the country, the Pathet Lao forces and the royalist forces, and there is a sharp conflict between the need for radical change felt by the workers and peasants who back up the Pathet Lao and the very limited room for reforms allowed by the established capitalist-landlord system.

Souvanna Phouma's heart attack on 13th July, and his departure for medical treatment on 23rd August, have given rise to a series of speculations about possible crisis in the government. The Paris daily *Le Monde* has reported tension between right and left in every ministry, a state of "social crisis", and a wave of strikes.

The 18-point programme approved by the coalition government on 11th July on the proposal of Pathet Lao

leader Prince Souphanouvong shows, however, a spirit of compromise rather than conflict. The programme is full of general conciliatory intentions — "national unity", calls on all other powers to respect the independence of Laos. The Pathet Lao does not want to force the pace — if they did, they would never have accepted the coalition agreement last year, when they were in a strong military position. On the other hand, the Pathet Lao is far too strong as yet to allow the right wing to force the pace.

An article in the French Trotskyist paper *Lutte Ouvriere* of 6/12 August, assesses the situation in Cambodia as one of military STALEMATE. Although the Khmer Rouge guerrilla forces have managed to take about 80% of the territory of Cambodia, their military hardware resources are not, according to LO, sufficient to defeat the US-equipped forces of the Lon Nol government.

Be that as it may, the finest US-supplied weaponry is no use without troops to use it, and a move by the Khmer Rouge towards an aggressive political strategy could topple the corrupt, decayed Lon Nol regime within weeks.

That government was in fact shaken by a big youth demonstration on 4th June, followed by protests against police killing of some demonstrators. Lon Nol, in a proposal put out on 9th July, practically went on his knees to offer negotiations without conditions to the Khmer Rouge. Following the prompt rejection of these proposals by Prince Sihanouk, in the name of the Khmer Rouge-backed "Royal Government of National Unity of Cambodia" (GRUNC), nine members of Lon Nol's government made a new proposal for negotiations (on August 18th) — a scarcely veiled offer to dump Lon Nol if that will help to get an agreement.

According to an article in another French Trotskyist paper *Rouge*, some months back, the Khmer Rouge had been planning a decisive offensive for June or July. At the end of August, there is still no sign of this offensive.

## US aid

In late July the GRUNC did decide to nationalise the rubber plantations. The rubber plantations represent Cambodia's main basic industry. They are mostly French-owned, and almost all in GRUNC-controlled areas (in fact they were one of the main places where the initial cadre of the Khmer Rouge came from). But the way this nationalisation was justified was not in terms of any socialist programme: it was based on the "uncooperative attitude" of the plantation owners. Cooperative, "national" capitalists are, it seems, quite all right.

Non of these regimes would have survived at all if it wasn't for massive US military aid. In South Vietnam, the piastre has been devalued seven times this year; even Thieu's corrupt Senate has demanded the resignation of the Minister of Commerce after it came out that \$80 million worth of fertiliser supplied as US aid had been sold on the black market; and the NLF has won important military victories near Da Nang. As in Cambodia and in Laos, the Right is in no position to take the offensive.

But public statements and resolutions of the North Vietnamese leadership, ever since the Accords, have stressed the aim of economic reconstruction in the North. In line with this the NLF, while making local gains where it can, is unlikely to launch any all-out offensive for a while yet.

Even if the war in Vietnam and Cambodia does continue on a relatively limited scale, though, that doesn't mean that there is no call for solidarity activity. The US imperialists must still be pressured to get out of Indochina completely. And the British government must be pressed to stop supporting the US. Only a few weeks ago, the Labour government presided over 120 South Vietnamese being sent back from Hong Kong — where they had tried to get refuge — to Thieu's prison camps, where 200,000 people are still kept in appalling conditions.

Martin Thomas

# THE SCAB 'ARMIES'

LAST WEEK was the week of the Colonels. Not to mention Generals, and even one corporal. All retired, but not very retiring.

To the Press, it was a nine-day wonder, a diversion for what they like to call the "silly season" — as if the dumping of a President (and an emperor, too), war in Cyprus and forecasts of one to two million unemployed in Britain can really be called silly.

What do the 'colonels' bode for us?

First, let it be made clear, the talk of military coups, rightly dismissed with derision — such a coup would come from the real army, not a toy one — is nothing but a cover for what these people are actually planning; that is, organised strikebreaking.

Are they a serious threat to the workers' movement? And, whether they are or not, what ought we to do about their appearance from under our beds?

Reading the documents written by Colonel David Stirling (the most serious by far) it's easy to join in the barely suppressed giggles of the journalists.

## Mileage

There is, for instance, a yawning gap between Stirling's hopes of running essential services against opposition from mass pickets, and the sort of people he plans to recruit to do this task. Given that he envisages having to "round up" sit-in strikers to get them out of harm's way (a tough assignment even for police or army) it's little wonder that one columnist got good mileage out of Stirling's volunteers from women's institutes, Rotary Clubs, junior Round Tables and Freemasons. ("Next week's meeting of the Rotary Club will hear an address on hand to hand combat, with particular emphasis of garrotting with cheese-wire, delivered by the Rural Dean. ... the Women's

# FUNNY OR NOT, THEY'RE A SERIOUS MATTER

Institute is to hear a lecture on the care and maintenance of the Bren-gun carrier, the Freemasons are practising street fighting up by the school, the Girl Guides are on manoeuvre, doing a tank course in Five-Acre Field... And finally "the Brownies, bless 'em, out on the machine-gun range. Keen as mustard, they are." Barry Norman. *Guardian*)

Nor do Stirling's fantasies about picket-jumping private helicopters do much for his credibility.

But his assessment that the British state might be willing to view favourably such help from volunteers, particularly if they seem to know what they're doing, is not at all far-fetched.

They certainly did in 1926, when the Tory government gave quiet encouragement to the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies.

Stirling evidently has also at least some contacts in the right places who haven't discouraged him. He has, for



As Mirror cartoonist McLachlan saw it. Can we afford to be so complacent?

"Thank God, Pimshew, this is a PRIVATE army! I'd hate the public to see them!"

ETHIOPIA is experiencing a revolution. Last March the workers' strikes, followed by peasant revolts, added to the simmering discontent in the army. The process of kicking in the rotten feudal structure of Ethiopian society had begun.

In a matter of days now, a bullet could cut short, at long last, the life of its decrepit "divine" head — Haile Selassie "King of Kings, Imperial majesty and direct descendant of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba".

The kind of revolution which Ethiopia is experiencing, though, is not of the modern type — that is, one in which the working class takes

over the means of production from the bosses. In Ethiopia there are very few workers and, for that matter, very few bosses. The process now developing is similar to that which took place in France two centuries ago, and in England a century before that. The only difference is that the system now doomed in Ethiopia is a thousand times more out-dated and antiquated.

## Relic

Ethiopia, before February this year, was like a perverted 'shangri-la'. Paradoxically, because of its feudal structure (unlike the prevailing tribal forms of social organisation at the time) it was able since the 19th century to resist the sort of (admittedly twisted) social and technological advances brought by European capitalism to Africa. Thus it remained a strange relic in the twentieth century.

Due to isolation and to its strong religious and monarchic institutions, Ethiopia kept foreign predators at bay throughout the 19th century 'scramble for Africa'. In 1896 when Italy, a late-comer to the colonial game, sought territory in Africa, her army was soundly defeated by the Emperor Meneluke at the Battle of Adowa. This 'slight' to Italy's 'dignity' was not avenged until Mussolini conquered the country in 1936.

Throughout the decades when European capitalism was penetrating the rest of the world, Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa remained "the

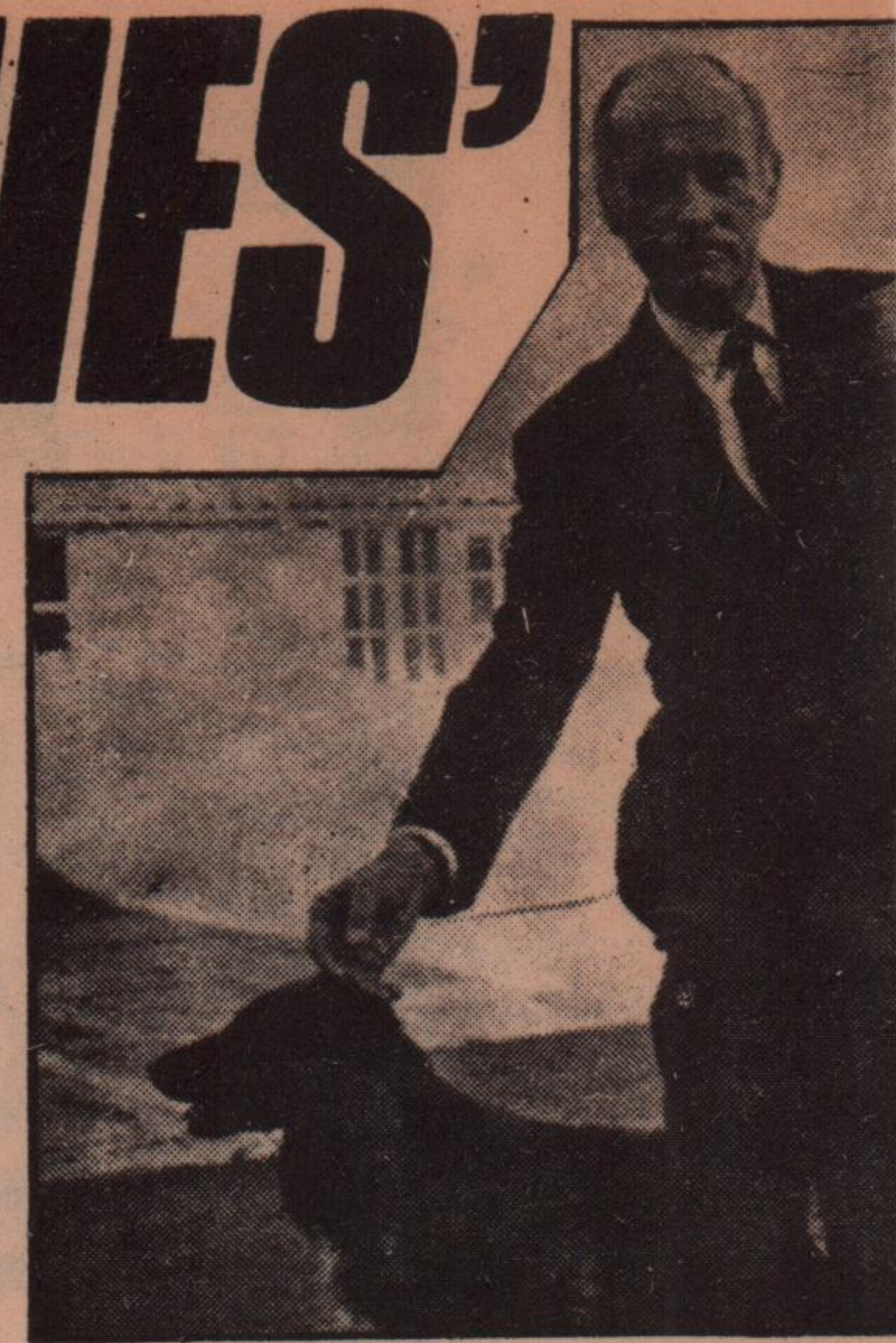
forbidden city" where the "white man" failed to penetrate.

Such penetration had two effects on other countries which were still at an earlier stage of development. There was of course the violence of colonial exploitation. And there was also the introduction of a culture based on advanced methods of production and the breaking up of pre-industrial social relationships. So Ethiopians suffered from the home-grown exploitation of the feudal lords, rather than the foreign entrepreneurial exploiters. But they lacked the seeds of change which the latter were to introduce to other countries such as Russia and China.

It was only after 1945 that the wheels of history finally rolled over the living fossil of Ethiopia.

## E.L.F.

Ethiopia 'inherited' from the war the province of Eritrea, a former Italian colony which was in a comparatively higher stage of advancement. This territory being incorporated into a hinterland of feudal backwardness, its industry and lands open to exploitation and spoliation by rustic nobles and corrupt politicians, after some time witnessed the growth of a liberation army the Eritrean Liberation Front (E.L.F.), which was to tie down much of the Emperor's army (The major centre of revolt in the army was in the capital of Eritrea)



Above (left) General Sir Walter Walker, by next month. He is seen with two of the British Military Volunteer Force from a fight in Vietnam with the Americans. Below: a unit of undercover terror-merchants, and

instance, talked to "senior members of the late Conservative Government". As he can easily recognise, the recruiting and training of volunteers is "a course of action clearly not open to Government."

If he is right that "there is no effective national contingency plans at the present time" and that "the Army itself has done little if anything to anticipate the results of a General Strike and the civil insurrection which might follow" (nice, if true, but doubtful) then a government might indeed be willing to make use of Colonel Sterling's services, or those of some other 'patriotic citizens', in the coming battles. And some employers might not mind, either.

## 'Civilians'

So, if Stirling is just living in dreamland and the others worth only a passing hoot, the question itself is still a serious one. If GB75, Unison and the other Dad's Armies are or are not a threat, it is quite likely that, in the proliferation of such groups, one will arise which will be a threat.

Certainly, as the growth of the National Front recently has shown, there is quite a sizeable right wing reservoir waiting to be drawn on. (And the NF itself will gladly interact with such groups —

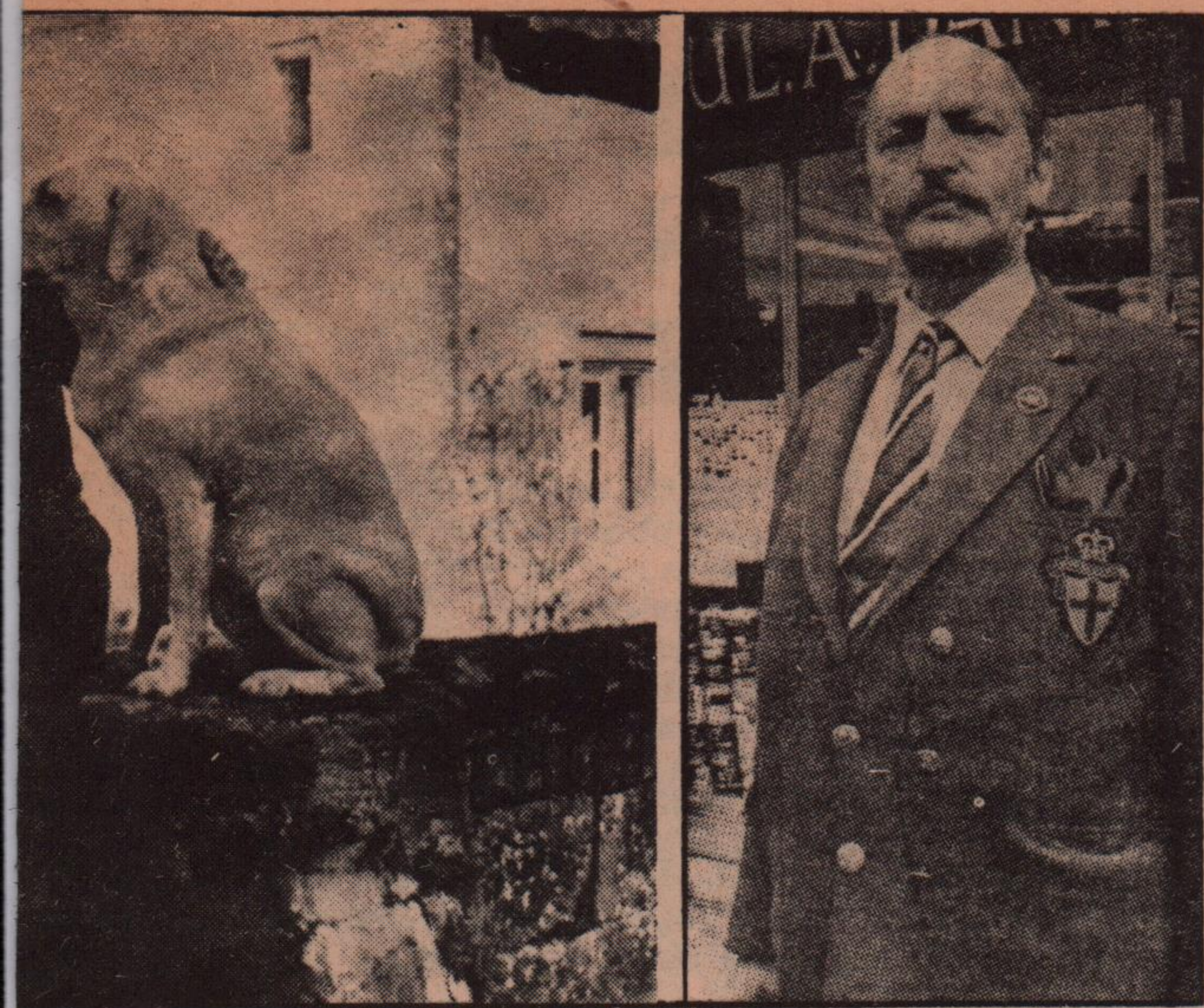
# ETHIOPIA Army sweeps the feudal

The penetration of the West was also felt in terms of the military and strategic importance of Ethiopia for the Americans. Ethiopia worked in close co-operation with Israel in terms of policing the Middle East and East Africa for the USA. A high proportion of the military expenditure of the US in Africa went to Ethiopia.

The building of a technically sophisticated modern army meant that it became necessary to raise the cultural standards in the country for a minority outside of the privileged aristocracy, thus creating an urban middle class. This is the class which has become the leadership of the movement against Haile Selassie.

Most of the middle ranking officers in the army are from this stratum — forcibly conscripted from the universities straight into uniform. Students have also played a major role in voicing popular discontent.

With the creation of large scale administrative centres, there has grown up a working class, too, mainly connected with administrative and service industries. The major sectors of militancy, for instance, among the urban workers are taxi drivers and airport and telecommunicat-



Former NATO chief, claims he'll have 3 million 'volunteers' here. Right, ex-Corporal Paul Daniels, who runs his paint shop in Hackney. He once tried to send a group to... Colonel David Stirling, who started the murderous SAS and later provided mercenaries to fight for pro-USA oil sheikhs.



whether they like it or not — as it does now with right wing, backward-looking lobbies like the anti-abortionist SPUC and the anti-'permissive' Festival of Light, not to mention the Tory Party's own Monday Club.)

The Observer thinks all this is dangerous "because it is about para-military training of various kinds by unauthorised civilians."

As far as they're concerned, just as long as it's paid for by the Treasury and there's a member of the Royal Family as Colonel-in-Chief, then a

makes them a lot less dangerous. It's far better to have to deal with amateur soldiers than with the much vaunted Professionals.

But it has to be said that the workers' movement hasn't even got a force that can deal with well organised amateurs — let alone the Army Professionals who would be standing behind them. We have to learn to deal with them (and bleating about them being 'illegal' or 'unauthorised' will both deflect us from doing that, and imply that we like the legal variety of uniformed bullyboys any better).

WORKERS FIGHT has many times urged the importance of the working class creating self-defence squads. We've said it in relation to the special anti-picket squads that the Police have created which are equipped with good transport and radio communication to outwit flying and mass pickets (not to mention well-trained muscles, dogs, truncheons and other nasty weapons).

We've said it in relation to the growing threat from the National Front.

### Get ready NOW!

And we say it now again. After the flurry has died down, the point must not be forgotten: we need a force that can deal with the amateurs and, if need be, the Professionals. (There will of course be other, more traditional responses to their use, such as the stepping up of strike action to include previously exempted areas, safety etc.)

So — don't speculate about whether or not this or that outfit is a threat or a joke. Don't go into a paranoid panic. Don't laugh either. Certainly don't go bleating to the forces of 'law and order'.

But next time you're organising a picket line, remember that you may have to face not just the occasional timid scab trying to creep back to work, but determined, trained and possibly armed men trying to break your strike. Remember. Prepare. Get training! RON VANDY

military outfit is a fine and splendid thing, there to serve 'society' from the owners of grouse moors and factories down to Fred Bloggs on the production line.

Socialists maintain that armies are the instruments of ruling classes, established and kept to defend and protect their class interests either from competing capitalist states or from revolutionary upsurges of the working class.

Authorised or unauthorised, therefore, they're all on the other side. For us, quite clearly, being unauthorised

year, the grain exports from Ethiopia had gone up by 92% and the landlords were able to buy up land at nominal sums from destitute peasants to increase the size of their domains.

As if this were not monstrous enough, the famine profiteers held huge banquets in the imperial palace whilst more than 150,000 men, women and children starved to death. So blatant was this that demands began to be heard for the trial of these mass murderers and the corrupt politicians who were profiteering in the aid sent to relieve the famine.

The rebel movement has demanded democratic rights and a land reform programme, stripped the Emperor of his courts and guards, and arrested his hangers on and members of the landowning class. The Emperor's palace has been nationalised, and also the national bus company in which his family held large shareholdings. As loyalty to his 'divinity' wore thinner, so bit by bit he was stripped of his powers and imperial trappings.

Ethiopia's armed forces want to "clean up the country", which will probably mean a republican constitution and the implementation of the demand of "Land to the tillers" (though most of the biggest landowners are already out of circulation in hiding or under arrest, and many peasants have probably taken back their land by now).

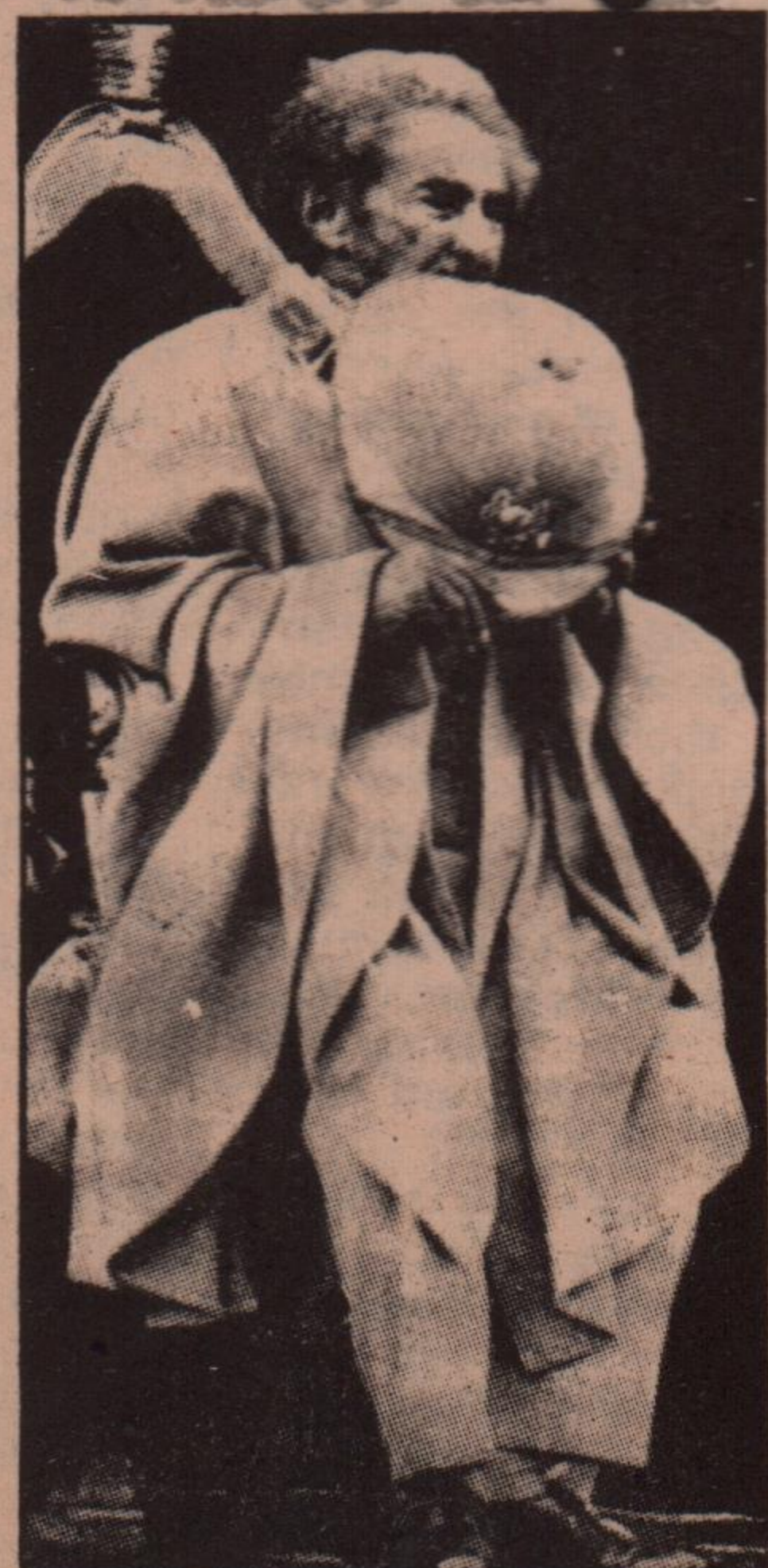
The movement of Ethiopia's armed forces is akin to those in Egypt in the early 1950s and Syria. How-

ever, a simply nationalistic policy will not suffice. Ethiopia will still be condemned as a producer of agricultural commodities, its industrialisation denied and prevented by the advanced imperialist countries who have no place in their scheme of things for the real development of such areas.

However, the changes now taking place are a massive advance on the rotten regime of the "King of Kings".

BAS HARDY

...and the spider itself is next to go



Haile Selassie: not so divine

# There's only one way to solve Capitalism's crisis...

BRITISH capitalism is now facing its most serious crisis since the war. The capitalist politicians and commentators themselves practically all agree that up to one million workers will be queueing up for dole by next year, that inflation will continue at its present rate despite this, and that an increasing number of companies will be faced with bankruptcy.

The coming crisis has brought with it new, and as yet only embryonic, divisions within the capitalist class. Disgruntled with the Tories' failure to subdue the militancy of the working class, sections of the ruling class turn towards the monetarist policies of Enoch Powell, which only a few months ago were ridiculed, or towards the strike breaking organisations of retired army officers, which a few years ago would have been treated as a joke.

In another direction, Antony Wedgewood Benn has put forward his solution to the capitalist crisis in the form of a White Paper, entitled "The Regeneration of British Industry".

## Confines

The Press have labelled Benn's solution as 'socialist'; one paper even went as far as to talk of "Benn's Soviets" controlling industry. In fact "The Regeneration of British Industry" is neither socialist nor is it a solution. Its proposals are entirely within the confines of capitalism; and they are not even particularly new. They represent a reinforcement of a trend which is essential to the current stage of capitalism — an integration of individual capitalist enterprises, the state and the trade unions.

The White Paper covers three major points — planning, nationalisation and 'industrial democracy'. The proposals on 'industrial democracy', which have featured as one of Labour's major electioneering policies, are the most paltry of the lot. There is just one paragraph of four lines devoted to it, and this has nothing to say apart from a vague promise about 'involvement of employees in decision making at all levels'. At most this will mean an extension of the workers' representation on ineffectual committees, which already exists in some nationalised industries and which merely serves to tie management decisions around the necks of the unions, without giving any real power of decision.

## No Veto

This sham 'workers' participation' contains no element of what would be a real advance for the working class — the power to veto management decisions on such issues as hiring and firing, working conditions, and production rates.

On planning, the White Paper provides for consultation between the government and companies to reach agreed aims. The government would have legal power to obtain information necessary for devising the plan, but would have no legal power to enforce the plan on

Even what would seem to be the most positive proposal, about the compulsory disclosure of commercial secrets, which would be available to the firm's workers, turns out to be another sham. Further down we read that "The Government will therefore require employers to disclose information of this kind, except where disclosure could seriously prejudice the companies' commercial interests..." (my emphasis). But of course, if disclosure didn't harm the companies' commercial interests, then the information wouldn't be secret anyway.

Such information as is deemed by companies fit to be revealed can be got from any newspaper. What isn't in the newspapers are the details of tax dodges that are being performed, or of price fixing agreements, or of financial and commodity speculation. Such information would be really instructive, but because it would certainly 'prejudice the companies' commercial interests' it will remain under lock and key.

## ANDREW ROBERTS

writes about Benn's own 'Make Britain Great Again' plans

On nationalisation, the White Paper proposes the setting up of the much vaunted National Enterprise Board. The NEB would take control of companies in which the government already has a majority shareholding and would be responsible for companies. This makes nonsense of the whole idea of planning within capitalism. It is implicitly admitted that there is a divergence of interest between different capitalist companies and between individual companies and the interests of the capitalist class as a whole. It is put forward that state intervention is necessary to reconcile those different interests, but the capitalists are under no legal compulsion to adhere to the plan.

Clearly any company which thought that it was going to lose out would simply opt out of the plan.

any further nationalisation.

Significantly, where nationalisation is agreeable to the present owners, then no Act of Parliament will be required.

Clearly, the NEB is seen primarily as an instrument for bailing out bankrupt industries and companies. 'Prompt and fair compensation' would of course be handed out.

## Ballyhoo

Despite the talk of the NEB being primarily concerned with profitable companies, its main role is likely to be that of providing investment capital to profitable companies while taking over the bankrupts. In all the ballyhoo against nationalisation, you never hear objections to the ailing aircraft industry being taken over. While cursing nationalisation as an obsolete Labour fetish, the present owners of the aircraft industry are no doubt praying for the state to take it over, as it is certain that no one else will.

But the extension of nationalisation, the pouring of government revenue into what will be the least profitable sectors of industry, is no programme for "regeneration". Its effects are directly inflationary, and in this at least the bourgeois commentators are correct. But the scorn and ridicule which the capitalists pour on Benn's plans don't come from a knowledge or belief that they won't work. Rather, they are afraid of the implications and the questions which are raised.

## Logical

If 'cold' nationalisation of the weakest sectors of industry is raised as a solution to the crisis, then many people can conclude that it is only a short logical step to the real solution — the revolutionary nationalisation of all industry with no compensation.

Bogus workers 'participation' implicitly raises the question of real workers control as a practical measure to defend workers' rights and living standards in the face of the crisis.

And if the government has the legal right to obtain some internal information about companies, then why should not workers demand the right to know all the commercial secrets which are being kept from light.

It is these developments which the capitalists fear. For the only effective permanent solution to the capitalist crisis is the overthrow of capitalism.

# Smash Capitalism

# DON'T LEAVE SHREWSBURY PICKETS TO APPEAL COURT'S 'MERCY'

**REMEMBER** the Shrewsbury 24?

A deadening wall of silence nowadays surrounds the building workers tried for picketing. But the case is far from over. Two of the jailed pickets, Ricky Tomlinson and Des Warren, were released on bail on 3rd June. They are due to come up in court for their appeal to be heard in October.

There is a real danger of Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson being left to the 'mercy' of the bosses' court — and there's a real danger of them going back inside to serve the rest of their sentences, three years and two years.

That danger exists because the defence movement is at present relying on trade union leaders and the government, instead of planning rank and file action. Yet what is the record of those trade union leaders?

It is a record of attempts to directly prevent and sabotage the building of the campaign for the

24! The fact that the executive of UCATT, the building workers' union, was 'severely censured' for failing to defend its members amongst the 24, at the UCATT conference in June, does not mean that UCATT CAN NOW BE RELIED ON TO KEEP Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson out of jail. Not at all! Instead, the executive has forwarded the following resolution to the TUC:

"Congress demands that every step be taken under existing legal provisions to ensure that no building worker tried at Shrewsbury be held in gaol any longer.

"Congress asserts that the sentences imposed on the building workers at the 1973 Shrewsbury trials were savagely excessive, having regard to the nature of the dispute and the evidence of provocation from lump workers and others. Congress concludes that the charges were pressed only

because the strike was successful and because the employers were anxious to intimidate the workers concerned.

"Congress demands a review of the existing law as to peaceful picketing and particularly along with this line of relying on requires satisfactory curbs on the use of conspiracy charges in strike situations."

The Communist Party, the main influence on the North Wales 24 Defence Committee and the paper Building Workers' Charter, has effectively gone along with this line of relying on the law and the government, with almost total silence on the issue in

the Morning Star ever since June. We welcome the fact that the Defence Committee and Charter call for the continuation of the campaign, because it's very true that "pressure and action is the only guarantee that they will stay out and free".

But these are empty words — unless an attempt is made to spell out exactly what needs to be done and act on this. Despite the 'social contract', despite the coming election, we must rely on and therefore organise to get action by rank and file workers. We must demand that the Defence Committee organise a mass demonstration on the day of the appeal, and begin now to get commitments to mobilise for this through the trade union and labour movement.

Cynthia Baldry

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**AFTER** the militant lead taken by Liverpool hospital ancillary workers, stewards at Manchester Royal Infirmary are planning a lobby of the TUC next Wednesday in protest at the low pay of health workers. Shop stewards from the NUPE branch at M.R.I. tried to get a meeting with Len Murray for after the lobby, but were fobbed off with excuses about being "too busy".

**HELP** is urgently needed by 300-400 women at S.E.I. Heywood plant near Manchester. Social Security have refused these strikers any money, saying that they are dependent on their husbands! They're so angry about this that there is talk of holding a sit-in at the S.S. offices. Also opposing them is the AUEW official, who has not called the men out, and insisted that no 'outsiders' help on the picket line. The women are saying that the strike is in fact now a lockout — the management (which has a notorious attitude on women's pay) say that they will 'accept them back' if they agree that any threshold increase will come off their bonus.

**With** the threat of over 100,000 building workers being out of work this winter, UCATT Gen. Sec. George Smith has felt confident that the rank and file will do nothing about his abandoning the national claim. The claim, decided on by the annual conference of UCATT and agreed by the T&G National Craft & Trade Group, is for £1.50 per hour for craftsmen, and £1.40 per hour for labourers. The claim is also for a 35 hour week and 4 weeks' holiday, and they are demanding an end to the Lump.

Smith, in conjunction with the TUC, has simply agreed to abandon the claim because of the Social Contract, and is concentrating instead on discussing a new wages structure. But as long as there are low wages in the industry, the Lump will continue. The Building Workers Charter must give a lead for action now. It's important to get site meetings to explain the claim, why Smith has abandoned it, and the need to fight for it without waiting any longer.

**The** fearless negotiators of Nalco are back in the fight again — under a mandate from the annual conference not to accept less than 20% on the national claim. They have already turned down the employers' 11% offer, which is a good sign.

But basically, it looks like it's going to be a tug of war between Len Murray (who is going to meet the Nalco leaders next week to get them to moderate the claim) and the militant rank and file, especially in London where they put up a tough fight for the London weighting claim and severely rattled the Executive.

**300** men at Laird Street bus depot in Birkenhead are on strike over the disciplining of a one-man-operated-bus driver.

The driver was dismissed when an inspector discovered that he had two passengers with 2p tickets riding on a 4p flat fare route. The bus company ignored the drivers' explanation — he had in fact merely forgotten to adjust his ticket machine at a busy stop — and he was charged with "ticket irregularity" (fiddling) and dismissed.

Under pressure from the men, the company backed down a bit and put the driver in the garage on shunting duty.

The men replied by bringing all the buses off the road, and a meeting was held. They agreed to strike until the victimised driver is fully reinstated. They are demanding that the company must prove fiddling before it can take any further action.

Other depots are blacking the Birkenhead area, and the men are meeting again on September 2nd to decide on further action.

C.T.

## Brent teachers 'allowed' to squat

**BRENT** Council is persuading homeless teachers to squat in condemned houses. The council is even quite smugly pleased with itself, judging from the tone of their replies in radio interviews. They expect to be over 100 teachers short in the borough at the start of the new school year, but despite pressure from the teachers' unions and a petition signed by over 2000 people, they refuse to allocate any council housing to teachers.

They have opened a hostel for single teachers which will have 12 places in September, and "another 24 within the next six months". Permission to squat is being granted to teachers who have applied for places at the hostel. So far four teachers have taken up the offer.

The Brent director of education estimates that last year

one in ten of the borough's first year teachers was homeless, and it is doubtless going to be mainly young, inexperienced teachers who are going to be forced resort to squatting in condemned accommodation. Does Brent Council think that teachers have nothing better to do in their spare time than mend broken windows and decorate their homes before they can be fit places to live in?

The facts behind Brent's offer are these. First, Brent has one of the worst housing records of all the Outer London boroughs. This means that with a huge waiting list for Council houses they cannot afford to alienate the electorate by diverting funds to provide for newly arrived teachers who, because of the abysmal conditions in London schools, will probably leave the city very soon anyway.

Second, the general level of young teachers' salaries is so pathetically low that they are financially incapable of finding anywhere decent to live, and thus become prey to Brent Council's Good Samaritan act.

This second fact is a major reason why the NUT leadership must not be allowed to sell out on the £350 claim for a London Allowance for all London teachers, including ones from outer London boroughs like Brent. NALGO has already shown that the Pay Board's limits can be broken.

Ian Hollingworth

## AUSTRALIA De-registration blow at progressive builders' Union

**BUILDING** employers in Australia have mounted an offensive against the Building Labourers' Federation.

On 21st June the BLF was de-registered nationally (but not at the state level: separate arbitration procedures exist for disputes in each state). While the system of arbitration and registration (dating from 1904) is a capitalist system designed to fetter working-class action, this de-registration was not the BLF's choice, but the result of an application by the New South Wales Master Builders' Association. Legally it could result in the BLF being excluded from national negotiations, and union organisers losing the legal right to enter sites.

However, on the 25th June an Arbitration Court judge allowed the Building Labourers' Federation to participate with five other unions in discussing pay claims with the employers.

The New South Wales Master Builders' Association has now boycotted the negotiations. Rank and file support for the Building

Labourers' Federation has meant the de-registration has had little impact.

The main target of the de-registration moves is not the Building Labourers' Federation itself but the militant New South Wales branch, which has used its industrial strength to impose "green bans" worth A\$5,000 million on development, ban work on sites whose owners discriminate against women and gays, support low-cost housing for Aborigines, and to support abortion on demand. BLF officials receive the average pay of members and are subject to recall, but within the union hierarchy there is bitter rivalry between the Federal Secretary — Maoist Norm Gallagher — and the CP-dominated New South Wales branch. At a meeting in Sydney, the NSW President, Bob Pringle, said "that it was alleged in several quarters that the Federal leadership had attempted to resolve its differences with the NSW branch by doing a deal with the bosses. This deal, according to Pringle's information, was to provide for a lockout of the NSW builders' labourers, to be followed by the formation of an 'alternative' union that would be dominated by the Federal leadership."

If the action against the BLF succeeds, it could lead to further attacks. With militancy rising among building, transport, and oil workers, the response of employers has been to call for more de-registrations, and State governments in Victoria and New South Wales have called for troops to break a strike by transport workers while state governments are preparing to strengthen their legislation so that they can prevent strikes and hamstring unions.

Tony Bidgood

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## JAMES P. CANNON



James P. Cannon — the founder, after Trotsky, of Trotskyism — died in Los Angeles on August 21st, aged 85.

Cannon had been active in revolutionary socialist politics since 1911, when he joined the Industrial Workers of the World. He was an early leader of the US Communist Party — and was expelled in 1928 for supporting Trotsky against Stalin. Together with two other members of the Communist Party National Committee, he founded the Communist League of America, which later became the Socialist Workers Party. Under Cannon's leadership, the American Trotskyists soon took a leading role in the world Trotskyist movement.

Cannon was national chairman emeritus of the Socialist Workers Party.

A forthcoming issue of Workers Fight will carry a full appreciation of Cannon.

## from p.1 HOW TO FIGHT THE DOLE

areas, take the investment grants and then move out again. Instead of asking the Labour Government for policies like this, we should demand practical measures to safeguard the working class against unemployment. Work or full pay; a statutory national minimum wage and legally binding cost-of-living increases; nationalisation without compensation of firms threatening redundancies; abolition of commercial secrecy, and a full opening

of the books' on state subsidies to industry.

"We cannot afford to rely on the Labour Government or on the TUC. The Labour Government's chief measure so far on unemployment has been a touch of black comedy — an increase in the legal rate of redundancy payments! The TUC's most recent report states: "It is still unclear whether the recent increase in unemployment is the beginning of a strong upward trend or not."

We must press these leaders into action against sackings and closures whenever possible. But we cannot rely on them. To ensure effective links between workers fighting unemployment, we need a militant rank and file movement. The embryo Rank and File Movement that does exist — set up by the Birmingham Rank and File Conference in March — has done nothing on the issue of unemployment. (And that Conference merely stated its opposition to "heavy" unemployment!) The next Conference, in November, must set out a clear policy and decide to start building effective local rank-and-file groups.

•Those workers who are already unemployed must not be lost to the labour movement. Unemployed workers should keep their union cards and retain full rights to attend branch meetings. Trades Councils should give representation to Claimants' and Unemployed Workers' Unions.

IF WE fight for these policies, we cannot guarantee that they will be accepted by the labour movement. Even if they are accepted, they will not stop unemployment — by themselves. No policy, however clever, will do that under capitalism, which breeds unemployment like swamps breed fever. We must drain the swamp. And socialist policies are the only practical way of defending ourselves against unemployment now. They are the only way of organising the working class for a united fight back, to take matters into its own hands. And when the working class takes matters into its own hands, that is the beginning of the real solution to unemployment — workers' power and a socialist state.

## SOCIAL

September 7th, 7.30pm at the General Picton pub, Caledonian Road, London N.1. Folk singers. Entrance 25p.

### MEETINGS

**LONDON** Workers' Fight forum. Stephen Corbishley on "Trade Unions, Red Unions, and Rank and File Movements". 8pm, Sunday 8th September, at the 'George', Liverpool Road, N.1.

**MANCHESTER** BOLTON Workers' Fight — Chartists joint meeting. "No Room for Fascism". Speakers: Sean Matgama (WF) and Graeme Atkinson (Chartists). 8pm, Wednesday 4th September, at the 'Lass O'Gowrie', Charles St, Manchester.

**NOTTINGHAM** Workers' Fight forum. Ivan Wels on "The Workers' State". 8pm, Wednesday 11th September, at the 'Peacock', Mansfield Road, near Victoria Centre.

**MERSEYSIDE** AntiFascist Committee public meeting, to mobilise support against the National Front demonstration on 7th September. Speakers to include Archie Breden (IPD). 7.30pm, Wednesday 4th September, at the AUEW Hall.

**NCCL** Public Meeting — "Free Pat Arrowsmith — Repeal the Incitement to Disaffection Act". Speakers invited include Eamonn McCann, Wendy Butlin, Edward Bond, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Tuesday 3rd September at 7.30pm.