



THE BATTLE

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dsay

A VOTE FOR LABOR IS THE FIRST STEP TO

FIGHT THE LABOR LEADERS!

all around Melbourne, car stickers and T-shirts scream "It's Time". The Herald produces banner headlines for each optimistic utterance of the Liberal Party cabinet. It's easy to see there is an election on. More interest and urgency has been injected around this election, than at any time since 1949. But with Labor selling itself on promises, and Whitlam reluctant to publicise his policies, we must be tempted to ask ourselves: "Does it really matter?" Is there any difference anyway? The Battler believes that there is a difference, and that this election does matter, though not for reasons that Gough Whitlam would have us believe.

The coming federal election is the most important of the last twenty-five years. It takes place in a period of increasing economic crisis, growing working class and indeed general militancy and discontent, and of confusion and defeat in world affairs for the imperialist powers -- and therefore for the Australian ruling class. It will almost certainly lead to the election of a Labor government. Therefore no socialist group which orients to the working class can ignore the elections. For all workers there are only two real choices: a vote for Labor or a boycott of the elections. Socialists must declare themselves one way or the other. To ignore the elections is to ignore the political struggles of the working class.

We vote for Labor but we have no illusions. The Labor Party cannot solve the crisis that will lead to its election. It neither wishes to, nor knows how. But the Labor Party can be forced to defend the basic interests of the working class in a way that the Liberals cannot. The Liberals as an open party of big business can only be fought industrially. Labor, though it serves capitalism, depends on the working class for its political existence, and can be fought by its rank-and-file and the Trade Union movement. We can win certain basic demands from the Labor Party, but only if we fight them. To do it we need to build a mass movement inside and outside the ALP to force the Labor leadership to defend the working class. The roots of such a movement exist in such bodies as the Socialist Left and the Rebel Unions, but they can only become effective if there is a real mobilisation of the rank-and-file inside them.

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but... look who's pushing...

SOCIALIST WORKERS' ACTION

EDITORIAL

The 1970's bring the beginnings of a social crisis to Australia, a crisis which already grips most of the world. It has its roots in the social system under which we live, a system that puts the means of production, and the institutions that control people's lives, in the hands of a small group of rich exploiters, who run society not for the good of all but for private profit. That profit in turn is created out of the exploitation of the working class. To maintain that exploitation and supplement it overseas, the Australian ruling class in the 1970's is attacking the jobs and wages of workers, and trying to build up a "mini-imperialism" in the Pacific Region. To keep its divisions fresh among themselves, it fosters poisonous divisions in society along racial, ethnic and sex lines, and an ugly national chauvinism.

As the crisis develops, it poses new questions to the Australian working class and to the left-wing organi-

sations. For workers it points to the need for new strategies to fight the bosses, and for a new understanding of society. For radicals and socialists, it creates the possibility for the first time in many years of building a left-wing movement inside the working class: in its political organisations and utilising the strength of the organised working class. The transition from the glamour of the protest to the hard slog of industrial work is not an easy one, but that is all the more reason why we should begin to consider it now.

SOCIALIST WORKERS' ACTION is still developing its positions on many political questions. It grew out of an awareness that there was a vacuum on the left of a need for organisations which would begin the work of the working class, the urgent task of revolutionaries in the 1970's. Inseparable from a growing

pre-working class orientation is the clear understanding of the anti-working class character of the so-called "Communist" regime in both Moscow and Peking. If we are to build a workers' movement to overthrow capitalism, we cannot afford to be tied economically and politically to bureaucratic regimes. We view ourselves as making some first steps toward the creation of a revolutionary socialist workers' movement, in opposition to both imperialist and foreign and repression alike. That is the only force that can create a world free of oppression and exploitation.

SOCIALIST WORKERS' ACTION is not, at this time, a disciplined organisation, and THE BATTLE is not a "political line" newspaper. Signed articles, therefore, do not necessarily represent the views of THE BATTLE, SWA, or of the publisher.

anyone else to defend their interests these days.

A Laboratory for the People?

...understood that the N.L.F. was the force to liberate the people from the forces of imperialism, and to support, as M.L.F. members...

A second significant current has called for action in "solidarity with the N.L.F.," which means calling specifically for an N.L.F. victory. Most of the radical activists undoubtedly do support this, nor should we hide that. However, the debate and political education surrounding the Aid-to-Vietnam campaign by university students some years ago was very valuable. Still, to use this approach in building national liberation movements in Viet Nam, it is difficult to exclude the millions who are against the war but find it difficult to support the N.L.F. victory at this point. We want to change their mind, but we can never do so if we exclude them from our movement in advance.

by Ron Flaherty

Immediate Withdrawal: Strengths and Weaknesses

The slogan "immediate withdrawal" has been the most widely adopted, and there is no doubt that it has mobilized large numbers of people in the country directly affected by the war. But this strategy has its weaknesses as well. It has been easier than we thought for Nixon to provide the appearance of withdrawal without abandoning the war strategy, and certainly without abandoning imperialist involvement. To the extent we have failed to implement the immediate withdrawal demand with further ideas behind it, to a critique of imperialism, we have allowed the movement to decline in Australia, not to play some progressive role in Vietnam, if only the "tragic mistake" can be said to remain for many at the level of negative isolationism, and now to risk complete dissolution if this particular war is indeed ended.

Another critical weakness of the anti-war movement both here and abroad has been its lack of a class approach. While large numbers of workers are to be found in the bigger marches, they have not been urged to leave work to march against the war, never have they been urged to stop production to stop the war, or to be in a position to stop production that the strength of the working class lies. Those union leaders who have marched in every demonstration have never posed the question of anti-war strike action being a great responsibility in this regard.

Forced Compromise

Since 1967 the movement has had a radical "hard core" with a broad, liberal, class of opinion around it. Among the activists a continued debate has gone on over strategy. Some have argued for a return to the basically liberal "negotiations" approach; today this takes the form of calling for an compromise short of immediate withdrawal, such as "support for the nine-point peace plan." While the N.L.F. has been forced to compromise in the face of massive American firepower, and we should expect the cynical unwillingness of the imperialists to accept even this compromise, there is no reason why we should demand anything less of our own government than they get out of Vietnam, now.

Take From Here

We believe there are two crucial tasks facing the anti-war movement now:

1. To develop within it and eventually outside a strategy for an anti-imperialist movement. This does not mean N.L.F.-flag-waving, which has no meaning to most Australians, but rather a conscious exposure of the role of Australia in playing in Asia and the Pacific, in its own right and as junior partner to the U.S. First of all, in addition to imperialism (imperialism from Vietnam), we should be demanding: **NO AUSTRALIAN MILITARIANISM FROM POSITION MARCHES!**
2. To transform its activities and membership to include a growing working class involvement. Politically this means linking imperialism to the broad with exploitation and oppression at home not just by foreign but also domestic capitalists. **DOWN WITH TAXATION FOR WAR SPENDING! RECOVER THE AIRD ECONOMY TO PEACEFUL USES! CRUCIAL ACTION AGAINST THE WAR!**

The working class is the only force in western society capable of mounting a really decisive struggle against imperialism, as well as being the key to action here at home. Without the active support of the working class movement, the anti-war struggle will be a social change. The first step is to develop a working class movement. **First Step: Develop a working class movement.**

The VSTA started its life in 1968 as a break-away group from the Victorian Union of Teachers. It named itself the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association. The name shows that it originally was a teachers' union. In politics were right wing and its policies were conservative.

It split from the VU largely because of the growth of left wing thought within the VU during the Second World War and the following years. The fight centered around two issues:

1. Whether the VU should fight for a re-establishment of the 10 per cent wage differential between primary and secondary teachers; some secondary teachers thought they deserved more money than primary teachers.
2. Whether women deserved equal pay.

The trend toward egalitarianism between all teachers was supported at the 1968 annual VU conference not only by the primary teachers, but also by many of the delegates from high school and technical branches. As a result of secondary teachers' protest on Melbourne High School were dissatisfied with the conference and at a general meeting they set up the VSTA. The membership in the first few years was a weak 150 to 200, but they were determined to safeguard the superior pay and to maintain wage discrimination against women teachers.

A keynote in the formation of this group was professionalization. In addition to what has already discussed, this meant "rejection of political ideological roles." Needless to say, for teachers this means an uncritical acceptance of middle class values, and a willingness to transmit them to students.

Within a few years women were admitted, and the name was changed to Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association. The word "professional" was removed from the name by a close vote of the Central Committee. After extended debate within the Association, and finally as the result of a membership referendum, equal pay for women was accepted as Association policy.

Fight for recognition

The VSTA was willing to modify its stand on these issues because it placed great value on the struggle to establish itself as an organization representing all secondary teachers. It was engaged, during the 1970's in a hard fight for the right to make submissions to the Teachers' Tribunal. At this time it did not win until 1963. During this fight the VSTA had built its membership and its reputation as an organization dedicated to the welfare of Victorian secondary teachers, and it made its salaries submissions to the Tribunal on the basis of increased margins between the secondary and primary teachers. Thus the elitist character of VSTA policy remained.

Logically enough, the VSTA was also demanding a separate Tribunal for each teaching sector. Its campaigns for these policies in the ensuing years centred around the denigration of the status of primary teachers with such arguments as "secondary teachers work longer hours, are more highly qualified and have more arduous jobs" and the like.

The seeds of future problems and conflicts within the VSTA were sown at this time. While it increasingly became the organization representing the aspirations of secondary teachers, and the interests ultimately of the high schools themselves, it attempted to fight for these interests on the basis of elitism and a dubious notion of professionalism, as well as the deliberate repression of Victorian teachers. A logical consequence of the VSTA's external elitism was the bureaucratic nature of its internal regime. A few articulate figures, on the executive ran the A-

REINFORCEMENT TENSIONS

- TENSIONS IN THE V.S.T.A.

By Ross Lindsay

association without a great deal of involvement by the rank-and-file.

We can see the problems beginning to develop in the fight for equal pay beginning in 1969, when the VSTA waged a campaign for teachers' right to determine the qualifications expected of new teachers in the school. After several years of struggle, the VSTA has achieved something which no other teachers in the world possess: they control entry into the "profession" through their organization, which registers qualified teachers. Notwithstanding the rather arbitrary qualifications set as a minimal for entry, this is a very significant and progressive gain, an attitude to this achievement, however, is less praiseworthy. "We are professional" they say (and here you can insert: just like doctors and lawyers), and we have a right to control hiring. The unwritten corollary of course is: "but other workers without this professional standing have no such right."

As "professionals", VSTA thinkers are uncomfortable about strikes. They reassure themselves that they are only striking to gain the rights of professionals. When they are properly treated there will be no need for the work-stoppages that are so embarrassing to conscientious blue-collar unions.

The vast confusion among teachers about "professionalism" reflects the unusual position teachers occupy in society. Within the school system they are not only workers, oppressed from above, but also the disciplinary agents of the power structure. Tempted by rebellion - whether physical or intellectual - from students, they fall back immediately on the power of the headmaster and the senior staff. Now educated on the whole than either students or parents, it is easier for them to see themselves as the enlightened agents of a benevolent, which "knows what is good" for the community.

The pressures within the school that create elitism are emphasized by teachers' dismay at their social situation. Where teachers once were a respected elite group within society, with the coming of mass education they have become slightly glorified workers. Nor do they earn much more than many blue-collar workers. Once a truly middle class group, they are being driven down into the ranks of the working class. Afraid to accept the idea of solidarity with other workers in struggle, they cling to the idea that they are somehow better than them, because they went to university and wear a tie.

Call for stronger action

The tensions in the VSTA came out into the open during the 1970, when the Association was defeated in two important struggles. At the start of the year, several thousand enthusiastic teachers came to a stop-work meeting in the Melbourne Town Hall. Executed by a major body of teachers, the VSTA's annual Secondary Teachers Tribunal, to be carried out in a series of half-day stoppages. Militants warned that such a tactic would isolate strikers and dissipate energies, and called for a more united front.

1. Democratization of the VSTA. No secret meetings of the leadership bodies, publication of Central Committee minutes, and a more active role in the development of a struggle, and invite their suggestions. Open Committee.
2. Make every branch a strong branch. School-based control, and a more active role in the development of a struggle between leadership and branches. (This is an action plan of number one).
3. Alliance with concerned members of the community. Present a united front to the authorities, but the elitist ideology of "professionalism" has meant an attitude of aloofness by teachers toward parents. The VSTA desperately needs to find capable which will only be done by reaching out to one another as was when the VSTA failed to act on the struggle to abolish compulsory fees.
4. Progressive Education - Support for Student Involvement. The schools at present are the schools of their line convincing students learning is worthless, an unbreeding docility and a devotion to rote learning. For change in the schools, and are best suited to change them on education. The VSTA should encourage the struggles of students for a decent and meaningful education, and see them as potentially powerful allies.

COMBINED WITH THE V.S.T.A.V. MASS STOP WORK

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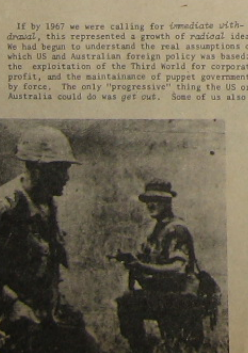
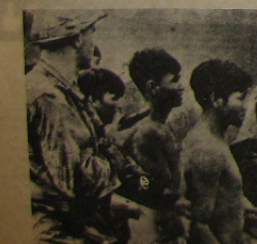
Henny Kissinger flits around the world, Washington to Saigon, and the possibility of some sort of settlement of the war cannot be discounted. Harold is playing a brilliant game pressuring Nixon, and Kissinger and the Americans are no fools either. The military balance of forces is an uncertain affair. We would be foolish to try to predict events in Indochina at this stage, but one thing is becoming clear: our anti-war movement is reaching a turning point.

It matters little from our practical point of view whether the settlement comes within the next week or the next six months, or even how favourable it is to either side. The reality is that some resolution is likely, and this will call into question the future of the anti-war movement.

A ceasefire or permanent peace in Vietnam will not mean an end to American power in Southeast Asia. Even George McGovern wanted to keep US troops in Thailand and a huge force remains within striking distance of Hanoi in Okinawa, and the future of Laos and Cambodia is an open question. The Philippines are an American colony. Vital for us: Australian forces in Malaysia, far from being a peace-keeping buffer between Malaysia and Singapore, are likely to become an anti-insurgent force in the guerrilla war on the Thai-Malaysian border gets hotter. The Asian countryside remains poverty-stricken and oppressed, guerrillas are active in eastern Thailand, Burma, the Philippines, Borneo. The needs have already been met for a dozen more Vietnamese. If the anti-war movement dies, we will have to rebuild it very soon.

The anti-war movement has undoubtedly been the most important progressive force in the post-war period. It has educated millions of people about the role played by western imperialism in the Third World, and provided a broad forum for the development of radical ideas. It is reasonable to say that the anti-war movement was the one thing that provided continuity in the international radicalisation of the sixties. If it is to survive now, we should look at its history, and the ideas and strategies it has adopted - and consider what new strategies are needed.

If by 1967 we were calling for immediate withdrawal, this represented a growth of radical ideas. We had begun to understand the real assumptions which US and Australian foreign policy was based, the exploitation of the Third World for corporate profit, and the maintenance of puppet governments by force. The only "progressive" thing the US or Australia could do was to give up. Some of us also



and now the surprising acts...

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

The Communist Party of Australia is running seven candidates for Federal Parliament, including Gus O'Donnell for the seat of Melbourne. The C.P.A. has had a long history. Founded in the 20's in response to the Russian Revolution, it has since been active in leading calls for a new revolutionary international working class politics which the rise of Stalinist rule in the Soviet Union has forced everywhere. For 50 years it was a slavish follower of the "line" from Moscow, adopting a policy of respectability and the tactics of collaboration with the bourgeoisie. In 1956, however, the C.P.A. has broken with the Soviet line, opened the avenues of revolutionary and socialist activity, and announced a program of internal democracy. It therefore deserves a new appraisal. What does it stand for today?



The C.P.A. offers a basically socialist program. It calls for the nationalization of industry under workers' control, and takes forthright stands against racism, sexism and minority groups, and on the fundamental changes needed in education, foreign policy and welfare. But a closer look reveals both contradictions and opportunities behind all the fine words.

The Communist electoral program opposes "unrestricted immigration" — a capitulation to xenophobia and chauvinism. It highlights the "zero population" goal, and that puts the blame for hunger and crowding, as well as on the general environmental crisis, on individual families rather than on the capitalist power structure. It calls for ending State Aid to private schools, without confronting the question of where the many working class children who attend these schools are to go if State Aid is simply cut off.

But more important than any of these weaknesses is the absence of any class analysis of Australian society. The term "working class" seems to be absent from the C.P.A. vocabulary. "People's action" is the phrase society is to be run by "the People" who are blind to the reality of a class society and a class struggle. Education, anti-racism, etc. — all are vital issues, but they can ultimately be solved only together with an end to capitalism, and revolutionaries should direct themselves first and foremost to the one force that can destroy it, the Australian working class.

The C.P.A. places the national-capitalist Australia Party alongside Labor as a legitimate reform party, an action which clearly shows its retreat from working class politics.

THE AUSTRALIA PARTY

The Australia Party is no more a party of the right than the American Democratic Party. Its origins go back to 1969, when both the Australia Party and the Liberal Reform Group were formed.

The Australia Party was based around a group of Canberra academics and professionals. They picked a certain amount of support from people whose position identified them with the Liberal Party, but who found it conservative policies abhorrent. They polled five votes in the 1966 Federal elections, but lost because nobody had ever heard of them. The Liberal Reform Group was actually formed by former members of the Liberal Party, principally the Transport business Gordon (IPEC) and Tom Thomas (the man behind National Transport), and Francis James, the director of the Anglican and now resident in a distant jail.

Their position was strong opposition to the Vietnam war on similar grounds to those of McGovern, Bright and the Kennedy's, and dissatisfaction with the business policies of the Liberal Government which favoured American Transport Industries and had proposed attempts by IPEC and TNT to move into Air Freight competition with Ansett and TAA. The Liberal Reform Group gave its preferences to the ALP and Praeger's economic nationalism against government-favored ship investment.

Subsequently (1969-70) the Australian Party, the Liberal Reform Group and certain independents merged in the Australia Party, combining the IPEC money and public figures with the Australia Party rank-and-file organization. The chief reasons they have gained something of a left-wing reputation was their opposition to the Vietnam war, and their anti-Americanism.

Because certain opportunistic Left groups have gained opposition to American investment as a progressive position, the Australia Party appears to be in a bind. In fact there is little that is progressive in opposing American business in the interests of Australian business, and indeed the support of the 25 per cent of the Australian population who do not own shares, it makes little difference whether the boss is named Bullion or Rockefeller, or whether he lives in Toorak or New York.

Either way the worker works too little, plays too-long hours. When the Australia Party talks of losing our country they are talking their own language. Arthur and Thomas do not wish to see the ownership of the country mean ownership of business and resources, then most of us have never seen the way to gain control, not a vote for the Australia Party and "patriotic" Australian businessmen.

Peter Fraser



THE

PAPER OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS' ACTION GROUP

Volume 1, Number 10cen

stuff their cars... WHAT ABOUT OUR JOBS?

IS THE GOVERNMENT'S handling of the British Leyland collapse a guide line for future victims of the recession? Leyland is not the first company to get itself into trouble this year. It isn't the last. As Zetland (Sydney) last week the government effectively said to the workers, we're going to help the company." Is this a precedent?

The 9000-plus workers involved in making buses and assembling Minis will have lost their jobs as well. Garbage Buses and Minis are profitable. P76's and Marinas weren't. Besides, Enderby's proposals do nothing for the 3,000 and more workers who are going to lose their jobs at Leyland, not to mention the many other workers in industries supplying component parts to Leyland.

It should be nationalised. We agree. He also said that the government should buy the factory (as a factory rather than a housing site) from Leyland. We don't agree. We

but it ought to. That is real way to fight the recession. Fight for nationalisation — without any condition — without any condition — under workers' control.

course, Kep Enderby, Minister for Manufacturing, tells us differently. He argues that if the government hadn't spent \$25 million buying the factory since 1970, Leyland then they would have had to close completely and

Joe Thompson, NSW secretary of Vehicle Builders' Employment Federation, came up with a much better proposal for Leyland's wreckage. He thinks

don't think we should have to BUY it from our taxes. Australian workers didn't design the ridiculous P76! Thompson has also advised Leyland workers to resist dismissal. Not to leave the factory when it closes. At the time of going to press it isn't clear whether this is going to happen,

To get this means a fight and at this stage it's not the VEE is present. The Labor government may be able to get away with making a present to British Leyland. Sure they don't make profits of our future next time company fails.

productivity. The point is, of course, that under these conditions, the rises never are fair.



If all of this sounds like Australian Labor Minister Cameron's proposals on wage indexation, it's no coincidence. The fact that Wilson's plan to hold down the Social Contract and was able to get co-operation from "left" trade union leaders will not go unnoticed in Canberra. Australia has an economic crisis of its own. It's not as bad as Britain's, but it's getting worse. Cameron, Crean and Cairns are going all out to sell wage indexation as an alternative to conventional deflation strategy. Conventional strategy has already caused the worst unemployment in Australia since 1946.

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GEORGE WHO?

By Ron Flaherty

Never since 1936 has a candidate for the American presidency been so badly beaten as George McGovern. He won 29 states and got two thirds of the popular vote. Even more astonishing, he did it despite his low personal popularity, and the poor showing in the rest of his party. Nixon didn't win this election, McGovern lost it. Americans voted for Nixon because they felt they had nowhere else to go.

reform. Most Americans are pretty sick of paying the bill for American militarism, and McGovern has a happy-go-lucky air about contradictory ideas. Today, however, the C.P.A. still has a socialist program, and its members generally desire a socialist revolution. A large vote for the Communist candidates will bring radical ideas and important issues away from the hands of the Australian. For this reason, we recommend a vote for C.P.A. candidates where they are standing. Vote labor Fraser

McGovern's early successes must be seen against the background of the falling of the other Democrats. Much of the success of Wallace, Buckley, and the Flaming Liberal (summed up to the right in a fruitless case after Wallace voters). Only Wallace and McGovern realised that most voters were angry and dissatisfied with traditional politics. While Wallace only built a right-wing pressure campaign, McGovern developed a clever three-stage strategy to win the presidency. Two clues by his

McGovern did not lose because he was "too radical" — a hard-hitting campaign on real issues could have defeated Nixon, as McGovern's early successes indicate. But the Democratic Party is incapable of addressing the real issues, because it's utterly controlled by big business. Even the trade unions are reduced to the status of a mere pressure group. McGovern was the only candidate who had support because he was so busy courting business leaders.

The lesson for American radicals is to begin channeling their energies and ideas into dead-end campaigns for party leaders and big business. Holding a radical working class alternative to the two parties is the answer. For us in Australia the lesson is that organizing your principles in order to get into office is not really practical: at all. Millions of people may be reached through other alternatives. We need a movement, within the Labor Party and without, that can pose them.

McGovern the Radical: in the early stages he stressed the "radical" aspects of his campaign, ending the war, amnesty for draft resisters, legalised abortion. This way he attracted student and radical activists to his organization.

McGovern the Reformist: as the other Democrats faltered, McGovern began going after voters, especially white working voters. The keynote now was his

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Harold Wilson's SOCIAL CONTRACT

HAROLD WILSON and his Social Contract have just been re-elected in Britain. British workers have a pretty fair idea of what his means for their living standards, but the result of these elections will be felt in Australia too.

having labour in office means that the fight can and will shift to the factories and offices, and to the internal life of the trade unions. It means that the growing rank and file groups of workers in Britain will have to concentrate on smashing the Social Contract at their places of work.

Mind you, it wasn't too much of a victory. Labour has a 3-but majority and got its second lowest percentage of the vote in the last ten elections! The British workers voted Labour because all the other parties are explicitly anti-working class. Unionists aren't going to vote for parties running a "bush the unions' platform".

But Labour's win doesn't end the attack on workers' living standards — it's a deepening economic crisis in Britain, and the way out for the ruling class is a deepening economic crisis in Britain, and the Tories did this, and Labour has different ways of doing the same thing. But

the BATTLER

Two years later...

It's been a long time between issues for the **Battler**. Our first issue appeared on November 17, 1972. Our second is being published on October 16, 1974, twenty-two months later. We're not claiming the record but we do feel the need to explain. Australia and the world have changed considerably in the last two years. So has the Socialist Workers' Action Group (SWAG) which publishes the **Battler**.

Two years ago SWAG was a small organisation only just beginning work in the working class and unclear on its positions on many major issues. In our editorial we said "If (SWAG) grew out of an awareness that there was a vacuum on the Left, a need for organisations which would bring the turn to the working class, the urgent task of revolutionaries in the 1970's was to fill it. We published the **Battler** and did not really let the vacuum ourselves. We published the **Battler** in the context of the 1972 federal elections which we saw as the crucial turning point in the fortunes of the working class in the postwar period. We argued that the election was being conducted in a period in which the postwar stability of capitalism was ending, a period in which the postwar economic and social crisis. Because of the urgency of the questions posed by the elections we were able to reach agreement on a common approach and put out a paper which was reasonably coherent.

But it soon became obvious that we had neither the theoretical unity or sufficient experience of real struggle to maintain a regular publication. So we began a process of two years discussion, debate and study.

Where we've been

This was not done in the abstract. At the same time our members have been involved in three on-going rank and file groups, two student groups and have been organising women's liberation activities. We've been strong in the equal pay fight, insurance workers, and heavily involved in various struggles of the WGA. At the time this issue was prepared SWAG members were leading a struggle against assessment and police intervention at Monash University, and against sackings. During the same period we drew closer to older and more experienced political groups overseas with similar politics to our own, particularly the British International Socialists, an organisation of several thousand which has rank and file groups fighting the bosses in most major British industries. We were determined that the next time we began to correspond in areas where established militants would have clear ideas to contribute.

Where we are

We believe that that time has now come. It is increasingly clear to SWAG militants that we can no longer wage struggles in our own industries and universities without attempting to link them to the broader struggles of other areas of the working class. That is the task that the **Battler** will perform. However, in the last few years has it been more necessary for the working class to have a voice and sense of unity between fights in different areas and different countries. Today we are facing a situation where our living standards are being eroded by inflation and our jobs are being attacked by growing unemployment. Internationally too, attempts to neutralise governments in countries hitherto known for political stability are collapsing like houses of cards, unscrambled by inflation and rising unemployment. We still don't claim to hold all the answers, but we see our organization and our paper as part of the battle to build the workers' movement that should challenge the existing system and bring about a new solution. The **Battler** hopes its readers will contribute articles and information about events at their place of work. We see the need to build rank and file movements to fight the bosses in this period when the bosses, the government and a large section of the trade union bureaucracy are conspiring to make workers pay for the weaknesses of what Jim Cairns himself called "the system". We hope you'll join us.

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CLUW for Working Women

by DAVID MITCHELL, who also writes for CLERK & DAGGER, underground clerical broadsheet

3000 women standing, arms outstretched and hands clasped, in the Solidarity Powerhouse is a truly inspiring sight. This is the Women's Building of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) ended in Chicago in March this year.

CLUW was set up because of the problems women so often have with unions. To start with, few women are unionised. This is particularly a problem in the USA, where only 10% of women are organised. Even where there is a union, it's generally run by men, who are usually unwilling to take up issues of particular concern to women.

So the formation of CLUW has been a tremendous step forward. Although it is dominated by women whose interest seems to be to use it as a lever to improve their own personal position by the bureaucratic hierarchies of their unions, many rank and file women have been involved.

The struggle between the women union bureaucrats and the rank and file women has concentrated on the issue of equal pay. CLUW should be action-oriented or a discussion group, whether it is for men or women, and whether (given the low rate of female union membership) it is a rank and file group or open to all working women.

Despite the heavy-handed and bureaucratic tactics of the leadership, local branches have been formed all over the country and many have been active.

In New York, women trade unionists involved in building the local branch of CLUW held a mass picket in support of the United Farmworkers' lettuce boycott. As one of the organisers of the demonstration said:

"CLUW, in its statement of purpose, supports organizing the unorganised. The farmworkers are showing that this can be done, that people such as women can be organised. CLUW is unorganisable, as a part of the trade union movement. It is not a good idea to get the farmworkers has been one of the major bones of contention between the bureaucrats and militants in CLUW.

In Seattle, the local CLUW branch helped win a seven-month battle with restaurant workers. The owners had reacted violently against the current attack on the picketers, hurling rocks and eggs and screaming obscenities. They hoped to provoke the men to join the picket line.

We demand that the government nationalise the business in this place to stop the owners from exercising their economic control of the people who work there... we know the workers are not going to live with the decisions that are made, so we should be making the decisions."

Join the fight

But the sackings will continue... especially if the union leadership is really serious about doing it -- and we let them get away with it. It's time for women to take action to defend them from the union bureaucrats. It's time to struggle. Join the MIC campaign against the sackings and protect our own jobs.

MONASH CONDITIONS

CLASSES AT OAKLEIGH JAIL

by Tess Lee Ack

At MONASH last month, students learned a lesson not offered on any official course. The lesson was provided by Fred McEwen, a councillor John Swan in the Monash Administration Building at 1910 on September 29. Also present were students who had been arrested in the past, or eight days and fifteen or so police, Swan had called the cops to arrest me. As they moved in, one student called out: "State that's right."

The occupation, once begun, developed in atmosphere of creative struggle lacking in the Monash campaigns of 1968-70. At that time the people who later formed the Revcoms criticized the then-leading students for controlling campaigns rather than leading them. A small group would issue a larger group of students for confrontation scenes on liberal issues. The assessment struggle as led by the Revcoms was a very different affair. Because it had implications for changing society, a different atmosphere developed. The occupation discussed every question of tactics and principle in detail, and the Revcoms had to fight for each position rather than making pronouncements à la Lenin. As a result, we experienced a much more united, much less alienated atmosphere, one in which valuable political discussion and decision-making could take place.

The Revolutionary Communists (Revcoms), campus section of the Socialist Workers' Action Group, had been arguing throughout the five month long occupation. Assessment that culminated in the occupation, that university assessment is not a fact of life, but a power that examinations in the content of the whole competitive nature of the institution. CLUW should be action-oriented or a discussion group, whether it is for men or women, and whether (given the low rate of female union membership) it is a rank and file group or open to all working women.

When John Swan called in the cops to arrest 77 people, he made our police very clear. Or, as we said in our broadsheet **Hard Lines** the next day: "If they can't fall us, then they'll jail us."

assessment

The campaign began in April over discontent with the assessment system, discontent which has repeatedly flared at Monash over the last few years, and more recently at Flinders, UWS and ANU. The Revcoms attempted to put this discontent to rest by a "no assessment" campaign. This was seen as a weapon of the capitalist system. The limited demands for open admissions, a campaign which is also being fought in the high schools by the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association. We recognised that the university education is its restrictive nature.

All means of selection currently used are a blatant class bias -- it's the kids from the middle class who get into university. It was clear to us that education at all levels was being used to create a privilege as it is now. We called on the Federal Government to provide the necessary financial space, staff, adequate student facilities and to provide facilities so that tertiary education could be a real possibility for all working class.

We saw the abolition of phony entrance requirements as an essential element of our strategy for changing the university.

As the campaign accelerated, a broader group called Assessment Action was formed which put together a series of meetings and street theatre, etc. The policy adopted by a six-student group was that the occupation was decided was based on the assessment struggle and the Revcoms' attack on the social

Ultimately, it became a question of the running of the union as a whole, and its role in the class struggle. We successfully resisted a notion to continue occupation over 1,000 students. It's a question of "power".

Two days later, September 2, the professorial Board, which had implications for the diversity, met and refused to discuss the occupation. At nine o'clock that night, I extended the occupation to a closed circle of 100 students of power on campus, because the meeting place of bodies the Board, one in which valuable political discussion and decision-making could take place.

An inconclusive meeting of students some hours after the arrests almost unanimously of the Revcoms. It was a Mateson to resign. It said for the article that the occupation till the following Monday (3 days later).

lies and threats

On Monday, Admin pulled out steps to defeat occupation. Two lecturers in various ways which had had very few students involved in the occupation, issued circulars early with civic instructions on how to vote.

Matheson undertook to drop charges if there was no occupation. (As one activist told me, that's like kicking a dog, then offering to let the dog lie if they won't bite anyone.) The teachers' examinations -- which he can't have done. But the staff shared the political tactics. Students (Desae Walls and Ma Pieters) to argue that the Revcoms did not have the power to make real change, but that these options made with the individual students. This was a lie. The Revcoms were the people who were purged socialists from the labor association. Their campaign for assessment reform was discredited by anyone who had been involved in the campaign (they haven't been seen before). The Revcoms' ability with newly involved students.

At Flinders earlier this year, the Mount-Led occupation. The Revcoms were the people who were purged socialists from the labor association. Their campaign for assessment reform was discredited by anyone who had been involved in the campaign (they haven't been seen before). The Revcoms' ability with newly involved students.

Since then, the campaign has been somewhat lower level. It is obvious that the Revcoms do not happen inside a diverse campaign where students have power. The occupation forces the Admin into dialogue. It will take another occupation next year to win.

As the occupation progressed, our demands crystallised in discussion. It became obvious that the building that for students to control for assessment.

As the campaign accelerated, a broader group called Assessment Action was formed which put together a series of meetings and street theatre, etc. The policy adopted by a six-student group was that the occupation was decided was based on the assessment struggle and the Revcoms' attack on the social

Debating the Currency

JOHN MAYHARD KEYNES -- who is more or less responsible for modern capitalist economics -- once wrote this about inflation. There is no subtler, nor surer means of perturbing the existing order of society than to debase the currency. The process engages all the hidden forces of economic law on the side of destruction, and does it in a manner which not one man in a million is able to diagnose. You don't go to look around to see that that's true. The ruling circles in every country are worried about an inflation they can't stop, but the fact is that the inflation is built into the system itself. It would be fantastic, if difficult to get rid of it under capitalism.

That wasn't always true -- things were quite different in the early days of the system. Throughout the 19th century prices went down steadily. A round of years, for example, cost about 14 shillings in Britain in 1779, but had gone down to three pence by 1862. At the same time the work week was gradually shortened, and wages -- real wages in terms of purchasing power -- rose steadily. (A far cry from today, when wage rises are being blamed for inflation!) But the twentieth century brought inflation to it, along with a host of other problems.

Since 1900 or so there has been a continual tendency for profits to fall throughout the capitalist system, a decay which has been reflected in two world wars and a terrible depression.

Each nation struggled to keep profits up for its industry. Sometimes they tried to raise the machine and resources of other nations, and the result was world war. Another method to bolster falling profit margins was to increase the volume of production -- but of course that only leads to a glut sooner or later. It was a crisis of overproduction, that caused the great depression of the thirties.

In each case it was the falling rate of profit that lay behind the problem. This was partly why the ruling classes of Germany and Italy turned in desperation to fascism; to smash the power of the working class and prevent higher profits out of the greater exploitation of labor.

Capitalism was lucky to get out of the depression. In fact it was only the second World War which provided the solution, because war spending gave the economy a boost. After the war, arms spending continued because of the Cold War. A United Nations study found that something like \$120 billion was being spent on arms in the world. That was equivalent to eight or nine percent of the world's total output of goods and services. This helped to produce a world-wide economic boom. It also led to inflation.



BEWARE
FALLING
PROFITS
OF
INFLATION

As we said, inflation became a problem much earlier. In fact, prices had risen steadily since 1800, with a temporary drop in the thirties. This was because companies put up prices to keep their profit rates, but the arms economy was the direct cause of much of the inflation of the postwar period. After all, if you pay workers to make atomic bombs, you are putting more money into circulation. But you are not increasing the amount of goods available -- who ever bought a bomb? The result is "too much money chasing too few goods", which means inflation.

America had the worst problem with inflation because it was the main arm producer. Finally it had to cut back. But as the US cut back the postwar boom began to come to an end. And capitalism found itself faced again with the old problem: a squeeze on profits.

'managed prices'

That's wrong, but massive inflation. The big price hike occurred in 1969, when prices rose again and again. No one could stop them, because they are virtually monopolies. This is called "managed prices". For a period of time that seemed to solve the problem.

But in the past year or two the public has got pretty sick of it. The unions carried over the burden for while voters threw out one government after another. In Australia, Whitlam was forced to an early election, and the main issue was inflation. Businessmen, too, are nervous about inflation for it destroys confidence in the currency and the economy generally. They are afraid it will ruin them in Australia. They demand that the government solve this problem which the businessmen themselves have caused. And they demand that it be solved at workers' expense. The solution? Cut wages.

All of a sudden it is "greedy" workers who become the scapegoats, the same media who told us about the "consumer society" a few years ago now tell us some "restraint". The unions are accused of dampening the national interest when they go on strikes.

This makes a kind of sense from the businessmen's point of view. If they can keep wages down, Australian profits stay high and Australian business can compete against foreign countries. It becomes "patriotic" to accept lower wages. The American capitalists and West German capitalists push the same line to their workers. Workers in each country are to sacrifice in the "national interest".

militancy

We would be crazy to go along with that. And we haven't. In Britain the Tories were kicked out of office for trying to force sacrifices on British workers. In France, the right wing got a scare in the last elections. In particular, we've had a wave of militant strikes. If this sort of action was going on, it would have the price for "curbing inflation" pushed onto us.

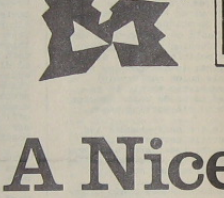
That is what terrifies the ruling class, that is what makes the press so hysterical about the unions. They are being forced to realize that in today's world, the rate of profit -- so vital to the capitalist system -- cannot be maintained except by a major confrontation with the working class.

And that is a confrontation that they cannot be sure of winning. It is an opportunity that, if organized, the working class could seize. It is an opportunity for the working class to get out of the rotten system for good.

WHEN Dick Baker's swashbuckling adventures in Mainline first began to go wrong (see this page) one of the first things he did to help for help to the Federal government. Baker and his receiver Jameson wanted the Mainline Industries Development Corporation (MID) to start pouring in funds to help Mainline. MID was established by the Labor government to assist Australian industrialists to buy back Australia from foreign companies. Baker certainly seriously considered but Mainline would have been left pouring water into a sieve.

Norm Gallagher's suggestion was to persuade Mainline projects to other Australian bank companies (see second article in this issue), which was eventually decided on.

WATTS



... But What's the Real Deal ...

WATTS REVEALS

In June 1969 Mainline, the Sydney-based property developer founded by R. R. Baker was for shareholders including W. R. Carpenter, the Life Assurance Companies MGC and MVO, announced a profit (after tax) of \$24,000,000 years later their profit had grown spectacularly to \$1,480,000. Nothing seemed to be troubling Mainline. In 1970, Mainline announced a peak of \$7.20 during 1971. However, to the end of 1971, Mainline's public relations look as if it would be less than the previous years. The profit figure for the six months to December 1971 was \$1,376,000 which would dictate land prices in that area, and when they build office blocks on the site could dictate office rentals.

Mainline, like any other property developer, and most of the hire purchase companies, had achieved its exceptional growth rate as a result of its ability to attract large amounts of money to finance its operations.

For example, Mainline spent \$17 million acquiring properties in the area east of St. St. in Melbourne, bounded by King Street, Flinders Street, and Flinders Lane. Of this \$17 million Mainline itself actually invested only \$250,000 of its own money, although it was forced to add another \$2.8 million in July. Things started to go really bad, but had hardly in line with the expectations of its investors.

Questions have the effect of either protecting or increasing the profits of employers. Both are recommended as ways of protecting business. We think that there is a distinction. The government should have taken the employers. It's called nationalisation. The government should have taken the ownership of Mainline and given control to the workers on the job. This was the approach that was so obviously missing from the labor government. Baker seriously considered indemnifying himself on the consequences of his speculation, and asked what he considered over the Mainline. This should not happen in the event of a collapse in the building trades. Articles on this page discuss the collapse of Mainline and the role of the Builders' Labourers Federation in more detail.



Gallagher's Fight

"It couldn't happen to a nicer pack of bastards" -- Norm Gallagher (Federal Secretary of the BLF) on the Mainline collapse.

"Watts is a company that's interested in the future of the building industry in this country." -- Gallagher on E. A. Watts, the company that took over the Collins Place project.

What did Watts do to deserve such praise from a "left-wing" union official? Doesn't Norm Gallagher know that E. A. Watts is one of the few companies that won't pay rates drivers and dockmen between jobs? The BLF leadership in Victoria and federally, known for being really well but they prefer "patriotic" Australian bosses to the "foreign" developers, who, it seems, are the only ones to exploit Australian workers. According to Gallagher: "The essence of the matter is that Mainline was a large foreign company run from overseas."

For Gallagher, it's nationality that's important. But for any union, the first concern should be to have the interests of its own members. The boss's national background is irrelevant -- all employers are in business to make as big a profit as they can, and that means hitting workers' wages and conditions as they can. Union officials like Gallagher and his boss on the Federal Management Committee and the Victorian Executive are not only showing illusions about the virtues of home-grown business, they are also actively trading the interests of their members for a chummy relationship with dinosaur Aussie bosses.

"Banning 'his' union like an old boy's club, with jobs for his mates and threats to those who oppose him."

Gallagher views his union post as a springboard for his personal manoeuvres. For his slick statements, he really has no idea how to solve the problems in the building industry, and no strategy to protect jobs.



Norm Gallagher -- BLF Fed Sec

But simply, Mainline borrowed at a rate of interest which was lower than their rate of profit, and pocketed the difference. In return Mainline guaranteed a specified rate of interest on its borrowings which would be paid regardless of whether profits were made by the company or not.

However, the interest payments on the borrowed money for this project alone amounted to massive \$1 million per annum, an amount which could only be sustained by increasing profits. In their pockets, Mainline was scornfully reduced profit growth and an increasingly higher proportion of income being spent on borrowing.

Under less than favorable conditions returned and buyers were found, Mainline's income would remain fairly static. Hugh projects in Fiji (the Wrona, a Mainline investment in the United States and America (Sugar Valley -- \$1 million), Mainline going ahead on other business Mainline's cash problems. Interest had to be paid -- Mainline was running out of money.

sabotage

Gallagher and Co. are sabotaging the union on a number of fronts by:

- Attempting to smash the NSW branch. The current re-registration application conspicuously omits the NSW BLF. Gallagher revealed his motivations when he said that intervention by the NSW BLF would mean an involvement in progressive action on social issues -- like green bans and support for militancy. He also threatened that he would be putting his case before a mass meeting of NSW BLF. He proves how little support he has even in his own opinion. He says even his friends in the Master Builders' Association are against him. He's trying the NSW branch. The AMU (not noted for its militancy) has already stated that it intends taking over the big BLF job, like the Ulino Expressway.

And it doesn't look like his attempt to get rid of Owen Munday and Fringle will work. The MBA may love him, but crane drivers who work on BLF sites and resident groups targeted by the BLF's environmental action are showing a lot of hostility to Gallagher's backstabbing -- as fact the crane drivers will work only with any member of the branch led by Owens and Fringle.

The NSW branch's application for registration as a state union under the Federal Industrial Relations Act (as the Australian Builders' Labourers' Federation) may well out-manoeuvre Gallagher, and at worst will stall him for a while, perhaps allowing a fight to get underway.

The BLF must strengthen their organisation, both on the job and in the union, so that Gallagher cannot get away with making deals with the kangaroo capitalists to eliminate the hard won right to fight the bosses, all bosses now and then. The union is coming under general attack.

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PAPER OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS' ACTION GROUP

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OF MORE THAN 100,000 West Australian workers struck on 1 October against the Liberal Government's Emergency Bill. The so-called Fuel, Energy and Power Bill is a thinly disguised and vicious attack on the rights of workers. It gives the Minister the power to suspend Common Law, trial by jury, electoral law and, most important, industrial awards. Not only can the Minister order strikers back to work, he can order them to work for nothing, in any working conditions; it constitutes an emergency is up to the Minister— he felt like it, or had interests in the company— could decide a strike stopping production of police, printing press bills was an "emergency". Any workers refusing to go back to work faces fines of \$500 for 6 months of jail for each day of the offence. The same goes for anybody at all who refuses to stand in line, ordered. "Corporate bodies" (in other words, unions) can have unlimited fines put on them, and police — or any other private arm the Minister can set up — can stop and search or enter premises and seize documents.

COURT IN THE ACT. General Strike in WA from Tony Horne in Perth



West Australian workers in the front-line but workers are under attack. In any national strike WA would be the link, and the existence of such a law in one state makes similar bills likely in the others. Especially needed militant and determined leadership. It did not come September the union officials called a stopwork strike. Its success depended on them. Fifteen hand of us marched Perth. But they held us up to the top of the hill and promptly sent us down again. A fight against the law. We needed tough working in politics, independence of the Labor leaders. The movement was led by the likes of Hawke Cronin — the same man whose own previous fight approved the bill itself, form. The strike the bill became long more than a protest. Instead of mobilising us for an all-out strike, we were allowed to stay for 24 hours, and in another stroll to the city.

port them, but when they abandon it we must be organized, ready to act independently. Unionists and ALP members should demand that the Labor Party is pledged to repeal the law immediately.

But the most important fight should be here and now. The next week may see a real trial of strength, not the shadow boxing of the Labor leaders. St. John's abundance men, faced with 72-hour-week posters have shown up their own muscles, which the bosses are trying to sabotage by withdrawing trainees. There'll be an all-out strike at the first sign of victimisation, and the fire-brigade, wharfies, and students here already promised instant sympathy strikes. Just the situation where Court will try to use the law — not on the saboteurs but on the men fighting for a decent service. But the law is a matter of principle, not paper — the strength of the independence and organisation of the workers against the power of the working class.

Thompson Hides from Teachers

by Tom O'Lincoln

"WE'LL BE BACK," Thompson, who shouted two thousand teachers on the steps of Parliament House. The demonstration, which had failed to force Education Minister Lindsay Thompson out of his job, was the high point of the first day of an indefinite VSTA strike. The strike is the boldest action by the VSTA in its history.

The issue is victimisation. Hundreds of teachers missed out on promotion because they supported VSTA policy — which is to boycott industry. The VSTA insist that if anyone is to judge a teacher's competence, it should be the people in the school, not the agents of the Education Department bureaucracy — who are known to favour the most conservative and docile for promotion.

The VSTA is also on record as favouring the abolition of administrative hierarchies and a democratic reorganisation of the schools.

Finally, after several general strike meetings called for state-wide action, the VSTA leaders decided to take the plunge — they called for the first indefinite strike in our history, and for mass demonstrations. This is a huge step for the Association's executive, which last year spoke fully of the consequences of demonstrating, and claimed members could not be relied upon to carry out an extended strike over Helen

immediate march

The demonstration was planned for Wednesday, but two separate resolutions from the floor also demanded an immediate march on Parliament House. The executive voted to march over their position. And nearly every body did so.

The sight of conservative leaders like Vic O'Connell leading chants at a demonstration shows how far the VSTA has come from its old "professional" approach. It also a good sign that they have arranged for teachers to address factory meetings. And the VSTA has decided to lock into affiliating to the ACTU. Secondary teachers may be about to take their place as a conscious part of the workers' movement. In any case, the level of militancy has been reached.

We will be back, Lindsay Thompson.

Social Con-Trick

from page 1

Bob Hawke is already using the words "Social Contract" here. So far, what he is doing is trying to bargain with Cameron over the terms of co-operation. If Labor promises tax indexation, then he will accept wage indexation under some kind of Social Contract. The "left" ACTU leadership is looking for an acceptable "compromise" that they can sell to its members.

We must not accept any social contract. We can learn from British militant trade union action. Can win wage rises. For that to happen here, we too must form rank and file groups to fight in the union movement, to force trade union leaders to reject any attempt to impose a Social Contract, whether the attempt comes from Whitlam or Hawke.

NUMBER 2 16 November 1974 GOVERNMENT PROMISES JOBS NEXT YEAR BUT

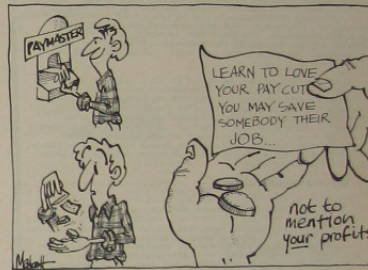
THOUSANDS FACE SACK NOW!

IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG DRY SUMMER HOLIDAY for a lot of people. Not three weeks annual leave on 1 1/2's loading, but an indefinite period on \$31 unemployment "benefits". Unemployment is currently running at 2.5 percent (149,701 people) but in itself is an unacceptable post-war record total. But when the current batch of school kids go out into the workforce and don't find jobs, the total is expected to swell to a horrifying 350,000. That's 6% SIX PERCENT! That means that three people out of every fifty wanting jobs won't be able to get them. Put it in another way, in every suburban street, six people will be out of work. Only it won't be in every suburban street — you can bet your boots there's no school leaver problem in Toorak or Kew. On the other hand, there'll be a lot more than six percent per street looking for jobs in Sunshine and Doveton.

Meanwhile, now that the horse has bolted, the Whitlam government is getting around to closing the stable door. The measures announced by Whitlam on Tuesday November 12 will, by his government's own reckoning, take until next year to have any real effect. The effects that they're likely to have are not all that impressive anyway, since they concentrate on help to business rather than workers, but apart from that, what are the unemployed, the soon-to-be-unemployed and the never-to-be-employed supposed to do while they wait for Whitlam's measures to take effect?

And we are the people who are expected to pay the cost of keeping the merry-go-round moving — workers, families on low incomes, pensioners and others on small fixed incomes. In a period of high inflation like we're going to have next year (it's bloody high now, but it's going to be worse next year) wages and pensions drop in real terms and therefore living standards plummet. When the government tries to hold inflation without cutting profits, workers lose their jobs. Either way we lose.

Unless we have to prove it by opening the books to the workers on the job. In the case of super-rich companies like Ford and BHP, the results would be very embarrassing. These companies point to their own community speak for. Apparently Labor speaks for them too. Now we know what Spedding meant in



May when he said after the elections: "We didn't win, but we didn't lose!" We do not have to wait until Whitlam's measures take effect to fight, either for our jobs now, or against inflation then. We can fight right now. Companies like Ford, which are laying off workers to protect record profits, can and should be stopped. If Ford reckons they have less work than instead of laying off six hundred, they should cut the hours of work without cutting wages. Workers can force companies to do this by refusing to accept sackings.

If part of the workforce is to be sacked, then the company should be faced with the threat of a strike by the entire workforce. If companies cannot afford to maintain full employment by shortening hours for the same weekly wage, then specialists have to prove it by opening the books to the workers on the job. In the case of super-rich companies like Ford and BHP, the results would be very embarrassing. These companies point to their own community speak for. Apparently Labor speaks for them too. Now we know what Spedding meant in

should be nationalised — and the government should pay compensation to the owners either. At the moment the government is doing the reverse: the businesses are allowed to collapse and the owners get compensation while the workers go on the dole. We voted Labor into office to fight for us because it is a party based on the trade union movement. Right now it is using its union links to try and con the union leaders into helping it save the bosses. So we have to fight for ourselves

insid

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Newport Power Struggle

page 8

Whitlam prepares Social Contract... page eight

VOICE OF THE SILENT MAJORITY; Monah's fight is not a mere cry for justice - are you?

the BATTLE

Crisis, but who's to pay?

At the time of writing, there are strikes threatened in Britain by miners and railway workers. In various factories and offices there are also strikes in less publicized areas. Glasgow was rocked by a day of strikes in the last month, Glasgow was rocked by a day of strikes in the last month, Glasgow was rocked by a day of strikes in the last month...

In France, railway workers, coalminers, fuel distributors, and others, are all out. The porters have been on strike for three weeks. French union leaders describe the conflict as a sizeable response to President Giscard's austerity program. Italy has an almost perpetual cabinet crisis. In Portugal, the Communist Party together cannot defeat working class militants. Israel, habitually paralytic because of its military policies, has a balance of payments crisis of truly monumental proportions.

In a word, the trouble is called inflation. It's a problem of the capitalist system. It's becoming a problem for the world's working classes. All over the capitalist world, governments and bosses are trying to get the money out by cutting wages while raising prices...and sacking people. In most countries, workers are fighting back. In Britain, the government tries to use a social control to get workers to accept lower wages and the workers, in Glasgow at least, ignore it. In France, the government brings in stringent economic controls and goes on strikes for its profit.

we can't afford this!
Meanwhile in Australia, things have been strongly quiet. In the motor and textile industries, workers have been sacked and the bosses have been getting away with it. At a time when the SO last week, British Leyland went bust last month, and the government did nothing for Leyland workers, Chrysler have been sacking its smaller, less spectacular, subsidiaries. Some manufacturers have been closing, or dismissing workers, for months. Dunlop Rubber, for example, has sacked over 9,000 nationally during 1974. Most of the dismissals have been met with rhetoric rather than action by the union leadership.

For the most part, there have been continued wage rises, but it is clear from the language of the Labor Cabinet that we will have to fight much harder for them in future. From Whitley and Cameron down, people we voted into office to improve our standards of living, are now trying to get the money out of our pockets. They find this easier to do than to cut back on bosses' profits. If the union leadership make as poor a fight on wages as they have on inflation, Whitley will get his wage cuts. We can stop him. To do this we have to build rank and file groups and fight on ourselves, regardless of leaders, as they were in Glasgow. The articles on pages 4 and 5 of this issue present some good ideas on how to wage these fights.

life on the field const...



REPORT Association Pty Ltd
DOLE BLUNDER SEEN WITH IL. GOTTEN GAINS
ANOTHER KIND OF BLUNDER SEEN WITH IL. GOTTEN GAINS

The BATTLE is published by the Socialist Workers' Group, and printed by Aldine Press, 45 Porter St., Preston.

Working in an office isn't exactly one of the most exciting little nervous before an interview and rewarding way of earning one's daily bread - especially if you're a woman.

Just by looking at the employment adverts in the daily paper, it's clear that today's 'Age of Equality' has a double standard - one for females and the other for males.

The majority of female employment adverts talk about the friendliness of fellow employees, the modern air-conditioned office, the active social club etc. Not all little nervous prospect-hunting, aggressive attitude taken in the male employment sections - 'You can make it to the TOP!'

Job interviews usually follow this line. Most women are asked about boyfriends, husbands, children, hobbies, typing and the age question. 'You're young, you'll be able to cope with two jobs at once?'

It would seem that families aren't intended to mean very much to men or women. I was frequently questioned about them after the offer of salary, further study, overtime hours had been finalized.

discrimination
It can take a while for the subtle forms of discrimination in jobs to seem to the surface. For instance, in my first job I did not consider that any favoritism towards the male sex existed. There was interesting work, equal pay, promotion - for both sexes.

However, after a few months the three females in my section were sent on typing courses (to help out with the occasional urgent order) which were paid and funded for both men and women. I was surprised enough for four males weren't.

Since the seven of us had matriculation qualifications, it was obvious that the only reason that three of us had been sent was because we were all female. Naturally we objected strongly, but we were condescendingly informed that, of course, there was no sex discrimination. All four males had been invited to go to 'touch typing' but all four had refused. First I then learned the hard way, instead of fighting against the forced work of typist within and without the union, I eventually left my job disharmonically.

If you take the typist's role one step further, you become secretary, a job which involves a collection of duties - typist, receptionist, telephonist, filing etc. It is a full time job. The pathfinder, message girl, and so on, but most definitely not least, is sex symbol.

Attractiveness in a secretary is an essential ingredient because of the prestige which office work has. I probably doesn't even need a woman doing his dirty work eight hours a day!

Life as a secretary can be very lonely and frustrating. All

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work is concerned with the bosses' interests - there is no opportunity to be creative. Getting interested in your work means adopting the bosses' interests as your own. It's essentially identifying with them. As a secretary you are paid to identify and to work for other workers and generally only meet other members of your own sex. I would hope or later you end up thinking like them.

When the union came to its fin and started enrolling members, very few of the secretaries went, job because of their close ties to management. Yet they received no managerial benefits given to the promising members of the union and had the hope of getting on the management bandwagon.

A number of other women were reluctant to join the union for different reasons. Many of them, although they might have been there for ten years, were still classed as "temporary" and they felt insecure - they didn't want to give the boss an excuse to sack them, by going on strike or even by joining the union in the first place.

It became clear as we talked about conditions that most of us were unhappy with our jobs. We weren't sure how to improve it. So we started meeting occasionally to talk about discrimination whether the union could help us and related problems.

The group enabled us to work collectively to fight our own discrimination. It was and it helped us to understand each other, for many of us were not a very experienced of its kind. But it was also a way of learning something throughout of others. There are also a number of Women's groups getting established in white-collar unions and fighting for the rights of all women like equal pay and child care centres. This is a very important. After all, it's easier work with a group than to try and change the world by yourself.

FOR TWO YEARS, non-academic workers at Monash University have been trying to organize a union. When they started having some success, the University Administration said, in Now there are victimizations in the air.

MONASH WORKERS FIGHT!

- for a UNION -

by Jeff Soar, Monash University sub-bran, MOA

"We are employees of this university and you will do what I tell you!"

That's what the Vice-Chancellor of Monash, Dr. Matheson, told me last Friday. My crisis? Trying to organize Monash workers into the MOA.

For years, we've had no real union at Monash, just the powerless General Staff Association. A few clerks were also members of the Federated Clerks' Union (FCU). Last year, the GSA suggested we join the Municipal Officers' Association and the MOA started recruiting and lodged a claim with the University for a new award.

Meanwhile, the FCU had taken its demarcation dispute to the Industrial Court, and on October 29th, the Court ruled in favour of the FCU; that the MOA had no right to organize at Monash and ordered it to stop. I even said that there was a prima facie case to have the MOA deregistered. The Industrial Court is not concerned with the interests of workers at Monash. It just wants to maintain "Industrial Peace" between the boss and the worker. All over us. That's why it is in love with the FCU leaders, who promise peace for the bosses and nothing for clerks.

However, instead of fighting the court order, the MOA went weak in the knees and told us that we WGS to stop recruiting new members into the union. The MOA leaders were trying to prove how reasonable they could be, but "reason" doesn't pay the rent. I wanted to fight the order by doubling our organizing efforts.

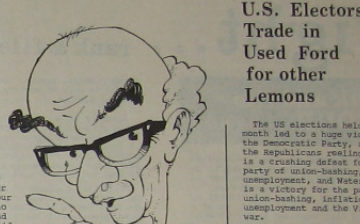
Since the union wouldn't do it, we decided to do it ourselves. We organized a rank and file group and called it 'Monash Workers Action' about our last signing up workers into the MOA.

All this activity was clearly upsetting the university's Administration. It was told that "there may not be enough money to employ you next year" but I refused to be intimidated. I received personal letters from the Vice-Chancellor about our last signing up workers into the MOA.

strikes
...and support
The MOA held meetings of sub-branch members, we protested and argued and even went on strike! We received some support from students, mainly from the Black Student group. But we weren't yet strong enough to force the Admin to listen to us.

reasoned discourse & rational debate
In the end, I got in touch with Patricia Watson who is the editor of "Clerk and Dagger". She showed me some of the conditions at the university. Her response to their direct action is to call for "reasoned discourse and rational debate" to discuss our claim and he refused to discuss it. But it has been our leaflet! Obviously, the only time he was in discussion is when we take a tip from students and send it in direct action to his office. I was in discussion with Dr. Matheson. Last Friday, in scenes so... Last of 'The Brown's'.

making the bosses' life difficult
over time on forty minutes a week (his wife was sick) a moment, "see" but he has no working. When the manager said that, they physically surrounded the fire workers surrounded their name. He didn't get to him. The union members got to his office, while the workers held a two-hour meeting to discuss part of the negotiations to Edwardstown, S.A. At knock-off time, the potential police had surrounded the building and expected for work the next morning. He is still working there. When a worker refused to do



School days, Matheson demanded to see two of the militants in the office. However, his intimidatory gestures have only made us more defiant and more determined.

The Administration is well aware that, if it can smash the MOA, it is effectively destroying the unionisation of non-academic workers at Monash. The MOA, although far from being a dynamic, progressive union, was brought onto campus by the workers because it is the only union which can effectively cover all of us.

As militants at Monash, we face two major tasks. The first is to convince Monash workers that they are NOT privileged to be working for the university. The second is that it is little different to any other boss. The second is to build the MOA and especially our sub-branch into a militant and fighting organization that defends our interests, social, economic and political.

making the bosses' life difficult
The simple reason is that the largest group in society, has been overruled. It's not over, not even a loosey one like the American workers. They play little role of any sort in politics. If that doesn't convince Democrats and Republicans that the American workers in turn, until someone begins to make fascism sound reasonable...

making the bosses' life difficult
WORKERS down at University, Dandenong, know what to do about unions. We don't wait for them to happen and then fight them; they physically surround the fire workers surrounded their name. He didn't get to him. The union members got to his office, while the workers held a two-hour meeting to discuss part of the negotiations to Edwardstown, S.A. At knock-off time, the potential police had surrounded the building and expected for work the next morning. He is still working there. When a worker refused to do

S.W.A.G. needs money!

It costs quite a lot to put out the BATTLE, even only once a month, and we sell at a loss. Like any active socialist organisation, we are a lot of eating expenses which means that we always are sorry, so we've got to get our activities, if you'd like to help us out, send donations to the Fed. Sec'y, Lefty, c/o...

U.S. Electors Trade in Used Ford for Lemons

The US elections held this month were a victory for the Democratic Party, and left the Republicans reeling. This is a crushing defeat for the party of union-bashing, inflation unemployment and Western war. It is a victory for the party of unemployment, inflation, unemployment and the Vietnam war.

You'd think Americans would get sick of making choices like that. And they are: they stayed away from the polls in massive numbers. The voters for anything that hinted of reform. They've got the best for gay liberation, to a woman State Governor and a number of blacked started for high office. They're all concrete political alternatives to the interests of big business. Americans can't seem to realize alternatives to the present political line-up.

FORD... Americans are sick and tired of Americans already.

THE simple reason is that the American working class, the largest group in society, has been overruled. It's not over, not even a loosey one like the American workers. They play little role of any sort in politics. If that doesn't convince Democrats and Republicans that the American workers in turn, until someone begins to make fascism sound reasonable...

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anyone else to defend their interests these days.

THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT has announced that it intends to go ahead and build the controversial Newport 'D' Power Station for the SEC. It should be pretty funny... watching parliamentarians in overalls building a power plant. And if the workers in overalls build it fast, then Hamer and his lackey can by fifteen unions holds fast, then Hamer and his lackey will be the only ones willing to work on the site.

THE Battler



GORHAM WITHOUT POWER HAMER PREPARES TO LOSE FIGHT OVER NEWPORT



Let us remain solid and our Union leaders uphold the ban, support might look like this for a long time.....

The SEC plan is that the Newport Station would generate electric power by burning oil and Natural Gas. The scheme has been denounced by conservationists as an environmental disaster, with widespread opposition. The government went to the Environmental Protection Authority, a State Government-controlled body, and forced it to give the project a pollution clearance. The Authority had no choice... it gave the clearance. But its report and variance were based on a set of legal limitations in its investigations, and its report pointed this out. The SEC has been running hard trying to make the law issue seem like a disaster".

That's why the Builders' Labourers' Federation imposed the first for a ban on the project. Other unions

joined the ban. When Norm Gallagher decided to take over the Builders Labourers' NSW branch from its membership, he lifted the ban. However, the other unions, led by the AMU, have remained loyal. So the project stays on the drawing board, despite the fact that the unions have already approved four other alternative sites.

The controversy and the black ban are hurting the SEC. If the power station is re-sited, it will cost an extra \$100 million, and take a further five years to complete. Even "re-sited", the delay will hit the SEC's plans for expansion and further empire building.

Then, just a few days ago,

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Unless, of course, Hamer wants to make it happen "his way".

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Then, just a few days ago,

the Victorian State Cabinet decided that the project would go ahead. The Premier Dick Hamer claimed: "It's a question of who is causing the disasters and Death Machines like the Newport Power Station are exactly what we can expect if we continue to allow the interests of profit to run Victoria or any part of the world.

For the SEC, the \$100 million is more important than the damage and loss of human life that will result from Newport going ahead. For the government, the wins of private industry and its demands for more energy to waste are far more important than the health of the workers living in the western suburbs who will suffer and die of the bronchitis, emphysema and possibly even cancer damage that Newport will cause.

Faced with such blatant "government for the business workers and their unions" and their political parties HAVE TO step in and say... "We are not going to let you run things this way!"

And if the union leaders and ALP politicians back down over Newport, we have to be ready to take over the fight ourselves.

It IS a question of 'Who's running Victoria'?...and it's about time WE were.

Phil Griffiths

Whitlam prepares Social Contract

ONE THING is crystal clear from Whitlam's November mini-budget: the government is preparing for a Social Contract. Whitlam offered effective wage increases by proposing tax cuts to take effect in January. He also promised that the Government would push wage negotiation. He didn't say it might not, but it is clear wage indexation would be part of the deal. Trade Unions would only get it if the cost of production didn't strike or make wage claims above the indexed figures.

That would be the basis of a Social Contract. And it is not on. For one thing, it's the kind of inflation caused by the mini-budget next year, we'd never

the government is planning. He repeated Crean's statement that "one man's wage rise costs another man's job." That's only true if increased wages are not to be met out of profits. Does Whitlam consider profits untouchable?

It looks like it: "The property of the private sector is basic to the government's social objective." In plain English, that means "We're looking after the bosses." And what's Gough doing for the workers? "Trade unions must not make unjustifiable wage claims." In other words, the aim is to get the government is now to control inflation by protecting profits and holding down workers' wages.

If this is the way the government thinks, we're

lucky we didn't get hit a lot harder. The reason we didn't is that the government still feels the pressure of the trade union movement. It was forced to cut taxes substantially for lower income earners. Whitlam is making gestures to trade unionists because he wants trade union leaders to co-operate in a Social Contract.

If union leaders volunteer not to make "excessive" wage claims, then to maintain our living standards, we'll have to strike it out every time. This is what is happening in Britain where they have a Social Contract already. We've got to stop Whitlam and Hawke imposing the Contract before they get started.



THE Battler

PAPER OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS' ACTION GROUP

Number 3 December 14, 1974.

Queensland defeat, Budget retreat: Labor voters want to know

10 cents

WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING?

The Whitlam Labor government came to power in 1972 with an ambitious program of reforms. Today most of that lies in ruins, and with it the hopes of most Australian working people. WHY?

We voted for Whitlam to protect our jobs and to rebuild social welfare and public services. But now the working conditions we had under the National Compensation Scheme look doomed. The government has ignored blacks, sacked down over state education, and run away from the fight for legal abortion. Due to high interest rates, there's a shortage of housing for workers. WHY?

We voted labor because we wanted to defend our unions and the gains in wages and employment deliberately designed to weaken our unions -- and the penal clauses are still there to be used against those unions that do fight.

At the same time, Super-gough, the brilliant and heroic Prime Minister of 1972 is being baited and ridiculed even by Snedden. His government is a shambles and a trivial thing like the Morosi affair can be

However, they did not demand that their own profits be cut. They did not demand that their own incomes should be taxed. They did not suggest that employers should make sacrifices. They demanded, and are still demanding in an ever louder

So he flounders. He may just keep floundering until next year when Snedden faces another election, or he may pull himself together for an all-out attack on the working class. Either way, it is clear we can't look him to fight for us.

On the contrary, we have fight for ourselves. First by demanding action on wages and jobs from our unions. Where the official union leaders are slack, rank up file members should organize to give them a kick in the arse. We can also fight Whitlam inside the Labor Party. What is needed is a militant workers' movement that insists on solving the economic crisis at the expense of the employers. That is why THE BATTLER is published -- to join in building that movement.



Housing Commission Hall - centre pages

about those black spaces... Our printer asked us to remove the names of the companies we slammed (in articles on page 3 for mistreating casual workers) so we know the libel law favour the employers in these things. The facts are all true, but the names have been removed to protect us from the libel law.

Anyone else to offend their interests these days?

The State Housing Commissions were established supposedly to prevent the mistreatment of tenants by avaricious landlords. Now the Commissions have themselves become among the most avaricious, avaricious landlords.

"THE WORST THING is the feeling of insecurity. It shackles people, robs them of their initiative and self-respect, conditions them to helplessness. Our job is to break through the feeling that nothing can be done". - Pat Tomelny, Tenants' Union, Victoria.

REPORT Phil Griffiths

INGRID OTTINGER lives in a block of Housing Commission "walk-up" flats on the Kensington estate, with her three teenage children. She is a member of the Housing Commission Tenants' Union.

"Living in the walk-ups costs a lot in heating...we all have a problem with damp." (The landladies are on the top floor.) "I was on the pension, it was dreadful. I couldn't afford heating, so all my clothing got ruined. That would get in and the stains just wouldn't come out. When you wash, the mould leaves holes."

Ingrid has also had her share of evic-



tion threats. "Final notices come like confetti. If you pay Monday instead of Thursday or Friday, you get a final notice."

"How I just ignore them. At first, I was scared. I kept running to the Estate Officer. When I heard that everyone else got them, I started ignoring them. They were all for \$4 or \$7."

"Well over 70% of tenants on this estate are single women with children and they are very scared of eviction if they fall behind in their rent. They are scared of coming out and saying that the union is a good thing."

"The single mothers are also worried about the safety of their children. If the kids want to go out and play, mum has to go with them. Children could be OK in the walk-ups if the Housing Commission put a fence around them and the sand pit."

"A while ago, the Commission actually put a fence around the sand pit, but it was not strong enough. A child pulled on it and it fell down. The police only went an inch into the ground, but they blamed us and pulled it all down."

"They won't put it back up. A friend of mine had her son bitten in the face by a dog. He had to go to hospital for stitches." He also spoke with Ingrid's children, Sylvia. "They gave us a community centre... under the pensioner's block. So we couldn't use it past 7 o'clock. Then they closed it down. We petitioned and got 700 signatures, but they said they couldn't do anything."

"Maintenance is a problem. Mr. Dickie says that maintenance is carried out in three days. This is definitely not so. Mr. Dickie is very well-informed. Maintenance can take four to eight weeks. I personally don't wait more than one or two days because the maintenance man knows I'm in the union."

"If you go to see the Estate Officer after you've been abused by... His work finishes at 4pm."

"We asked Ingrid about the Tenants' Union. "The union can help us get some say in the running of the flats. Some tenants can take four to eight weeks. Some tenants don't wait more than one or two days because the maintenance man knows I'm in the union. They can achieve something."

"On her own future, Ingrid said: "One thing worries me, I'm getting old, I can't afford anything else. It's not alright to get a house because I have only three children. Although the flats are supposed to be only temporary accommodation, I've been here 7 years. When my kids grow up, I'll have to move. If I don't have the security of knowing this is my home". You spend money, you put in carpets, you make a home and then you have to leave."

"A home of your own". That's the Australian dream - as Billy Swenden told us last May. During the boom of the fifties and sixties it was almost possible for most people. Only the poorest in society were not able to make payments on a housing mortgage.

As a result the Housing Commissions changed. Their role came to be seen as providing acceptable accommodation for the "lower" people in society who were "too lazy to work for their own home" or "had too many kids to afford one". And the unions, which had been led by higher wages and conservative leadership, were less active around social and political issues. They offered no resistance to the degrading and divisive policies of the State Commissions.

You can see all this in the way the Commissions operate. They look down on our tenants, who have few or no rights. Migrants and single mothers are abused and the Commissions have developed inhuman bureaucracies. This article is mostly about the Housing Commission of Victoria, but it could just as easily be about any of the other State Commissions.

"FOR A LARGE section of the Housing Commission country, a threat of eviction is the end of the bloody world". (Pat Tomelny)

The Housing Commission knows this and the threat of eviction is the club that the Commission has developed to beat its tenants into submission. Every year, the Commission issues round 6000 final notices to tenants who are a few days behind in their rent. The Commission evicts around 20 tenants each year. Yet it never takes more than \$50 in rent. Many of these have been intimidated into leaving early by the Final Notices and Court cases. Probably more.

The Commission is supposed to help tenants with money problems. In fact it punishes people on low wages or on strike. Then it chlobers them with the full weight of the law courts and police.

The Commission is equally brutal if you genuinely want to pay back your arrears. (If you don't, you are soon thrown onto the streets and your belongings stolen by the Commission).

Most tenants only get into arrears when they are in financial difficulties. Yet the Commission is immediately on their back to pay more than they can afford to pay. To make up the arrears. And it doesn't just want few bob...it demands an undertaking for you to repay all you owe. Some tenants have been scared into agreeing to \$40 a week extra!

But once you've agreed to pay off your arrears on the Commission tough terms it gets worse. Whilst you are actually paying them back, they continue to demand and actually TAKE YOU TO COURT...even though you've agreed to pay back your arrears and you have been doing it.

Then the Estate Officer comes round to see you and persuades you not to go to court. The Commission gets a Court Order that allows it to evict you at any time (provided you are still in arrears). Your last rights and security are stolen.

The Commission does nothing to help you in times of trouble. And doesn't care what happens if you are forced into "private" housing (which is twice as expensive). It's just concerned with getting your money and keeping you under control.

"NEARLY EVERY letter the Commission ever sends to its tenants contains a threat of eviction". (Pat Tomelny)

Being rent is not the only way to get evicted. The Commission forces tenants to sign a "conditions of tenancy" document. It gives them power to evict for no reason at all and with only a week's notice, and contains a list of prohibited activities...such as keeping pets or having friends stay overnight without written permission. These can result in instant eviction. Tenants must also obey every order of the Estate Officer. That gives the Estate Officer the power to throw you out and wreck your life if he feels like it. Some of the Estate Officers keep their noses out and just do their job, but many are known to have harassed tenants, especially single women, and made their lives pure hell when they don't obey the Officer's "orders".

Despite its eloquent crap, the Commission does not give a damn about the housing conditions of poor workers. The tenants have never been consulted about making the flats comfortable, or about what facilities they needed. There are not enough lifts in the high-rises; they are always breaking down again. All the flats are stinking hot in summer because you can't open the windows more than a few inches.

There are no child minding facilities, recreational facilities; the laundries are inadequate and the Commission has only installed domestic machines which break down under the load of many families' washing each weekend. The flats can be very noisy and some tenants develop nervous problems. There is no privacy as anyone can wander off the street and through the flats. Small children cannot reach the buttons for the top floors in the lifts. Actually they are not supposed to operate them on their own, but they are not manned and few mothers can afford the luxury of being with the children while they play.

The walk-ups are damp and there is a lot of mould - one woman even found a mushroom in the carpet under her tv - it wasn't left in the carpet under her tv.

"THE REAL PRESSURE of living in the flats is the attitude of the Commission and its officers". (Pat Tomelny)

"SOCIETY" looks on Commission tenants as vagrants, second class citizens, bludge the community. Eventually some tenants believe this themselves. Many people usually enjoy living in rented accommodation in high-rise buildings. But "society" tells you that you must buy your own home". So many lies end up with both parents working where two jobs each to pay for the "downside" that the children in a few years where there aren't any play facilities! child-minding areas! A lot of tenants in the high-rise flats are prisoners, hate life there and pour shit on the other tenants. They work their guts out to save enough to move out and up the social scale!

Photo of Hamer's home. 39 Noronell Ave, Canterbury

ON MONDAY, 25th November, Dick Hamer, Minister for Housing (Vance Dick, Palaces), and Hamer went on to say Commission flats have never both READERS from the block of flats kept out by roping off a plaza and contingent."

After the ceremony, guests were chicken and watermelon.

by the fairies. Children are not safe in high rise flats (about 10 have died from the stairs in the past year). The Estate Officer is the heating and sometimes the heating is during hot days and off during cold days. Maintenance can take ages. When they complain the Commission is self-righteous, pious, humbling, incompetent, slow and utterly bureaucratic. It's always the tenants' fault that the machines break or windows get broken.

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With people who hate the flats forced live there because they can't afford else, you create a whole new set of hell inside the flats.

"SOCIETY" HAS judged that the problem with the flats is the buildings. Actually the buildings themselves aren't too bad. The real problems are social problems". (Pat Tomelny)

The people who live in the flats are no-hopers. What's more, they care about decisions made because they have to live with them. They should have control over their decisions.

"The tenants need control of the flats...sooner or later we are going to be forced to take over"

Can you see the Housing Commission handing over its job without a fight? Can you see the tenants demand their rights, the Commission is going to hit back...hard. And it has the legal power, the police are on its side and so are the Courts and the Law. They've proved it...already.

Tenants have to ORGANISE, to FIGHT for their rights, the Tenants Union, although small untested and not very confident; has the potential to lead the fight. But it will only be able to do that if it is built on a basis of activity and democracy and by being prepared to challenge the power of the Commission and its allies in the interests of the tenants. So far it has around 1,000 members but needs to be built further and on militant basis. If you are a Housing Commission tenant, JOIN the Union and get active on it (sign up your neighbours and friends and organise a local committee). The union can be contacted at: phone 4151 or 67 Brunswick St., Fitzroy.

But even that is not enough. A lot of the problems with the flats and public housing generally are social and political problems that need social and political solutions. The Housing Commission must build more houses and low rise flats. At the moment there are a few houses even though there is a housing shortage. The Housing Commission must build more houses and low rise flats. At the moment there are a few houses even though there is a housing shortage. The Housing Commission must build more houses and low rise flats. At the moment there are a few houses even though there is a housing shortage.

Decent housing at cheap rental is a basic right that the whole labour movement must fight for...and not just because it's workers who live in the flats. We have to prove that we are a responsible and progressive society and that we have answers that work.

It is criminal that it was left only to the goodwill of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence to help the Tenants' Union with an office and telephone. The ALP has limited its activity to petty debates in parliament instead of organising for a working class solution to housing problems.

Except for a few individuals, the Trade Union movement has done nothing to organise tenants and fight for decent housing...a basic right for everyone. Housing Commission tenants have already begun to organise for control of their own housing. They have a right to expect our support. The Secretary of the Tenants' Union said:

"The only power we have in the end is the rent strike".



Does your home look like this?

Booth and Nadel

by Dave Nadel

Sick & Tired

You've got to have an iron constitution to work for Goodyear. Three company in Sydney. During the week (anti-July) the company started an anti-sickness campaign where workers could win prizes. Fear didn't miss a day for three months. Now they don't give prizes. Fear of unemployment works just as well. Colin Davis, Goodyear's public affairs manager said the company no longer needed to encourage the workers not to take sick leave.

changed completely since July" he said. "We are trying to get rid of workers".

He said employees had realized the company might consider the number sick days taken when deciding on possible retrenchments. In other words, if you get sick, get to work anyway or you'll be sacked. Whether you have a hangover or the laboring Plague Goodyear expects to see you at your workbench. Workers wanting to keep their jobs should go and cough all over the personnel manager.



Ah, here comes the morning shift!

THE MORNING SHIFT

Without Map or Compass

reviewed by DILYS KEVAN

WITHOUT MAP OR COMPASS -- W.B. WIDDERS. The Australian Book Society, 1974. 80 pp. price \$4.95.

But if the masters won't see reason, then all we can do is fight. (Aelia Dules)

And of course they never do. To the working class has to be organized and fight. It is in the atmosphere of Fred Dules' *Without Map or Compass* grows the roots of the socialist Midlands of England that the period 1914-1924, and is mostly concerned with the daily struggle of people trying to raise their standard of living.

The highlight is a massive 14 week strike, started by railway workers, it soon spread to cover 90% of the people in the area. The strikers were given a penny an hour more and received a 30% increase in the ration of union. Simple money, but too much for the bosses. The women of the Co-operative movement organised food when the local shops refused credit. Widders stresses the need of working class organization and solidarity -- not just the need for good work by your masses, but because that is the way to win.

He shows that organization is necessary to build people's confidence, as, for example, the Women's Guild of the Co-operative started by running social classes and by organizing to get to know each other, and gain more confidence, they

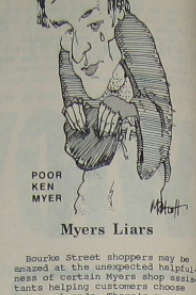
mark on an education program involving speakers for the Labour and Union movements. Fred Dules goes to meetings with his mother Aelia, who is the local branch secretary, to help her take the minutes because at that stage she can hardly read or write. The culmination of her development within the Guild comes when she is made chair of the branch and speaks at a national conference.

Fred's own politics are heavily influenced by his mother, who gets him to read socialist pamphlets to her. Long before her involvement with the Guild, she sees the value of acting in a cohesive group. When neighbours are threatened with eviction, she encourages all the women in that street to get their furniture out into the street. Even this threat of a rent strike worked.

As Fred gets older, he looks for some direction to his life. For a while he seems to find it in the women's political influence. He goes around with some girl who doesn't approve of his working class attitudes, but when he realises that he has where his real interests lie, and this is where his problems were, because at that time, there and in life he can do. He works for the Labour Party, but doesn't join with his comrade who refused membership. He attends a Communist Party branch, but he dislikes the British leadership and doesn't explore further.

Sweated labor

There is equality in North Korea, where, through the policy of "self-reliance," and the glorious leadership of Kim Il-Sung, the people are steadily moving toward to a higher standard of living. Of course, we are not talking about luxury standards, but they are moving forward to socialism and equality, and so they tell us.



POOR KEN MYER

Myers Liars

Leadership recently paid \$1221 thousand for five luxury yachts from the Tylose sauna company in Stockholm. The sauna came equipped with stereo sound systems and carpets on a padded surface -- to encourage self-reliance. They could have bought ordinary saunas for 20% of the cost, but, so quote Sven Olaf Jansson, manager of the firm, "instead they wanted their money on luxuries the ordinary people would not use." As we said, they're moving towards socialism and equality in North Korea!

Watts up, Norm?

A few months ago, before he went to NSW to set up a scrub union, Builders' Labourers' Federation member, Norm Gallagher released a pamphlet on the Mainline crash. He called Mainline an employer because they were foreign owned. (Norm prefers Australian workers to be hated Americans.) Most workers can't tell the difference; it doesn't seem to change working conditions. Later, Norm praised E.A. Watts, another construction militant in Australia. The book finishes with Fred vaguely optimistic about the future.

The best parts of the book are those about Fred's childhood --

Having missed a chance to go to University, he decided to emigrate to Australia. The book finishes with Fred vaguely optimistic about the future.

Militants sent back to classroom

DEFEAT BUT NOT DISASTER. VERA MILITANT AGAINST THE BULKS OF THE NSW OPEN ADMISSIONS. To defend the union's Open Admissions policy on December 1, but if we lose, the final vote count was about 190 to 160.

Supporters of the policy, which calls for open entry to tertiary institutions and the NSW Council of Higher School Certificate, were not convinced of the value of all the arguments. Speaker after speaker demanded that the "Anti-Bulkers' League" explore alternatives to the shocking discrimination in education, which he built into the NSC and its method for achieving open entry. The speaker was mostly silence, punctuated with generalities like "the vote was being Open Entry, "unfair", or "just not good enough".

But the policy was not overtaken by the Anti-Bulkers' League. It was thrown out by the voters of the NSW. The bulkers were not convinced of the value of all the arguments that they knew had very radical implications. That the vote was so close indicates that a lot of people are aware of what the VERA should be.

The most important lessons from

Nyere cuts overheads very nicely. It is a good idea to pocket the difference between the wholesale and the retail price, and to do this by cutting overheads as well. Which is why the unions attempt to reduce management's hours by an hour a day on the grounds of poverty strikes. It may be a good idea to pocket the difference between the wholesale and the retail price, and to do this by cutting overheads as well. Which is why the unions attempt to reduce management's hours by an hour a day on the grounds of poverty strikes. It may be a good idea to pocket the difference between the wholesale and the retail price, and to do this by cutting overheads as well. Which is why the unions attempt to reduce management's hours by an hour a day on the grounds of poverty strikes.

concentrating on the influence of his mother and his conservative ideas. The book more importantly, it shows the way his surroundings and the historical events in which he is involved shape his decisions.

Militants sent back to classroom

the fight over Open Admissions are straightforward. First, those among the radicals who imagined they would be the backbone of support have been forced to look reality in the face. Teachers are much more radical than they used to be, and that general trend will continue. But the bulk of VERA members remain tied to relatively traditional ideas of education.

Second, if battles like this are to be won, and most members won over to radical views, the more militant teachers will need solid organization. They have done a good job of throwing the hot coalition into an electoral campaign, and in this case did good. The organizing against the Anti-Bulkers' League, on the other hand, was mostly silence, punctuated with generalities like "the vote was being Open Entry, "unfair", or "just not good enough".

It should also be said that certain Executive members, such as Dennis Alton and John Harris, who supposedly "supported" the anti-Bulkers' League, were silent all day on December 1. It is something that they might be proud of. The fact that they were silent all day on December 1 is something that they might be proud of. The fact that they were silent all day on December 1 is something that they might be proud of.

by Tom O'Lincoln

if they act like his LABOUR?

by Tom O'Lincoln

"WE VOTED for a 35 hour week and we didn't get it". That's what a woman told us when we were out selling Batteries in Dunshire last month. She had a right to be disappointed. In Dunshire the slogan and Ough's personality had influenced some voters, most workers voted for the ALP because they thought it was their party -- a Labor party. They expected Whitlam to represent their interests.

Things have not turned out that way. The Whitlam government has called the unions to "restrain themselves, protesting over the worst unemployment since the war... and telling us inflation is our fault for being greedy."

Sadly, all of that was that 100 per cent predictable. The Labor leaders have been doing things like that for nearly a hundred years.

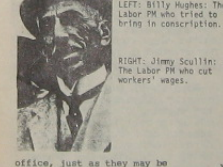
In 1916, another brilliant and arrogant Labor Prime Minister named Billy Hughes tried to force conscription down the throats of Australian workers, and was willing to desert the ALP altogether when he couldn't get his way.

In 1931 the Scullin government presided over a pay cut handed out by the Arbitration Court, and expelled Jack Lang for fighting the Federal government.

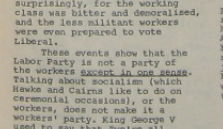
In 1949 Ben Chifley used troops to break a coal strike in NSW.

After each of these events, the voters threw labor out of office.

Why? Well, Billy Hughes: The Labor PM who cut workers' wages.



LEFT: Billy Hughes: The Labor PM who cut workers' wages.



RIGHT: Jimmy Scullin: The Labor PM who cut workers' wages.

Workers' Party

This sense in which the ALP is a workers' party is very important. It's not as if the working class has any other party at this stage of the game. To make the most of the ALP however, means it's vitally important to understand the role played by Whitlam and his fellow party leaders.

The aim of a politician is to win. Naturally, to do that in this society you have to be respectable. Respectable means being someone who has power, like big business and the big unions. In 1916, the unions were so close to make control of most of the working class in the defeat of Hughes' conscription referendum, and to expell politicians like Ben Chifley.

In 1911, it was the NSW Labor politician who became the

because the Labor Party is based on the unions -- can dampen and reverse the struggles of workers.

Not being stupid, he doesn't say that openly. Instead, he uses phrases like "cooperation", "wage restraint", and the sweet magic word: "social contract".

This notion of convincing workers to "cooperate" with the employers can be made to work. In times of prosperity when the employers are prepared to make some small concessions to the workers, it is a period of economic problems, it is a lot between union and employer love. More and more workers begin to see his employers as the vicious exploiters they are.

Whitlam's Choice

Now Whitlam has a choice. He can support the workers, but that would cost him the support of his friends among the employers (like Rupert Murdoch), he can come out and support the bosses, and bash the unions -- that would make him look just like the liberals and probably cost him the election.

Or he can flounder around, hoping to stay in power by sheer force of his personality. That is what he got away with last year, but there is a limit to it.

Whether he flounders till the voters get sick of it, or whether he comes around to a full-scale union-baiting campaign, either way he won't be able to solve the problem. Working class needs to build a revolutionary party to smash the capitalist state and replace it with democratic workers' control.

UNCOMPROMISING STRUGGLE AGAINST SEXISM AND RACISM

which are pillars of the capitalist system. We fight for full equality and liberation for all women, Negroes, blacks and all other oppressed groups. We stand for the freedom of sexual expression, including an end to the social oppression of homosexuals.

INTERNATIONALISM. We fight to live with an international revolutionary movement, opposed both to the imperialist state and to the ruling classes in the USSR and China. While defending the rights of nations to self-determination, we oppose national chauvinism and work to overcome national divisions.

DEMOCRACY. Democracy in this society is very limited, yet in times of crisis it can be used to destroy even this limited democracy. We fight for a change, therefore the defence of democratic freedom and the right to extend the scope of our revolutionary outlook. In democratic class societies, such as the USSR, the need for democratic procedures is inseparable from the fight for socialism itself.

IT'S NO USE JUST TALKING ABOUT THE NEED TO END WOMEN'S OPPRESSION. IF YOU ARE NOT WORKING TO DO THIS, THEN YOU ARE A LAZY IDIOT!

Black and Tans. Today it involves British-occupied Palestine. It involves Protestants and Catholics. It involves people driven to despair, some of whom are now being driven to the tropics. It involves the use of gas, like bloody Sunday and other killings.

It is this appalling history that drives young people to join the IRA, and to carry out the terrible campaign for the withdrawal of the British from Ireland, and the self-determination of Ireland.

The possibility of some IRA handlings will continue until the situation is changed. A powerful campaign for the withdrawal of the British from Ireland, and the self-determination of Ireland.

THE BATTLE 14 December 1974

Socialist Workers Action Group

Revolution is a revolutionary socialist organization, open to all who accept our basic principles and are willing to work. Some of these principles are: WORKERS' POWER as the solution to Australia's economic and social crisis; only the organized working class has the power to change the conditions of exploitation and oppression, based on workers' control of industry and the state.

BANK AND FIRM ORGANIZATION. We work within the mass organizations of the working class such as the trade unions, and fight to bring them under rank and file control. We aim to fight where the paid officials are unwilling, workers need their own rank and file organizations.

REVOLUTIONARY FRONT FORMATION. While reforms cannot transform society, the struggle for them is important in building a movement which can continue to bring about short term gains for workers and the oppressed. But the working class needs to build a revolutionary party to smash the capitalist state and replace it with democratic workers' control.

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anyone else to defend their interests these days

THE Battler

BLACK DEXTER!

from Mick Armstrong in Canberra

Last week, Barrie Dexter kicked Charles Perkins sideways. Dexter is the permanent white head of the Aboriginal Affairs Department. Perkins is the most senior black official in the Department. The sideways kick, moving a white servant from one job to another, is a traditional trick of dealing with trouble makers too powerful to sack. In Perkins' case, the transfer was away from Consultation and Liaison to Special Duties. It followed Perkins' resignation.

Perkins said that he would see Dexter with racial discrimination against the original people of Australia. He intends to bring charge before a committee of the Department of Immigration, which set up to investigate complaints of discrimination employment.

In his statement, Perkins stated against "the lack of action in Aboriginal Affairs and the disgraceful situation existing for our people". He attacked the establishment of a bureau which controlled the urgent and which was adding the aboriginal people into the dirt.

He argued Aboriginal Affairs spent \$17 million less than their budget and handed back

the difference to Consolidated Revenue.

While Dexter is busy patting himself on the back for saving Treasury money, black kids are dying in Wilcannia. They have been living in temporary housing for most of this year, in conditions that breed disease. Their previous homes were destroyed in the floods early this year, and nothing had been done about re-housing. Dexter considers saving money more important than saving black lives -- "grinding the aboriginal people into the dirt."

Once again, Labor is in trouble over Aboriginal Affairs. In 1972, blacks had high hopes for Labor. But it soon became obvious that most of the reforms would be token ones. Little was done to antagonise the mining companies and other

exploiting interests, opposed to real reforms such as black land rights.

The Department should be brought under black control. This will not solve all the problems of blacks, but it is quite clear that blacks have a better idea of their own needs and welfare than people like Dexter. Due to the racism of the education system, there are probably not enough black doctors, lawyers and accountants to fully staff the Department right now. But if white experts are still needed, they should be made responsible to blacks.

Free Speech

The way Perkins has been treated also shows the lack of free speech for public servants. The thinly veiled warning by Senator Cavanagh on This Day Tonight concerning Perkins: "His position will have to be looked at in the future" shows how Labor has again failed to live up to its pre-election promises.

As it turned out, Perkins was kicked sideways for his attack, rather than being sacked, fined or denoted. This was because he has friends in Cabinet who would be embarrassed if their sole black bureaucrat was axed. I wonder what would have happened if a tylist from the Department had made the same comments.

If you work for Ford or BHP and you call your boss an exploiting capitalist bludge you'll get the sack. If you're in the Public Service and say exactly the same thing, you'll not only be sacked, but be fined



Charles Perkins

or even jailed as well.

Back in those heady days of December 1972, we Public Servants were told that we would be given the same freedom of speech as every other Australian. Well, we waited for eighteen months before a few minor changes were made. But even after these reforms, I could still be prosecuted if I revealed really vital information such as how many paper clips my Department uses each year.

Admittedly it is partly our own fault. We have not yet worked to build rank and file groups in our union, which at the moment is a timid and cautious one. The membership could and should force the union to fight for the rights of its members, rather than worrying about pay rises for a few fat cats.

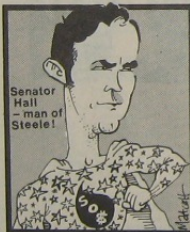
the right to retain liquidity, there's got to be efficiency, and there's only one thing that's expendable." -- Steele Hall, 2/12/74.

O.B. threatens jobs

Steele Hall was addressing a meeting of about 350 employers, called by the Movement for the Survival of Business and Industry (S.O.B.). This movement was formed two months ago and represents mainly small and medium business. It's a people who went to the meeting are worried about their businesses and declining profits, which they blame on the Labor government's economic policies. Their demands include a twelve month wage/price freeze and the introduction of penal clauses for any strikes within the next year.

Secretary of the Victorian Employers' Federation. With a job like his, he doesn't have to. Both Spicer and Steele Hall have no doubts that the bosses' interests are different to those of the workers. -- When profits are threatened, jobs will go. But this is only seen as a partial "solution". Spicer, for example, wants to see SOB and other groups like it merge together in one big Bosses' Union to fight the trade unions. He put it very clearly -- it's a class war, and you can only be on one side. Steele Hall, on the

other hand, wants a government of National Unity to combat the current economic problems. He advised the meeting not to appear sectional, but rather to appeal to the community as AUSTRALIANS. In Britain recently there have been similar calls -- and it's important to see where this kind of thing starts. If it comes from the bosses, it's obviously going to be in their interests. At the moment, it's just part of Steele Hall's "I'd make a great Prime Minister" campaign, but when the economic situation gets worse, it will be taken up by others.



Both these solutions are equally dangerous as far as the working class is concerned. Both call for all-out attacks on our living standards. Both call for solidarity among bosses -- though they will try to con as many workers as they can.

For the moment, they're calling for "moderation". This means that while prices rocket around us, we should be "moderate" and go broke in the "National Interest". After all, it's for our own good!

In an economic recession, the big bosses get squeezed, the little bosses get squeezed out and the workers get thrown out of work. But workers fight back! Big business can easily convince small business that it's the unions who are to blame. That's what SOB is about. Owners of small firms will be used by their unions to attack the unions even though they themselves are crushed by big business competition.

These two-bob capitalists have to be convinced that big business is to blame, and that they have no future in the capitalist system they are part of.

by Tess Lee Ack