

The Red Mole

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Hands off Pickets!

In recent weeks, the ruling class have been stepping up their attacks on picket lines. Specially-trained mobile police squads have turned up unexpectedly in force in various parts of the country to smash through picket lines.

An attack on picketing is essential for the Government at the moment. Although it does not as yet have to contend with a united working class mobilisation, there is the danger that an individual group like the hospital workers might win increasing support in a long-drawn out struggle. And their ability to stay out hinges from day to day on the effectiveness of their picket lines.

Then there is the danger of another miners' strike. The miners used the flying pickets to win the support of large numbers of other workers. The Government is worried by the possibility of a repeat performance this year.

In this situation the trial of the 24 Shrewsbury building workers (see page 4) will be a crucial indicator for the Government. The explosive response to the Industrial Relations Act rules out its further use for the moment. But the established criminal law is another matter. Its carefully fostered appearance of neutrality can confuse the response of the working class. Even though the pickets and police are acting on behalf of classes in struggle, it appears to operate on the basis of detailed evidence in individual cases.

The revolutionary left can play an important role here. It should unite its forces for a campaign throughout the labour movement against repression in its different guises. All bodies of the labour movement begin to prepare practical measures for defending local pickets against the mobile police squads who can turn up at any time. Trades councils for example could begin to organise pools of local pickets to match the centralisation of the state forces. All local bodies created to fight against Phase II and the Tory Government must take up the issue as part of their activities. The labour movement has to re-learn the lessons of the Twenties and Thirties in the fight against state repression.

Lofthouse Tragedy

As the miners' ballot result will be known by Tuesday, the capitalist press is trying to wind up its mourning for the dead at Lofthouse Colliery in a rush. The Lofthouse workers after all were only on the receiving end of the day to day violence of the capitalist system. Now preparations must be quickly made to deal with the 'men of violence' manning the pickets in a possible strike.

But the craven hypocrisy of the capitalist press is only one aspect of the Lofthouse tragedy. It was miners who died, miners who drove themselves to exhaustion in the rescue operation. An 'impartial' inquiry will serve only to cover up the real responsibility, as at Aberfan. We should demand a workers' commission into all aspects of the running of the coal board, including safety. The actions of the Coal Board should be made accountable to the workers, not the class enemies in whose interests the Coal Board is run.

AS PHASE TWO MAKES PAY STRIKES ILLEGAL AT THE BEGINNING OF APRIL

FULL SUPPORT FOR HOSPITAL WORKERS

By JOHN MARSTON and ALAN JONES

Next Monday, 2 April, the Phase 2 norm of £1 plus 4% becomes the law. Any union defying it by taking action in support of a claim above the norm can be fined an unlimited amount. There is also the further possibility of jailings for contempt should the defiance continue.

Faced with this prospect, the response of most trade union leaders has been to beat a hasty retreat. All That Vic Feather had to offer at the meeting of the TUC finance and general purposes committee last Friday, 23 March, was that unions are "free to take their case to the Pay Board if they so wish". The civil servants look like being among the first to knock at that door; their actions come to an end with a final half day strike this Friday, the last working day before Phase 2 becomes law.

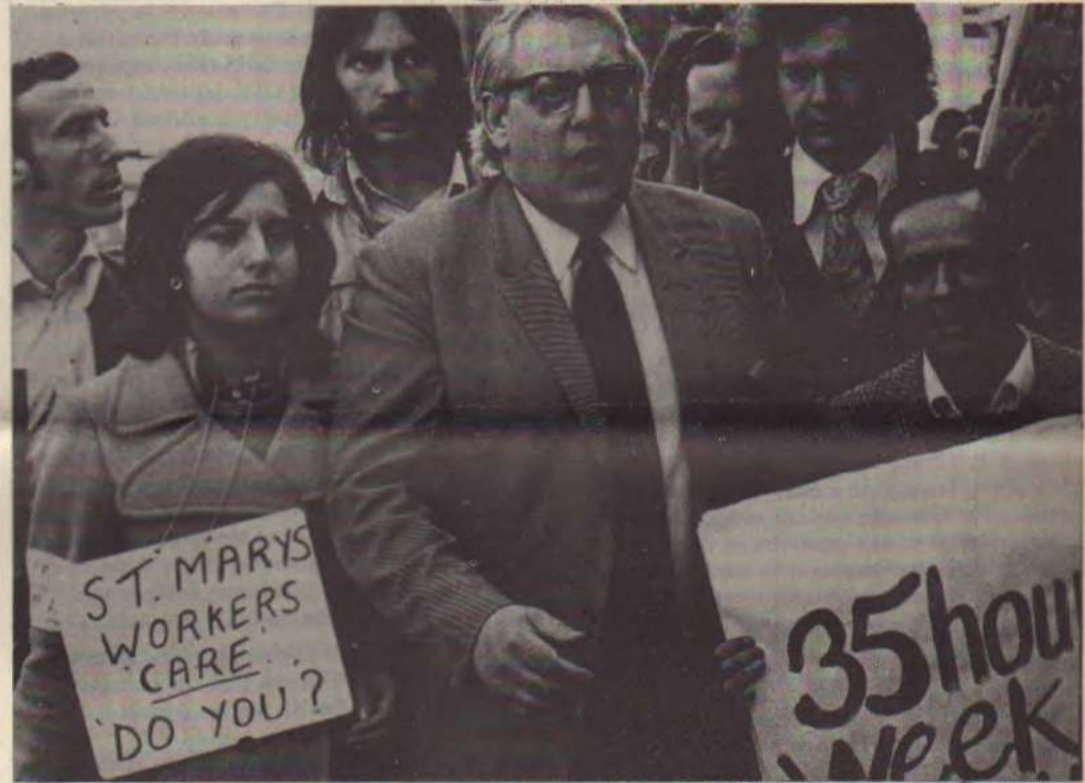
Only one group is certain to defy the law—the hospital workers. The militancy and solidarity of the rank and file has driven the strike forward despite the reluctance of the union leaders. Already St. George's at Hyde Park in London has voted to strike indefinitely from 2 April in open defiance of the law, and other hospitals in London and elsewhere are taking similar action. The strike is also being extended in other ways, with strike committees and sympathetic doctors deciding what are 'emergency' cases, and private health care facilities being closed down. But this in itself is not enough.

IMPORTANCE

The ruling class is well aware of the importance of this strike. They know full well that one serious struggle to breach the Government's policies will have much more damaging effects than any number of resolutions and protest actions. That is why the press has been so full of carefully set up stories of 'unnecessary deaths', 'health risks', and so on. That is why police have been intimidating pickets not just at St Mary's, Paddington, where two were arrested, but at other hospitals like the Whittington in North London. As political commentator Peter Paterson noted in the *London Evening Standard* last week: "Of all the disputes over Phase Two... this is the most dangerously combustible for Mr Heath."

But if the ruling class is treating the situation as one of some urgency, the same can hardly be said of the so-called leaders of the working class. Feather's main concern is to get "a full hearing of the case for a public inquiry"—what used to be known as 'talks about talks'. But the response of the Government even to this mild proposal was openly contemptuous. After going along with Feather to see Heath, John Cousins of the T&GWU admitted that, "the meeting was pointless and I don't know why we bothered to come"

Clearly the Government does not intend to



After their court appearance: St Mary's NUPE convenor Don Steadman (foreground) and steward Peter Barker (to left behind him) with supporters. (Photo: Chris Davies, Report)

talking. Only industrial action will force it to back down.

NATIONAL ACTION

But so far the only real support for the hospital workers has come at a local level. Last Friday's demonstration and strike of engineering workers in Sheffield, and Tuesday's demonstration in Nottingham, are the kind of action which the TUC should be organising nationally. For if the hospital workers are allowed to face the might of the State alone, the ruling class will have taken a big step forward in its struggle to break the resistance to the Freeze.

Already the employers are getting confident. The *Economist* reports: "The good news is that the Government has so far been getting the

better of its confrontation with the unions over pay controls... The rise in prices since the start of the freeze means that many people are now worse off than they were five months ago. This makes the success so far on wages an achievement."

Up and down the country, conferences and meetings are taking place to discuss the struggle against the Freeze and the Government, and to prepare for the May 1st day of action. All of them, and for a start the LCDTU conference this weekend, should have as the first practical item on the agenda the question of how to give immediate support to the struggle of the hospital workers. Every practical step to win the present strike will be worth a hundred pious resolutions.

WHITE PAPER: Extra Time for Whitelaw

From GERY LAWLESS

After Bloody Sunday and the suspension of Stormont, British imperialism formulated its strategy for the coming year. This was planned as a combination of repression in the crucial Catholic ghetto areas, and enough concessions to the middle class or middle aged Catholics to win them away from the IRA, but not enough to pose the threat of a serious back-lash from the Protestant Ascendancy.

Paper. The White Paper was to signal the end of the year of direct involvement, and a return to peaceful exploitation North and South.

TIME IS UP

One year later, time is up. Whitelaw's White Paper, far from showing the way forward for imperialism, or to be more accurate, how imperialism sees the way forward for Ireland, is a belated appeal for extra time.

THE NATIONAL HEALTH "A Working-Class Affair"

The hospital ancillary workers' strike is important not just as part of the general fight against the Freeze. It also reflects the grave crisis of the National Health Service 25 years after it was set up. For in spite of an annual budget of over £2,000 m., a real increase of over 25% in 15 years, the NHS is now less able than ever to meet the needs of those who use or work in it.

Waiting lists for hospital beds now top half a million, yet due to staff shortages the number of available beds has been falling. People may have to wait for up to two years before gaining admission for some non-urgent operations. So it is not surprising that the private insurance companies are cashing in on the anxiety thus induced, with full page ads in the national dailies for their 'queue-jumping' services.

ORIGINAL N.H.S.

Even the original NHS was far from the model of perfection which the Labour Party prided itself on. But it did not then have to cope with the rapidly rising demand for its services which has taken place over the years. This can be traced back to four main factors.

1. The increase in the ratio of the very old and very young to the rest of the population; these requiring more attention from the health service.
2. The phenomenal rate of advance in medical knowledge, which is often accompanied by highly expensive techniques such as kidney machines.
3. The higher expectations of a population whose standard of living was rising in other respects.
4. The rise in both physical and mental diseases caused by the stresses and tensions of life in advanced capitalist society.

During the years of the boom, and indeed almost up to the end of the sixties, it was possible to alleviate some of the pressures of this increased demand through increases in expenditure. The percentage of the Gross National Product devoted to health, for instance, rose from 4 to 5% during the sixties. But in the last few years, faced with a continuing crisis of profitability, British capitalism has had to seek new solutions to the problems of the health service which will enable it to direct state expenditure in more profitable directions.

THREEFOLD REMEDY

The Tory Government's remedy is threefold: to reduce demand, to raise finance from other sources than the Exchequer, and finally to rationalise ruthlessly the operation of the NHS.

The way of dealing with the first objective has

been to abolish welfare benefits or drastically increase charges for them. We have already seen the imposition of higher charges for prescriptions, spectacles, and dental treatment, putting them out of reach of an increasing number of working class families. In the near future we can also expect attempts to make 'hotel' charges for use of hospital beds.

By MIKE FITZGERALD

Charges, running at £100 m. a year, are also an increasingly important source of revenue. Moreover, the increasing popularity of private medical care within the NHS can be expected to lead to an expansion of the facilities for private patients in NHS hospitals, with all the detrimental effects this will have on ordinary consumers in terms of longer waiting lists and reduced access to consultants, etc. Companies who organise their executives into private health insurance schemes already get tax relief for this purpose, and no doubt there is further scope for state encouragement of this practice.

PROPOSED RE-ORGANISATION

However the main strategy of the Government lies in its proposed re-organisation of the service, which is being legislated in the present parliamentary session. The ostensible purpose of this re-organisation is to unify the existing tripartite division of the NHS (the three parts being the hospitals, the GPs, dentists, opticians, etc., and the local authority health services).

There is no doubt among health workers that this ought to be done; but the Government have given the game away by not really carrying out this unification at all, merely renaming a whole lot of committees and authorities. Their real intentions were given away when they invited a top firm of American management consultants to advise them on it.

The underlying theme of the Government's Bill is managerial efficiency and cost minimisation. In other words, the streamlining of the NHS has the purpose of exploiting the existing facilities and workers to the maximum regardless of the quality of care which would ensue, or of the interests and conditions of the workers involved. All semblance of democracy will be done away with in the name of 'maximum delegation downwards with accountability upwards'.

Thus the centralised apparatus of the state will be strengthened, to ensure that the interests of the patient or the health worker do not override those of the state. And to avoid clashes with staff who put clinical considerations above 'efficient' administration, there is also an

attempt to co-opt a wider layer of professional health workers into the management structure.

Also a key component in a 'labour-intensive industry' like the NHS is the question of wages. It is hoped that a more efficient management will be more successful in selling productivity deals to the ancillary workers, in spite of the chronic shortage of staff. Unfortunately union leaders are eager to collaborate in this, hoping that the higher rates will cover up the fact that for a long period of years they have allowed their members to exist on a poverty-line basic wage. Part of the present claim, for instance, is for a £1 'lead-in' payment for those not yet under bonus schemes.

RESISTANCE

However the Government's multi-faceted attack on the NHS is unlikely to be accepted without resistance. The newly-awakened militancy of the ancillary workers provides an excellent basis for a struggle against capitalism's attempt to solve the financial problems of the NHS at their expense.

In the last few months there has been a steady growth in the formation of stewards' committees and in unofficial rank and file groups like LASH. Among professional health workers, opposition is growing to the cynical way in which the Tories are subordinating the health of the population to the interests of the bourgeois state. This is reflected in the popularity of radical journals like *Needle*.

What is necessary now is to unite these currents around issues which expose the class nature of the NHS as part of the bourgeois state. This must be done in opposition to the line of the CP and the 'lefts' in the unions, who call for more democracy and 'participation' i.e. for an alliance with those forces whose interests are essentially opposed to those of the working class. To this end a campaign of action against private practice, especially within the NHS, would be an obvious starting point. This would also be extremely important in relation to the present struggle of the ancillary workers against the Freeze, since it would clearly make the direct object of their action the real enemy, i.e. the bourgeoisie, rather than working class patients.

Health workers are in the best position to know what is happening to the NHS and to the health of society. By relating that to the general issues of the class struggle, it is then possible to understand the importance of raising the question of the crisis of the NHS among the working class as a whole, who alone can lead the struggle for a service which will meet the needs of society.

300 ATTEND WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Socialists in the women's liberation movement came together for the first time over the weekend 17/18 March in Birmingham, when over 300 attended a conference on Women's Liberation and Socialism. This marked a significant step forward in the development of the socialist current within the women's movement.

On the first day various workshops were held. Discussion centred around general problems of Marxist analysis of the family under capitalism, sexism, Mariarosa Dalla Costa's pamphlet, Engels, etc. They showed that we still have a long way to go in developing an adequate theory and in clarifying our differences.

STRATEGY

The second day opened up a discussion on strategy. This focused firstly on the relation of the women's movement to the revolutionary left organisations. The main organisations represented (IMG, IS, CP) outlined their positions on women's liberation. However the discussion was mainly around the problems of male chauvinism in the revolutionary left and amongst male trade union militants, and was generally somewhat diffuse and inconclusive.

The socialist women at the conference all recognised that a socialist revolution is a necessary pre-requisite for women's liberation, but there were various differences on how this would be achieved. The essential difference was between those who saw revolution arising out of the development of a whole number of different movements, including the women's liberation movement; and those who saw the need for a revolutionary party to centralise all such initiatives within one overall strategy.

Finally, the question of further meetings of socialists in the women's liberation movement was discussed. It was decided to hold a further conference to discuss the state of the movement and to evaluate campaigns and demands, in London on the weekend of 30 June/1 July.

Margaret Coulson

LONDON WORKERS AGAINST FREEZE

The second meeting of the ad-hoc mobilising committee for the All-London Conference of Workers Against the Freeze was held last Sunday, 25 March, with just over 30 representatives attending. It was decided to hold the conference in two sessions, the first covering the present situation and the second concentrating on the way to deepen the struggle against the Tory Government and its policies. Several well-known speakers from the labour movement in London will be invited to speak at the first session, and already Briant's have agreed to provide a speaker.

The mobilising committee also agreed to present the following motion to the conference:

"1. This conference is taking place at a time of rising struggle. The Tory Government, especially through its present pay laws, threatens the living standards of the working class, attempts to undermine the trade union movement, and prepares the way for further attacks. In order to fight for unity in struggle against the Tory Government and its policies, this conference calls for Trades Councils and other suitable bodies of the labour movement to set up Action Committees in every area, open to all organisations prepared to struggle against the present Government and its policies, in particular against the Freeze, the Housing Finance Act, cuts in education, etc.

"2. The first act of such committees should be to build for the central all-London rally against the Freeze scheduled for May Day, and to take up immediately the defence and solidarity with all struggles against the Freeze and unemployment, especially in support of the teachers, hospital workers, and the Briant's workers.

"3. In the present period of intense struggle it may be necessary to rapidly recall this conference. There should be elected, therefore, a small standing committee which shall establish communication between the various action groups to ensure rapid recall as the need arises."

The conference takes place at the Fellowship Room in the Central Hall, Westminster at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, 14 April. It will be open to anyone who wishes to attend, and tickets are available in advance price 25p, but only delegates will have voting rights. Meetings to mobilise for the conference are already arranged for Tottenham and Dartford, with others planned for different parts of London. If anyone requires a speaker about the conference at their trade union branch or any other meeting, or for information on tickets, delegate forms, posters and leaflets, please contact: Jon Duveen, 14 Alpha Road, Croydon, Surrey (688 0750; 278 2616).

Crompton's - A Case Study in Unity

Workers at the Crompton Parkinson factory in Newport are now on strike following new efforts by management to break up the hard-won unity of the Arab, Pakistani and white workforce. It has taken constant battles over the last twenty years to get organisation, recognition, and unity in this factory. Now management have thrown down the gauntlet again; by manipulating the shift system in one department from three into two, they have produced a surplus pool of labour which can be laid off at any time.

The workers' immediate response to this was to hold a mass meeting at which it was agreed to go for immediate strike action. Pickets have been successfully organised, with Arab and Pakistani workers taking their place in the front line with their fellow white workers.

In an interview with *The Red Mole*, R Ahsan, T&GWU factory convenor, had this to say:

A. First of all we would like to thank the International Marxist Group for producing collection sheets at no charge, and helping to distribute them.

I see this struggle as an attempt by management to smash the gains we have made in the organisation of the workforce, particularly in the last three years ... The products of these gains can be seen on the united and militant picket lines today ... The way to consolidate this unity is to base it on the fullest democratic control of the rank and

From PAUL SMITH in Newport

file leadership by the membership. When the strike was first called, the whole stewards' committee including myself resigned so that we could elect a proper strike committee. A further mass meeting will be held in the next few days to spell out the role of the strike committee.

— What do you see as the main role of the strike committee?

A. The strike committee should have two main roles. First, it should organise all of the workforce to get them involved in the strike. We should, for instance, call an early meeting of the strikers' wives. Also we should organise flying squads to do a publicity campaign around the other local factories. Another thing we are thinking of producing is a strike bulletin to keep all of our membership involved and informed. We should hold the strike committee meetings openly — so that any worker on strike can come along to put his point of view ...

The second main thing the strike committee should do is campaign in the town for support from other workers, and allies of the workers' movement. This means a series of public meetings in the town, mass leafleting of the estates, and perhaps a local demonstration ... We should call for any support

that can be given ... colleges and tenants' associations and other groups should set up support committees.

— How do you see this struggle in relation to the struggle against the Freeze and to bringing down the Tories?

A. Personally speaking, I see it as vitally important to unite all sections of the labour movement in a struggle to organise a general strike to do this. In this area we have got the big steel redundancies. Many thousands of workers face unemployment. We must fight on this issue but also try to get these workers together for a general push in every worker's interests. In some areas I see that local conferences of workers, tenants, housewives, etc. against the Freeze and against the Tory government have been set up. This is just what we need at this stage ... it has to be done on a national scale.

Already the strike at Crompton Parkinson's has been discussed at the meeting of the new Hawker-Siddeley combine committee (of which it is part) last weekend. It will require a big effort to win on the issues raised in the strike and to defend the unity so far achieved. Rush all donations and motions of solidarity to: R. AHSAN, 4 ADELIN STREET, NEWPORT, MON.

STOP PRESS

The management are now calling the Crompton's strike an "unfair industrial practice". This implies that they may be intending to go to the NIRC. Further news in our next issue.

South Africa Low Wages High Profit



Above: Two of the South African crew of the Union Castle's Clan Robertson with Swedish Seaman's Union official.

On Monday, 12 March, *The Guardian* headlined a report on conditions and rates of pay of black employees of British companies in South Africa. General Electric, Rowntree, Tate & Lyle, British Leyland, Courtaulds and Metal Box were amongst the big corporations named as paying wages to Africans well below the Poverty Datum Line of between £10 and £11 per week for a family of husband, wife and three children. The report showed that in 1970/71 the ratio of African to white wages was slightly over one to four in banks and building societies, just under one to six in manufacturing and the railways, over one to six in construction and central government services, about one to seven in electricity and one to twenty in mining (where however, employees "enjoy" free accommodation and rations for themselves in PoW type compounds).

The response in the following days was varied. A few companies tried to justify the situation, but most went on the defensive, expressing 'surprise' and 'ignorance of the facts' and ordering 'urgent enquiries' etc. It is, after all, almost a year since a study conducted by the South Africa Productivity and Wage Association for the United Kingdom South African Trade Association showed that 80 per cent of the black employees of British firms were being paid below subsistence levels.

INVESTMENT

But the game was really given away by Jim Slater of Slater Walker Securities, whose South African subsidiary owns two farms where malnutrition is said to be rife and children suffer from opened sores, distended stomachs, and weakened limbs caused by kwashiorkor. On hearing the news, Slater immediately issued a statement that "my colleagues and I were horrified" by the report; they had regarded the

subsidiary "simply as an investment". And how do you judge an investment? Well, a good investment is one with a high rate of return on the capital invested, which just happens to be dependent on a low wages bill.

In fact, British investment in South Africa is now rapidly nearing the £2,000 million mark. This is not unrelated to the fact that throughout the capitalist world, but particularly in the older established industrialised countries of the Northern hemisphere such as Britain, pressure has been building up on profit margins largely as a result of the relative self-confidence and strength of organisation of the working class. For the international corporations, South Africa comes as a heaven sent opportunity to escape into a paradise where the majority of the labour force is cowed by draconian repression into acceptance of wages and conditions reminiscent of the early days of industrialisation in Europe. For spokesmen on behalf of any investors in South Africa to express dismay or horror at the existence of conditions which have constituted the main reason for their own presence in that country is sheer hypocrisy.

Not hypocritical, but perhaps potentially more misleading, have been the 'liberal' comments urging 'pressure' to force improvements. In Britain, the Anti-Apartheid Movement has launched a campaign which "asks British companies not to invest further in South Africa until these conditions are improved".

WAY FORWARD

Meantime, inside South Africa itself, African workers showed the way conditions will be improved when a three day strike at the South African Pulp and Paper Industries' Mandini mill won a near 20% pay rise on 14 March. Along with the successful Durban strikes in January

this action will undoubtedly stimulate other sections of the black labour force into further actions

This re-emergence of strong organisation and militancy constitutes a much more serious threat to the status quo in South Africa than any attempts to pressurise capitalist companies into defying their very *raison d'être*. Of course it is correct to expose the role of British capital in the continued exploitation of South African labour, but our action needs to be taken forward to the provision of more concrete forms of support. Trade Unionists in companies with South African investments should be attempting to forge direct links with workers there. Inside the multi-national corporations the workers need to develop their own multi-national organisations which rally around the demand that wages everywhere be raised to the level prevailing in the highest paid location. Already last week the tremendous effect such actions can have was seen with the blacking of the Union Castle ship *Clan Robertson* by Swedish, British and Belgian dockers in support of a pay demand by Zulu seamen. Within days the seamen had secured a 100 per cent rise to the same level as British seamen.

It is also necessary to develop a fight to commit the British labour movement to a total boycott on the movement of arms, etc., to the racist regimes in Southern Africa. Financial and material support must be given to the organisations engaged in struggle against apartheid.

The new upsurge of workers' struggle in South Africa make this task more urgent. It is certain that when this becomes generalised and develops into an all-out assault on the institutions of the racist regime those who presently mouth hypocritical expressions of their desire to improve conditions for their labour force,

etc. will come out in their true colours. At the end of the day the British capitalist class and its government will seek to prevent that revolution against the South African state whose inner logic will end super-exploitation by imperialism and transfer control of industry, agriculture and mining to the African workers and poor peasants. It is in preparation for this revolution and the concrete tasks of solidarity which this will pose to the British working class that it is necessary right now to develop the beginnings of a movement which has no illusions about the potential benevolence of the big corporations but bases itself on the international unity of the working class.

TONY SOUTHALL

3rd Conference of Radical Scholars of Soviet and East European Studies

4-6 May, Birmingham University Union, on

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

- May 4 (7.30): *Marx and the dictatorship of the proletariat*—S. Zienau.
 May 5 (10): *Dictatorship of the proletariat in the transitional period (1917-21)*—C. Goodie, A. Holt.
 (2): *Bureaucracy and the Party in the twenties*—P. Ivanov.
 (7): *Free discussion and social*.
 May 6 (10): *How to fight empiricism in Soviet studies*—H. H. Ticktin.
 (2): *WORKSHOPS*

For information, accommodation and creche: CRSEES, c/o Lucas House, Pritchatts Rd., Edgbaston, Birmingham.

NUS : TIME FOR A CHANGE

The NUS conference at Exeter from the 2-6 April is taking place during a period of militant student struggle not seen since 1968. The crucial difference this time is the breadth of student involvement and the fact that it is happening inside the NUS and not by-passing it. As might be expected, such a development is finding a reflection in the NUS Conference itself. There are no less than five slates for the elections. At least three of these claim to be revolutionary and even the right winger, John Randall, is masquerading as a socialist.

The key questions facing the conference are of course, the perspectives for the grants campaign and the relation of students to the developing workers' struggles against the Tory pay laws and other measures of the ruling class.

THE PROBLEMS OF PROTEST

As we have explained in previous issues of *The Red Mole*, the present NUS executive, dominated by the Communist Party, has presented the campaign in such a way as to isolate it from the struggles of the working class. By dragging up atrocious stories of students in distress, they hope to build up the 'special case' which students supposedly have. In this way, they hope to shock 'public opinion' and pressurise the Tories into conceding an increase in the grant.

Even so, from the point of view of student involvement, this campaign has been the most successful to date. There has been overwhelming support for the NUS initiatives as the national demo and national one day strike indicate. And the bulk of this support has come from the lower half of the system — the Polys

and, importantly, the Techs. But this has brought in its wake big problems which flow from the basis on which the campaign is run.

The first problem is that within a framework of protest, militant forms of struggle such as rent strikes, mass demonstrations, one-day strikes, etc. are seen not as ways of *advancing* the struggle of students but as spectacles to attract attention from the bourgeoisie press. Hence the plaintive cry for 'leadership' in the local struggles which have developed out of these actions.

The second problem faced by local leaderships is how to unify all students behind the campaign. The main form of struggle which has been chosen, the rent strike, and the orientation to pressurising Vice-Chancellors as a key component of 'public opinion', both mean that most emphasis has been placed by the NUS leadership on the universities, and then only on a section of these.

It is as a result of taking up and expressing this dissatisfaction at the level of tactics that the conference election slate initiated by the International Socialist group and a number of prominent NUS social democrats has begun to win increasing support.

IMG SLATE

Insofar as the victory of this slate will signal a determination for a change in the campaign and an increase in the combativity and self-confidence of students in struggle, it should be critically supported.

But there is no solution to be found simply at the level of tactics. By endorsing the basis of

the campaign, this slate is incapable of offering anything other than "more militancy" as an alternative. The root problem is the *politics* of the campaign. The low level of the student grant is not at all due to the inadvertence of the Tories who don't recognise the appalling material conditions which most students are in. It flows from the pincer movement of inflation on the one hand and the attempt to cut down on unit costs through rationalisation on the other. Only by showing a real determination to *struggle* against both of these things will the enemy be really under pressure. And by the same token, only by correctly identifying the enemy can the correct unifying tactics be projected.

It is in the IMG is fielding its own slate for the top four positions. The members of the slate will argue that on this basis it is in the immediate interests of all students to throw their weight behind the struggle of the working class. Solidarity with workers' struggles is a necessary concomitant to an offensive grants campaign.

THE NEXT STEPS

The most immediate question facing students when they return to the colleges next term is the contribution which students can make to the May 1st day of action called by the TUC. All colleges must be occupied on that day, and the day used both to demonstrate solidarity with the working class and also to begin to organise in a determined way to utilise all the resources of students in this fight. Conferences

of all those in the colleges — college workers, technicians, teachers and students — should be held to plan the way forward.

Secondly, students must extend their action over prices which have been waged through refectory boycotts. A national day of action on prices must be organised with mass pickets of supermarkets and demonstrations against rising prices all over the country.

Finally, the struggle in the colleges will have to be stepped up. Unfortunately, it will not be possible simply to build on the actions of this term. The lack of success so far can only breed demoralisation, especially with the attempted victimisations of rent strikers now being carried out by 'our friends' the Vice-Chancellors.

The starting point of any move forward must be the defence of these students and of victimised lecturers like Steve Whitley (see separate article), our real friends in this fight. But this will only really be possible if a balance sheet of the campaign so far is drawn up and its political basis changed.

* **FULL GRANTS FOR ALL STUDENTS**; for the abolition of discretionary awards, discrimination against married women, and the means test.

* **£100 NOW (1962 level) ON THE GRANT. AUTOMATIC DIRECT INCREASES IN GRANT TIED TO ANY INCREASE IN THE COST OF LIVING.**

* **NO TO LOAN-FINANCING OF RESIDENCE AND SELF-FINANCING OF CATERING.**

James Clynes

Twenty four building workers are now facing trial on charges of assault, intimidation, damage to property, and conspiracy, arising from incidents said by the police to have taken place in Shrewsbury in the course of picketing during last year's building strike.

These charges are farcical. Many of them, for instance, refer to picketing which took place on the site at Telford, yet the police detained nobody at the time and made no charges at all on that day. They even escorted the pickets to two further sites after the action at Telford.

When the men were finally charged, the police found it necessary to use a device which is often used to force a confession from a detainee: the conspiracy makeweight. The usual procedure here is for the police to drop the conspiracy charge—which can mean anything that the courts want it to mean, and carries heavy penalties—in return for a confession. The building workers refused to do this.

They are now being tried, six months after the event, mainly on the basis of photographic evidence collected during the strike by Special Branch and police. Needless to say the police do not seem to be taking any action against the site agent who on one site threatened the pickets with a shotgun on that day in Shrewsbury last September.

INTIMIDATION

The way the 24 men have been treated since

reasonably hope to pick off individual sections one by one; what *could* wreck its plans would be if workers in struggle were to popularise and extend the kind of picketing tactics that were so effective in the miners' strike. It therefore wants to test out the working class response to State intimidation before moving in a really big way.

It was in this atmosphere that the building employers decided to offer the Government a test case with the Shrewsbury 24. This dovetailed neatly with their own need for striking a decisive blow at the rank and file of UCATT and the T&G in their counter-offensive to return the lump. Thus it is that the employers and police have cobbled up these charges many months after the case had been dropped by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

DEFENCE

Of course, militants and revolutionaries must be defended against the State regardless of whether they are guilty of the charges or not. The working class has the right to take any action against capital that it feels is necessary to further its own interests.

But in a case with such 'irregularities', one would also have expected the union bureaucracy to conduct some kind of campaign on the issue. But no. The T&G and UCATT leaderships have scabbed on the men. Originally the unions offered them lawyers, but a week before their first hearing on 15 March, when thousands of dockers, steelworkers and

Below : OLIVER MacDONALD looks at def

The State Pro

On the morning of Thursday, 15 March, motorists in the West Midlands had what for most of them must have been a new experience. Within a twenty mile radius of the small town of Shrewsbury they found themselves confronted by police road blocks. Anyone trying to escape to this tranquil haven from the big cities of the West Midlands, torn by bitter class conflict, could have found himself stopped as many as five or six times by police and then confronted by no less than a thousand cops surrounding the court house in the town centre. The reason for this massive show of strength was the trial of 24 building workers, brought to court by the Director of Public Prosecutions for carrying out union policy by organising flying pickets during the building workers' strike last year.

The next day, one of the most authoritative journals of big capital, the *Economist*, appeared with a main editorial which made the following points: those who "have struck against the public", as the *Economist* put it, should "lose very heavily in jobs and money and their union's status. This will be in addition to court action against any union committing an offence against the counter-inflation bill. Incomes policy will only succeed if the authorities pick the right moment and the right strike in which to make these very 'provocative' move. It might well be wise to pick them early."

SERIES OF INCIDENTS

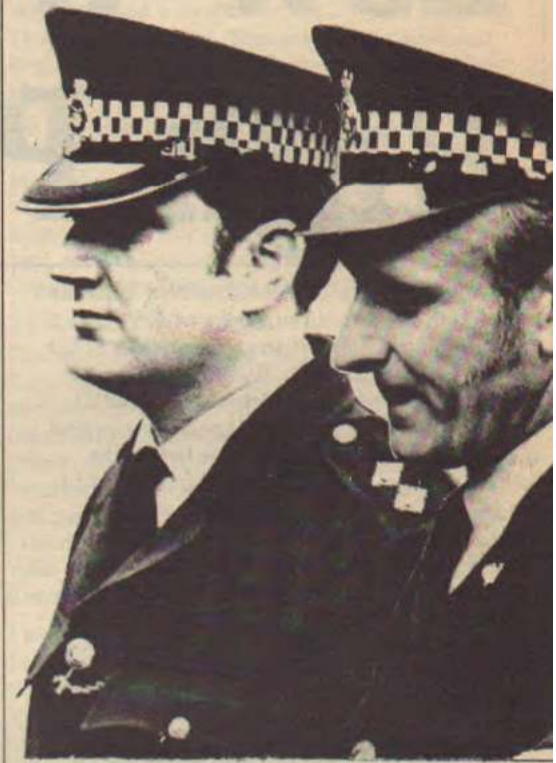
The attack on the Shrewsbury building workers is just one of a series of incidents in which the repressive forces of the state have begun to bare their teeth. In recent weeks, a new name has begun to appear in press reports: the Special Patrol Group (SPG). Organised in 1965 this organisation is designed to fill a crucial gap in the bourgeoisie's repressive apparatus: between the regular police which would be unable to deal with an increasingly combative working class movement, and the army which has sufficient means of violence, but which could provoke a revolutionary response from the working class. The SPG is small, highly mobile, trained in all the necessary military techniques of the army, and at the same time able to appear as just another part of the police. It was introduced to the world with the gunning down of two Pakistani workers at the Indian High Commission a few weeks ago, and was given another publicity boost by being presented as the heroic discoverer of the bomb at Scotland Yard. Since then it has been seen in action against the pickets at St. Thomas's Hospital building site in London.

Such attacks on picket lines have so far been carried out only in a selective way. At the same time, since the freeing of the five the Government has not used the enormous repressive powers written into the statute book with the passing of the Industrial Relations Act. On paper, the government could have intervened to use the Act against every strike so far against the pay laws. The fact that it has not done so demonstrates one crucial lesson which has been learnt over the last year: that the events in the class struggle decide the fate of Parliamentary legislation, and not the other way round. Unable to inflict any serious defeat upon the working class, the government was forced to pull the Industrial Relations Act out of the limelight for fear of an escalation of the working class offensive to smash the Act.

But the Government's retreat from use of the Act does not mean it has abandoned repression. The legal system as a whole provides numerous legal formulas to justify any repressive measures that might be required to pursue the capitalist offensive against the working class. It did not require the Industrial Relations Act to find a legal pretext for charging the Shrewsbury building workers. The armies of government lawyers simply fished around in their libraries till they discovered something suitable dating from 1875 which they could throw at the building workers.

PRINCIPLES OF LAW?

The Government also has another enormous advantage in its efforts to defeat the working class. And this is the widespread belief that the police and the courts do operate according to some principles of law and that the forces of repression simply enforce these principles in an 'impartial' way. The conclusion that flows from such an argument is that provided you do



Inspector Meynell (left) in charge of Numb to PC George Burrows (centre) and PC Stan Hussein and Mohammed Hussein. (Photo: ...)

Shrewsbury - A Taste of Things to Come

From : ALF JENNING

the end of the strike is itself a nightmarish piece of police intimidation. The police first laid charges in November. At the time, some of the men were told by police that they would 'get life' for damage and assault, others that 'their charge sheet would be the same as the Kray twins - demanding money with menaces' (this was for collecting money during the strike).

But within three weeks, the charges were dropped by the Director of Public Prosecutions. The men thought this was the end of the affair. Yet in mid-February, the police again rounded up a number of the men, most of whom live in towns in North Wales, took them to Shrewsbury prison under full security guard, and the following day there were charges once again. What explains this treatment?

TEST CASE

Mid-February was also the period when the Government announced its intention to toughen up the laws on picketing. At the same time the creation of a special mobile anti-picket police squad was given publicity. In the absence of a united struggle against the pay laws by the trade unions, the Government can

building workers were to down tools in solidarity, the offer was withdrawn. The workers were told that a one-day stoppage on the day would do "a great disservice to the union".

Clearly the unions hoped that the men would admit to the charges, thus preserving the 'respectability' of the unions and freeing them from the stigma of 'conspiracy'. Maybe the bureaucracy even thought they could get concessions from the bosses by stabbing the men in the back in this way. As it is, the action committee has now had to employ its own lawyers, and this makes financial support vital.

The Shrewsbury 24 must not be regarded as an 'isolated case'. The fight to get the charges dropped is part of the same fight as that against the Industrial Relations Act. All bodies of the labour movement must take up this case as part of the struggle to defeat the legal offensive of the State. Those workers who have already made their solidarity clear must do so again on 25 April when the men go for committal hearing again; and rank and file organisations like Charter and the LCDTU can and must play a vital role in organising to spread the kind of campaign needed to defeat the law.



1,000 uniformed police brought Shrewsbury almost to a halt as building workers went to court.

not "provoke the law", all will be well and repression will not take place. This view has continually been expressed on some sections of the British Left in interpretations of what is happening in the North of Ireland for example. People get the idea that if only the Catholic workers had stayed with 'the Law' instead of turning to violence they would not be facing military repression now.

Thus a paper called *The Militant* recently had a front page headline which read: "Terrorism Leads to Repression". This statement is nonsense, either as a description of what happened in Ireland or as a general statement about repression. In Ireland what led to repression, the brutalities of the RUC, the violence of the British army against the Irish masses, the torture and internment camps was not 'terrorism'. It was a mass movement for civil rights and for Irish self-determination. The people who want to convince us that the army has stepped in to deal with terrorism are the British ruling class.

LEGALISTIC CRETINISM

Secondly, such statements breed precisely the kind of legalist cretinism which represents a key danger for the labour movement today. It suggests that repression comes from incorrect actions by the vanguard: that if 'terrorist' actions were not made then there would be no 'excuse' for repression. The consequence of such middle class notions is for militants to respond to victimisations or repression by wondering whether the victims of repression might not after all have done something wrong or acted 'excessively', thus provoking the repression.

Such fumbling must be rooted out of the socialist movement. The facts of the class struggle provide the 'excuses' for repression, and if necessary the capitalist class will manufacture the necessary embellishments to the facts to suit its purpose.

In the same way, it is necessary to combat the arguments of Feather and Co. that "militant



of the strike movement against police violence

prepares for War



Unit, Special Patrol Group, who issued revolvers
Tonley (far right) who shot and killed Basharat
(Out)

difficult tasks is to get the maximum value of it without having the bluff called."

This was exactly the tactic which the police tried during last year's miners' strike, by staging a show of strength in front of the pickets, hoping that their bluff would not be called by the workers. But at Saltley in Birmingham when the police tried this tactic outside the coal depot, workers from many different factories all over Birmingham struck and joined the picket lines, thus calling the police bluff and forcing the closure of the depot.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION

The Government is at present walking a tight-rope. The economic needs of British capitalism demand a quick and crushing victory over the working class, but at present the labour movement is too strong for the government to risk a full scale confrontation. The Government is trying to overcome these conflicting needs through its wage control laws. Under the cover of these laws it hopes to be able to force defeats on the working class, wearing down workers' resistance by beating down one individual section after another.

The big question worrying Heath is whether a section of workers like the miners with really strong economic power will face him with the terrible choice of capitulating to the miners' claim or trying to use repression against the miners such as would provoke a general strike.

To avoid this situation the government is trying to influence the miners by baring its teeth against economically weaker sections of the class like the hospital workers. Then if the miners do not come out the police and court actions against the hospital pickets will be repeated and stepped up in an effort to browbeat the working class into submission.

THE RESPONSE

The experiences of Saltley and the freeing of the five provide two essential lessons for combatting state violence. An attack on one picket line must be seen for what it is: part and parcel of the whole offensive against working people, and the whole working class in the area should be mobilised to down tools and man the picket.

Any imprisonment of workers in struggle must be fought to a finish through the kind of strike movement seen at the time of the freeing of the five.

A campaign should be launched within the unions to make these basic matters of principle for trade union action. At the same time, the labour movement must demand the disbanding of the special patrol groups and no interference of any kind by the police against pickets.

But these demands must be backed up with solid organisation in defence of workers in struggle. For the State has no sacred right to a monopoly of the use of force. If the police try to repeat the bullyboy tactics used against the Fine Tubes picketers in Plymouth and at the St. Thomas's Hospital site, then trade unionists must demand that their unions provide them with the necessary means for resistance and self-defence. If the police attack with truncheons, then why should workers not be similarly armed to defeat such police attacks. The police are the mailed fist of the capitalist class; the pickets must become the impregnable shield for the workers in their struggle. Without this defensive force it will be extremely difficult to hold the line at any point for enough time to prepare a working class counter-attack.

All over the country at different points the fight is being waged on the picket lines. Massive solidarity must not be left to ad hoc initiatives and spontaneous movements. The demand should be raised for trades councils to create action committees to co-ordinate the defence of picket lines. Since the need can arise for such action in a matter of hours it is essential that such committees should comprise delegates from all the factories and work places — not just branch officials. The demand should be raised immediately for the setting up of such bodies, and if the trades councils or main unions in the area will not take the initiative then rank and file militants must take it themselves. The organisation behind the police flying squads requires organisation behind the workers' flying squads.

Nixon shows his contempt for Vietnam ceasefire

On 27 January, 1973, the United States was finally forced to sign the Paris peace agreements. The two major stipulations of that agreement were that the Americans were to withdraw all their troops within 60 days, and that they were to respect the national sovereignty of the Vietnamese people.

Within the last two weeks, Nixon has exposed to the whole world his contempt for these stipulations. On 15 March, alleging North Vietnamese violations, he made a statement generally interpreted as a threat to recommence the bombing: "I would only suggest that in the light of my actions over the last four years, North Vietnam should not lightly disregard such expressions of concern from here." On 25 March, three days before the scheduled date, he announced that he would refuse to withdraw the remaining troops until the American prisoners in Laos were released as well — a clear violation of article 5 of the peace treaty on the basis of a demand never conceded by the Vietnamese.

By JAMES REBELL

In addition the Americans have refused to dismantle their bases (violation of article 6) and have disguised their military councillors as "civilians" (violation of article 5). They have not fulfilled their agreement to withdraw mines from North Vietnamese ports (violation of article 2) and have pursued their bombardment of Laos and Cambodia (violation of article 20 and article 2 of the Laos agreements).

SAIGON

As for Saigon, Thieu has flagrantly violated articles 8 and 11 guaranteeing democratic liberties (freedom of the press, freedom of movement); carried out thousands of violations of the military ceasefire (articles 2 and 3); and has refused to honour the agreements concerning the functioning of the control commission and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam (PRG) and North Vietnamese delegations (chapter 6). Four military representatives of the PRG were killed by Saigon troops shortly before the International Conference in February!

Most menacing of all, Thieu has refused to enter into discussions with the PRG about the release of the estimated 300,000 civilians illegally detained and tortured in South Vietnamese jails (violation of chapter 3, article 8). Political prisoners are being reclassified as civilian prisoners, and all are being publicly threatened with extermination; hundreds, perhaps thousands, have disappeared and possibly been killed since the agreement was signed. As in the cases of the military violations, the finger of the United States is the one on the trigger, for the finances, "advisors", and even the "tiger cages" for the prisons are all provided by the Americans.

In addition to the violations of the peace treaty one must add: the maintenance of over 10,000 "civilian" personnel in South Vietnam, responsible for maintenance of the computers, planes, communications of the South Vietnamese army; the massive amounts of military aid which continue to pour into South Vietnam (over 400 planes, worth billions of dollars, since October); maintenance of 54,000 troops in Thailand, 60,000 in the 7th Fleet, a total of 177,000 in the area, etc., etc. Only one conclusion can be drawn from these facts: **NIXON AND THIEU HAVE NO INTENTION OF ABIDING BY THE PEACE TREATY; NIXON CONTINUES TO SUPPORT THIEU TO MAINTAIN THE HOLD OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM IN INDOCHINA.**

THE CITIES

To combat the immense resources of the Americans and the repressive machinery of their Vietnamese lackeys, the liberation forces have their army and the support of the immense ma-



Above: armed supporters of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam

majority of the people of Indochina. In Laos, the peace treaty is more favourable to the Pathet Lao than was the treaty in South Vietnam for the NLF; in Cambodia, the fall of the capital city Phnom Penh is only a matter of time.

In South Vietnam, the next stage will be the return to political action of the urban masses, now representing over half the total population. But in order to understand the difficulties faced by the revolutionaries in this area, one must take account of the massive social transformation caused by the Americans. These are described by Nguyen Khac Vien, editor of Vietnamese Studies, in an interview with *Jeune Afrique*, dated 10 February.

"Since his coming to power in 1969, Nixon's policies have been those of scorched earth and an excessive bombardment of rural regions. As a result, the entire rural population was obliged to flee to the towns. Millions of peasants no longer have any work, any jobs. Eligible men must enlist in the army or the police; the women are obliged to become prostitutes. There are now millions of people dependent on American aid, and that is one of the greatest difficulties. The soldiers don't want to fight but they don't have any other way to survive because the Americans have destroyed everything. The army, the functionaries, the police in Saigon and their families comprise 5 or 6 million people out of 17 million inhabitants.

"Along with the peace, I think there will be a thaw. People who haven't dared to talk, who haven't dared to protest, first of all in the general public, later in the army and even in the police, will begin to move... We think therefore that there will be an important political struggle against the Thieu regime. Within the Thieu government, the most reactionary and pro-American elements will try to launch a bloody repression — that's for certain. But once again there are the revolutionary armed forces on the scene. That will make them stop and think." (Our emphasis). The situation of dual power could not be more clearly stated.

SOLIDARITY

Now more than ever, it is necessary for the solidarity movement to fight against any relaxation of activity in defence of the Indochinese Revolution. The international mass mobilisation against the American bombings in December '72 exposed the errors of those who believe that demonstrations have no effect. At the same time, the actions of dockers and other sections of workers in Australia, Italy, and Denmark show the possibilities of solidarity which doesn't confine itself to "peace" and "parliamentary roads".

In Britain, both the Indochina Solidarity Campaign (ISC) and the British Campaign for Peace in Vietnam (BCPV) support the demand of North Vietnam and the PRG: for the release of prisoners in South Vietnam; for the defense of democratic liberties guaranteed in the peace treaty; for the British Government to recognise the PRG and North Vietnam. The IMG supports the call of the ISC for joint actions on these demands by all individuals and organisations, in particular the BCPV and the CP. The decision of the Communist Party Student Commission to support the national demonstration on Saturday, May 5, called by the ISC is a positive step towards united activity.

ATTENTION!

The Red Mole 62, we are soon to go
on be changing our name to Red Star.
The first issue of Red Star is May Day.

"Fascism is an attempt to build a mass movement that will destroy working-class organisation"

Not a book to read, but to raid for information. Embedded in the considerable detail amassed in this academic study of the British Union of Fascists of 1932-40 are several key pointers to the practical lessons which anti-fascists today must learn about their opponents on the extreme right. However it requires effort to extract them, since the only concern of the author is to vindicate the "institutional pluralism" of British society, which rescued our "civil" democracy from Mosleyite agitation.

Amid the current widespread chatter about the Tories "drifting towards a corporate state", this book may remind readers of the actual relationship between fascist movements and the capitalist state. Benewick traces the development of the main precursor of the BUF, the "British Fascisti", founded in 1923. They briefly kidnapped Harry Pollitt in 1925 and sought semi-military mobilisations "against communism", to protect the state even under the detested Macdonald Labour Government. The specific issue which split and destroyed their organisation was the question of co-operation with the government-approved Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies to defeat the 1926 General Strike (i.e. the need for continuing separate defence mechanisms for capitalism).

FIRST LESSON

The first lesson from these pages of history is that fascism is an attempt to build a mass movement that will destroy working-class organisation and ultimately subjugate the class through a new "corporate" state-structure - a phenomenon quite distinct from repressive tendencies on the part of an established capitalist state

The Fascist Movement in Britain, by Robert Benewick (Allen Lane/Penguin Press £1-60p) / Richard Neubauer

using its traditional forces.

Secondly the book shows the understanding of the BUF that the organised working-class, as their principal physical obstacle to success, required special attention in agitational work. In mid-1936, a rally was attempted at Tonyandy involving distribution of a pamphlet called *The Miners' Only Hope* and in the autumn of the same year the BUF were sued for libel by the executive of the AEU over a booklet *Fascism and the Trade Unions*, which demagogically attacked the privileges of union bureaucrats. Part of the fascist propaganda for a corporate state system included a "Charter of Labour" concerning working conditions and employee benefits. That these efforts attracted little success owed much to the higher political awareness of sections of the working-class than is often to be found today. The growing trade-union work of various modern fascist groupings demands serious attention, in the light of this history.

FASCIST IDEOLOGY

On the question of fascist ideology, Benewick refers to the BUF's emphasis on harnessing the nationalist traditions of British imperialism, but without relating this to the economic de-

terioration of that imperialism. He also fails to link this development to the BUF's vicious anti-semitism, which he documents competently, though merely commenting that "the enemies of fascism made strange bedfellows... it blamed pacifists, liberals, Jews, Communists, internationalists, capitalists, financiers, the British press and unscrupulous propagandists."

The author fails to see that racism, as a doctrine for a national entity struggling to control the economic markets of other races and nations, frequently finds its target in a people fashioned by a tragic history as a universal symbol of (rival) commerce, pre-dating the advent of capitalism. Hence the confusion of hostile images entertained by the fascist advocates of British nationalism; a mixture of older anti-semitic themes with the particular bogeys of contemporary capitalism - bolshevism and international finance. Such quaint amalgamations litter the pages of NF literature in Britain today just as they motivated the Mosleyites in the 30's.

Alas the real causes of the BUF's lack of success as a movement are under-estimated badly in this book, the space being turned over to a consideration of the subsequent Public Order Act, 1936. A better account of the anti-fascist mobilisations of the working-class in the streets is recorded in the stalinist Phil Piratin's book *Our Flag Stays Red*, published in 1948. If nothing else however, the liberal Benewick has unearthed fragments of the story of fascism in Britain which the revolutionary of 1973 should bear in mind as he witnesses the evolution of the extreme right-wing in our own time.

WHAT IS TO BE SUNG

Songs of Revolutionary Struggle (available from P. Cooper c/o 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1. - 15p)

In countries with a long-standing revolutionary tradition like France, one of the ways in which the continuity and development of the struggle is emphasised is through the mass singing of international revolutionary songs, particularly on demonstrations and rallies. This really adds to their unity and militancy. In England, by contrast, there is neither a real revolutionary tradition, nor a mass singing tradition, which makes demonstrations into rather depressing tramps round London, punctuated by sporadic slogan-shouting.

This songbook tries to go some way towards helping to overcome this problem, with a wide if limited selection of songs from Europe, the United States, Ireland and England. These songs reflect mainly the class struggles in these countries in the period from the 1890s to the Spanish Civil War, although the Irish songs are those of the national liberation struggle from the 1798 uprising to the present day.

What characterises these songs is that they are *revolutionary* songs, unlike most English working class songs (despite their more 'proletarian' subject matter). 'The Dirty Blackleg Miner', for example, is basically just a trade union song. Even 'The Red Flag' was written by an Irishman, Jim Connell. As for the songs that do exist on the revolutionary left, they largely reflect its historical isolation in their sectarian nature, are not songs of struggle, and have wisely been omitted from this selection.

What this songbook lacks, however, are any more recent songs. It is not enough to revive old traditions. We need new songs which take up the issues and struggles which have come to the forefront in the last few years; songs of women's liberation, about the NLF, about the Freeing of the Five, etc. Still, these are more likely to be forthcoming once the beginnings of a revolutionary singing tradition are established, for which the appearance of this songbook should be especially valuable.

James Larter

5 March 1973

Dear Red Mole,

Bob Purdie started off on a false premise in the debate on Ireland. He started off by saying that the IMG had a lot in common with the Militant. His attitude was that the Militant was sincere, and that disagreement was only about strategy and tactics. But is the Militant sincere? At the meeting all they showed was an arrogant display of British chauvinism and racialism. Comrade Purdie made a big concession by treating them in a friendly and comradely spirit.

Haddon of the Militant didn't say that his Protestant neighbour who was shot by Republicans had been found with another Protestant, both armed, in the Catholic Unity Flats. What does Haddon expect Irish workers to do? Turn the other cheek? Or say, 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do'? No wonder Irish workers didn't want Haddon in their neighbourhood either, and kicked him out! Why didn't Haddon explain all this to the meeting? It was very dishonest of him not to tell the audience.

Ernie Roberts was not a neutral chairman. Why did the IMG not expose the partiality of the chairman? His union, the AUEW, has taken no action against the fascist politics of many of its members in Belfast.

Taaffe said on the platform that the Militant support the right of Irish workers to defend their own neighbourhoods. But Irish workers in London know that Taaffe in 1970 attacked the Provisionals in Ballymacarratt and Ardoyne for defending their neighbourhoods. Even the British Army admitted at that time that Catholics were under attack.

The Militant is really trying to cover up for the British loyalists, under the pretence of standing for working-class unity. In fact they really condemn Irish workers for defending themselves. But it is a fact that the Provisional IRA has so far proved the most reliable weapon of the workers in Northern Ireland. All the Militant talk about a trade union defence force is simply pie in the sky. The northern Ireland workers are divided by British imperialism. The trade unions are completely divided. Many of them reek of British chauvinism. Let the Militant answer this - how can there be any kind of working class unity without unity in action against British imperialism?

A recent issue of the Militant had a main article headed 'Terrorism Leads to Repression'. What a liberal, cowardly, pacifist headline! At least one of their Irish members refused to sell that issue. The Militant line goes all the way with the attempt by fascist organisations such as the UDA and UVF to portray themselves as 'working-class'.

Why did the IMG not attack the Militant for supporting the Northern Ireland Labour Party? This party supports the domination of northern Ireland by British imperialism, it is a typical chauvinist 'labour' party. At the same time as Militant was telling Irish



workers to join the NILP, one of the NILP leaders, David Bleakley, was in the Stormont government that brought in internment. How does Militant explain that away?

Taaffe boasted that the Militant have good relations with some Officials in Belfast. Well, that's nothing to boast about. Both organisations make concessions to British imperialism. It is well known that the Officials left the Irish workers disarmed when the Orangemen launched their pogrom in 1969.

One Militant supporter sneered at the IMG from the floor for being 'Provo-Trots'. Perhaps the British chauvinists in Marx's day sneered at Marx for being a 'Fenian-lover'! Anyway, how does Taaffe as a Trotskyist explain his praise for the Officials after their newspaper the United Irishman launched a vicious slander against 'carpet-bagging Trotskyists'? The Officials in Britain and Derry had a thousand times more honour than Taaffe when they refused to sell that issue of their own newspaper.

It is all very well to have a debate in London in front of a 95% British audience, and nearly all petty-bourgeois too, important as it is. But the matter should be taken further. We suggest that the IMG invites the Militant to a second round of the debate to be held in Ballymurphy, Belfast, where the audience would be 100% workers. We dare Taaffe and Haddon to repeat their remarks there! Let us see whether the Militant has the guts to repeat their lies and distortions in a debate in Belfast where it really counts, and where the workers are in action! A venue could be arranged.

If it was not for groups like the IMG and the PD, the ideas not only of Marxism but of any kind of socialism would have been completely discredited among Belfast workers. The Militant and the other British chauvinist groups who are trying to pick up crumbs from the table in Ireland do their best to disgrace the name of socialism. And they dare to hide behind James Connolly!

Engels must have had the Militant in mind when he wrote that after the domination of Ireland by the British aristocracy and the British bourgeoisie, there were some British trade unionists who expected to see

the domination of Ireland by British workers! (letter to Kautsky, 12 September 1882).

The Militant have proved themselves in Ireland to stand four-square in the old chauvinist tradition of the British left. Long ago Engels pointed out: 'Anglo-Saxon sectarianism prevails in the labour movement too. The Social-Democratic Federation, just like the German Socialist Workers' Party, has managed to transform our theory into the rigid dogma of an orthodox sect; it is narrow-mindedly exclusive and thanks to Hyndman has a thoroughly rotten tradition in international politics...' (letter to Sorge, 10 November 1894). The same imperialistic spirit dominated the overwhelming majority of the British left at the outset of the First-World War, and the CPGB carried out the same social-imperialist policy throughout World War Two. You belong to a fine tradition, Mr. Taaffe!

It is clear that the Militant will not offer any resistance to the rising tide of *chauvinism among British workers* which is being deliberately stirred up by the capitalists. Bernadette Devlin was nearly beaten up by London dockers when she went to offer them her support over the jailing of the Pentonville Five. Does the Militant deny that very many British workers are more in solidarity with their 'own' imperialists than with Irish workers in Belfast? What is the Militant doing to combat this?

Has the Militant made one serious effort to persuade London dockers to defend Irish workers in Belfast who have been put in concentration camps, tortured, thrown out of helicopters and murdered? Taaffe complained in the Militant that the Belfast dockers, who once had a record for militancy, were the last to come out in the recent dock strike. No wonder. According to people like Taaffe, Irish workers should come out to support British workers, but not the other way round.

This type of scabbing politics made it necessary for Connolly and Larkin to *break away* from the British labour movement and set up separate Irish organisations.

There is nothing Marxist about the Militant. Marx always used to test the socialism of British leftists by their attitude to Ireland. Over a hundred years ago Marx wrote:

'Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working-class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish workers he feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself. He cherishes religious, social and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude towards him is much the same as that of the 'poor whites' to the 'niggers' in the former slave states

of the U.S.A. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and the stupid tool of English rule in Ireland.

'This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organisation. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it.

'... it is the task of the International everywhere to put the conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground, and everywhere to side openly with Ireland. And it is the special task of the Central Council in London to awaken a consciousness in the English workers that for them the national emancipation of Ireland is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment but the first condition of their own social emancipation.' (Marx to Meyer and Vogt, 9 April 1870).

Everything Marx said here applies word for word to the war in Northern Ireland today. Does the Militant deny it? They cannot. Not only do they betray the Irish workers with their toadying to imperialism, they also betray the real interests of the British workers including the Protestant workers in the North. How shamefully they compare with Marx! When they accuse Irish workers of sectarianism, they should look to themselves. Anglo-Saxon sectarianism! It is the Militant who are full of the spirit of chauvinism.

Lenin spent years fighting this kind of social-imperialism. On his death-bed he made it clear that 'an abstract presentation of the question of nationalism in general is of no use at all. A distinction must necessarily be made between the nationalism of an oppressor nation and that of an oppressed nation...' (The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomization', December 1922).

Under a smoke-screen of words and phrases about socialism and internationalism, the Militant is giving the British army and the Orange fascists a clean bill of health in the ranks of British workers. Their aim is to blunt any revolutionary awakening. We think that British socialists who are trying to become revolutionaries should ruthlessly expose them, instead of singing the Internationale with them. It is an insult to Irish workers and to the Internationale to regard these people as internationalists.

T. Haig R. Ascal

In the last issue we promised a full report of the IMG-Militant debate on Ireland. Since then, we have received this letter. Although we do not agree with every dot and comma, in general it sums up our view of the Militant's position on Ireland.

The streets of French cities in recent weeks have seen massive demonstrations by youth against the tightening up of the conscription laws. The new laws were approved by the legislature in June 1970 and brought into force on 1 January this year. They abolish the right to exemption from conscription for anyone enrolled in a lycee (high school) or institute of higher education.

The French bourgeoisie hope that military discipline, drummed into the youth at a time when they are becoming more conscious critics of bourgeois society, will limit the growing radicalisation among students. This has also been the object of the Belgian government, which in February had to face demonstrations of around 180,000 youth throughout the cities of Belgium in response to an attempt to abolish exemption from conscription.

In France too this attempt to strengthen bourgeois order has been strongly challenged. On 22 March, after the banning of a demonstration called by the 'Struggle Committees' of the schools movement, 80,000 demonstrators took to the streets in Paris alone.

COMMUNIST PARTY

The most significant outcome of the attempt to ban the demonstration and the response of the 'Struggle Committees' to it, was that the French Communist Party was forced to change its opposition to the demonstration of the 22nd and instead endorse it.

The Stalinists have a record of hampering and dividing the fight against these measures. At the time the laws were passed their deputies abstained on the grounds that they contained a 'positive' clause: the reduction of the term of national service to twelve months. When the laws came into force at the beginning of this year, the role of the CP was to try to pull back attempts to take action and divert the youth into waiting for the March elections, after which, they said, the measures would be repealed by the 'Union de la Gauche' (the electoral coalition of the CP and Socialist Party, in the event defeated at the polls by the Gaullists).

Some days before the 22nd, when it became clear that the initiatives of the Struggle Committees had wide support, the CP announced a protest meeting to be held on the 21st with youth and trade union organisations of the CP and SP. This move was clearly intended to limit the movement and take the initiative away from the revolutionary organisations. But after the ban was announced on the 21st, and it became clear that the demonstration would not be halted, the CP had to call on its supporters to join the 22nd demonstration.

Jane Walsh reports on

"SPRING MANOEUVRES" IN PARIS



above: school students protest against new laws

The French Trotskyists have fought to extend the struggle against the laws. The Ligue Communiste (French section of the Fourth International) has campaigned for the exemptions to be re-established and extended to apprentices and young workers in training: and this has been taken up by the 'Struggle Committees' in the lycées as well as in the apprentice schools. The Ligue has worked for and played a leading role in the organisation of these committees, which are elected in the lycées by students on strike, and of which there are 40 in Paris alone. Against the CP's attempts to split the move-

ment and confine it within a reformist perspective of 'democratising the army', the Ligue sees that conscription is a class measure, which goes beyond the school and affects millions in the working class. The struggle against conscription has given an important demonstration that revolutionary forces can be organised independently of the control of the Stalinists—and shown the opportunist way in which the PCF adapted under the pressure of the mass movement. Such experiences are essential if the masses as a whole are to be educated in a spirit of distrust of the reformist leaders and increased confidence in their own initiatives.

Irish Trotskyist Conference

On 3/4 March the Revolutionary Marxist Group (Irish supporters of the Fourth International) held its second national conference in Dublin. Since its founding conference in February of last year, the RMG has established branches outside Dublin; in Belfast, and in Limerick, the heart of the Shannon industrial complex. Its national paper, *The Plough*, and its theoretical journal, *The Marxist Review* have, in the first year of the group's existence, made important contributions to the analysis of the problems facing the Irish revolutionary movement, and to the development of a revolutionary perspective for all of Ireland.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The tasks of a revolutionary group in Ireland, and the primary orientation in its strategy, are determined by the needs of the objective situation in Irish society north and south. The objective situation in Ireland is dominated by the national question, the struggle against British imperialism in the six counties and against the pro-imperialist national bourgeoisie in the South. The recognition of the fundamental importance of the national question in a revolutionary strategy for Ireland distinguishes the RMG from the other major groups on the Irish left. Against the crude workerism of the SWM (Irish counterpart to the IS) and the Lambertist LWR (who see the national struggle as a hindrance to the pure class struggle) the RMG sees the national question as an integral part of the class struggle, the struggle for Permanent Revolution in all of Ireland.

From the RMG's attitude to the national question flows its approach to Republicanism, the political ideology of the anti-imperialist struggle, and to the Republican Movement. Republicanism is, of course, a petit-bourgeois ideology, which must be transcended in the struggle for a workers' republic in Ireland. Republicanism arose in Ireland as the ideology of the struggle for "bourgeois independence". But the Irish national bourgeoisie are no longer capable of playing a progressive or revolutionary role and, as James Connolly said, "the Irish working class alone remains as the incorruptible inheritor of the fight for Irish freedom". It is this same working class which is the mass base of the Republican Movement, which is in the forefront of the struggle for national liberation.

The significance of this fact is completely missed by the erstwhile pillars of the International Committee, the Lambertists and the British SLL, who refer to the IRA as middle-class terrorists. The task posed for itself by the RMG at its second conference, in relation to the Republican Movement, was one of serious analysis and fraternal dialogue, realising that the only way forward for the Irish struggle lies in the development of a revolutionary marxist perspective in the anti-imperialist struggle. The struggle for a socialist republic in Ireland will not be advanced by attempting to bypass the national struggle or the Republican Movement.

CATHOLIC CHURCH

The backward nature of many of the institutions of Irish society, especially the dominance and the reactionary role of the Catholic Church, give an increased dynamic to the struggles of other oppressed layers of Irish society. This is especially true of the struggle among women and students. Thus an important part of the conference was that which dealt with perspectives for struggle in those layers. This part of the conference was open, and was well attended by contacts and invited members of the Republican Movement. With a young, confident and politically educated membership, the Revolutionary Marxist Group will continue to make an important contribution to the development of a revolutionary perspective and a marxist revolutionary party in Ireland.

NEW PRE-REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS IN THE ARGENTINE

The sweeping Peronist victory in the March presidential elections opens a new period in the pre-revolutionary crisis in Argentina. For months it had been extremely doubtful whether the military would allow the elections to take place within the forms of bourgeois democracy. The fact that they have done so by no means implies an abdication of their counter-revolutionary role—though the precise course they will take is still uncertain.

Campora and Peron, the new fox and the old, must now form a government. Yet to do so, like any possible bourgeois government in Argentina today, they need the support of the army, or at least its toleration.

STRENGTH

Large sections of the Argentinian working class undoubtedly see the election result as an important victory. But such a view is in conflict with the experience of past struggles and of those in prospect. The Argentinian workers face massive and bitter struggles in pursuit of the demands which they have piled up over the years of the military dictatorship. The strength the working class has acquired, and on which it will be forced to draw, does not lie with Peron and the CGT trade union bureaucracy; it lies in the traditions of militant, independent struggle such as it has waged against the military dictatorship in the recent years, with insurrectional strike movements and armed struggle against the violence of the bourgeoisie.

If the Argentinian bourgeoisie has made any retreats, this has been forced on them by the working class. After two years of still more vicious repression had failed to crush the combativity which produced the Cordoba uprising of 1969, a change of strategy was forced on the military dictatorship. General Lanusse took office as president in April 1971

with the mission of 'stabilising' the crisis facing the ruling class. A necessary condition of this was the attempt to restore 'constitutional' rule, and a 'Great National Agreement' was therefore made with the bourgeois political parties, to hold elections in March 1973.

But throughout the two years of the Lanusse operation, the pre-revolutionary crisis has deepened, bringing Argentina to the brink of civil war. Real wages have again been forced down, and the workers have responded with more strikes, even defending these against the army. The repression against the revolutionaries has been intensified, but they have not been politically isolated from the working class, rather there have been political strikes against the repression (e.g. the response to the Trelew massacre).

From mid-1972 on Lanusse was being forced to play the most desperate card from the point of view of the bourgeoisie: allowing Peron to run a candidate, to re-visit the country, even finally to win the elections. The immediate outcome of the 'stabilisation' process is still one of great instability for the bourgeoisie.

ACCORD

Because of the divisions in the bourgeois camp as well as the pressures on Peron from his working class support, no open agreement was reached between Peron and the army in the pre-election period. But some kind of accord is important to both parties. The change in their public positions during the election campaign (a year ago Peron was making public overtures to the military; now Campora has been forced in election meetings to shout 'Long live the armed struggle!') does not hide the fact that Peron cannot govern without the army. The army, for its part, is deeply divided in its attitude to the Peronists; but no section

of it could now launch a coup without unleashing a civil war in which at this point in time the opposing side would be in a very strong and confident position.

It is, then, likely that the Argentinian working class is to be faced with a new and pernicious variant of 'military reformist' government—in a country where the contradictions of capitalism do not allow for much in the way of reforms. The upsurge of the Argentinian workers which this election must open up will not soon be checked, and revolutionaries will have to intensify their efforts to strengthen the independent fighting ability of the working class against the deals with the military now being prepared in the Peronist camp.



INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP

(British Section of the Fourth International)

182 Pentonville Road
London N.1.

I would like more information about the IMG and its activities.

NAME

ADDRESS

BELFAST 10 DEFENCE COMMITTEE

Last Sunday in London, a committee was formed representing most Irish organisations, and British left groups in London. Known as the Belfast Ten Defence Committee, the object of the committee is to organise the defence, in the political, legal and welfare sense of the ten Irish prisoners removed at gun-point from a plane at London Airport on the day of the London bombing.

Offers of help, money, etc. are urgently needed. Details from Maureen Maguire, 88, Roslyn Road, London N. 15.

The two recent Building Workers' Charter conferences (one in Birmingham on 10 March, the other in Scotland on 24 March) came at a vital stage in the struggle in the industry. The building workers' strike, which ended last September, was the last successful national strike. Now lessons have to be drawn in preparation for Stage II of the agreement signed then, which is due to be implemented in June. The non-appearance of Charter's newspaper during the strike has still not been satisfactorily explained. The excuse of being busy locally in the strike points to an extremely low priority for keeping the national organisation going at a time when it was desperately needed for a complete victory in the strike.

After the strike, militants were immediately plunged into battle against the employers' attempts to reintroduce lump labour on a grand scale. Centres of militancy like Birmingham saw the victimisation of militants like Pete Carter, new lump sites, and big new struggles. The reappearance of the lump, and the eternal nature of the fight against it, has raised once again the question of a permanent solution to the problem.

Finally, at Shrewsbury 24 building workers face charges, including conspiracy in six cases, for their role in the picketing during the strike — six months ago! This issue needs an overwhelming and united working class response. Six hundred workers, from Birmingham building sites, Shotton steelworkers and the Liverpool docks, demonstrated outside the court in Shrewsbury on 15 March. Part of that demonstration was mobilised by Charter. But the issues raised by this case need the widest airing possible, as a first step through the national building trade.

CONFERENCES

Approximately seven hundred and fifty people attended the Charter conference in Birmingham, with a further hundred and sixty delegates at the one in Glasgow. With such a

TWO STEPS FORWARD ONE STEP BACK

good attendance, it was vital to spell out a response on these issues. Militants should have been able to come away feeling that a plan of action had been hammered out which would enable them to overcome the problems they faced. In that light, far too much of the time was spent in beating chests and giving fine "we must struggle harder" speeches.

The only 'policy' to come out of the conferences was a policy statement passed, which was presented by the Charter Editorial Board members. This did contain some valuable points. It was agreed, for instance, to campaign for a compression of all the stages of the agreement to be implemented on 6 June (e.g. Stage III was to come into operation in September, 1973). One-day stoppages are to be called both in support of this (on 6 June) and to coincide with the introduction of Eric Heffer's Bill outlawing the lump (on 28 March).

SPLITTERS?

One thing that was a move in the wrong direction was the way some speakers responded to a leaflet put out by building workers belonging to the International Marxist Group. Again all the ludicrous charges of 'splitters' and 'wreckers' were levelled at the group, in both Birmingham and Glasgow. If Communist Party members in the rank and file leadership of Charter feel so threatened whenever criticism is raised, then we will be unable to move forward, learn from our mistakes, and discuss all of the options open to us in the struggle against the lump, low wages, the

Freeze and the Tory Government.

At both conferences members of the International Marxist Group spoke on the need to struggle against the lump in a way which can smash it permanently. But they also spoke on the need for building workers, through their trade unions, to build local conferences of trade unionists and other groups committed to a struggle against the Tory Government and its policies.

Clearly, then, the Charter conferences did not meet all the needs of workers in the trade, though they did offer some steps in the right direction. Building workers should use these opportunities to go back to their local areas to campaign on the issues of the claim, the lump, and the Shrewsbury workers. Already in South Yorkshire there are moves to organise a one-day stoppage on 25 April in solidarity with the Shrewsbury workers when they come up in court again. Actions like this are on the order of the day, if the Charter conference is to have any meaning at all.

Finally, the Charter Editorial Board is committed to discussing at its first meeting the ways in which a political campaign against the lump for Registration is to be implemented. Stoppages on 28 March and 6 June will be a real step forward, as will a real debate on how to struggle for Registration. But it is a great pity that more time was not spent on these issues in the conference reports of Lou Lewis and Pete Carter (reporting for the Editorial Board).

Paul Smith

EXTRA TIME FOR WHITELAW

Contd From Page One

On the three crucial issues it was to deal with — security, relations with the South, and power-sharing in the North — it becomes just a new part of the 'carrot and the big stick' policy. This is expressed by its vagueness on these issues.

On security, Britain remains in overall control. The RUC is left intact, the Special Powers Act is to be repealed; the Diplock Commission's recommendations are to be implemented — i.e. another Special Powers Act is to be brought in.

On the "Irish Dimension", the White Paper proposes that the Six Counties gerrymandered area shall remain part of the United Kingdom as long as the built-in sectarian programmed majority want it. However, the possibility is offered of setting up a Council of Ireland, with a hint that before this happens the Green Tories in the South must retreat from the claim to national unity, and that a major part of the responsibilities of the Council shall be the repression of Republicans North and South.

CARROTS

If the rest of the White Paper is vague, the section on power-sharing is elevated to a fine art. In one part, a mysterious figure called the Head of the Central Secretariat (the new Prime Minister?) appears once, and then vanishes thereafter from the pages of the White Paper. Like the grand-child being shown the shilling he'll get if he's a good boy, Faulkner is shown the job he will get if he is a good boy and it is then put back in Whitelaw's waistcoat pocket for fear someone else will see it.

The exact method of election of Heads of Department who will form the Executive is left vague, so that Gerry Fitt can see a glimpse of his promised land. The membership of the new assembly is to increase, to 80, as opposed to Stormont's 50 odd, and in an assembly with less power than Stormont members' salaries will be greater, so that every little rat-bag politician in the Six Counties can dream of the carrots

that await him if he'll help Willie put over the deal.

The race for these seats explains in small part the physical and mental gymnastics of the Orange-ultras in relation to the White Paper. Faulkner, who resigned rather than lose control of security, now accepts an Assembly in which the British Secretary remains as the overall Gauleiter. Paisley, who wanted total integration within the U.K., now flirts with U.D.I. Craig, who wanted U.D.I., now says that the White Paper is pushing them out of the U.K. Hull and Herron, who claim to lead the plebeian Protestants away from the fur-coated brigade of the Unionist Party, now lead their supporters in behind the most fur-coated of them all — Captain Orr. And Orr, who for a year has been angling for leadership of the Orange power-block, is caught, euphemistically speaking, with his pants down, in an impending divorce case, and decides that this is more financially promising than the leadership of this rabble.

The political explanation of all these gymnastics is the agonising dilemma of the choice between the Union with Britain, the only long-term guarantee of the Ascendancy, and the maintenance of the Ascendancy within Whitelaw's constraints.

PROMISES, PROMISES, PROMISES

Liberals, Civil Righters, Stalinists, etc., are promised their Bill of Rights alongside the proposal to continue internment and establish new tougher Special Courts.

The mass of the population are promised strong action to tackle crucial social issues such as jobs and housing, provided they learn to behave like Englishmen.

As the Falls Road housewife said to the British paratrooper who threatened to rape her, "promises, promises, promises. . ."

This vagueness is not accidental, and the explanation for it is simple. The original White Paper was intended to be imposed on the Six

Counties following the defeat of the IRA. The Sunday before the White Paper, in one 12 hour period, there were 37 armed attacks on British troops in Ireland.

The IRA has not been defeated in the time scale laid down for Whitelaw. This White Paper therefore is an attempt to buy time to achieve this task.

It would be wrong to assume from all this though that the promises will not have some effect. The experience of the promised O'Neill reforms of '68, the promised Callaghan reforms, the "Downing Street Declaration" of '69, is that sections of the Catholic population, particularly the Catholic middle class, egged on by the Church and the Green Tories in the South, will play on the fears and war-weariness of the Catholic population to "give the White Paper a chance".

SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

This will have an even greater effect on the potential supporters of the Irish struggle outside the Six Counties. What the solidarity movement in this country faces is a continuing period of swimming against the stream. This therefore increases the importance of work to build the Anti-Internment League sponsored conference on the role of British troops in Ireland, now planned to be held in London's Conway Hall on Saturday May 19th.

This will provide the solidarity movement with a central task, which will direct our energies onto the most sensitive flank of imperialism in relation to the Irish war — the increasing disenchantment in Britain with the Irish war and the growing war-weariness of the British population.

Meanwhile in Belfast, party politics are hotting up. After the promises of the Downing Street Declaration of 1969, we had the famous honeymoon period, when Catholics in the North were offering cups of tea to British troops. After the White Paper, things have gone even further, with even Republican girls inviting British soldiers to parties.

LECTURER VICTIMISED

From ROSA NORTH

On Wednesday, 14 March, the day of the NUS one-day strike in support of the grants campaign, the picket line at Northumberland College of Education was joined by the Senior Resident Tutor and lecturer in English, Steve Whitley. Two days after this open demonstration of support for the students, Whitley received a note from the College Principal, Miss Churchill. It informed him that she was "relieving him of all his responsibilities as Senior Resident Tutor from today", and that he had three months to quit his bungalow on the campus.

Whitley, a member of Newcastle IMG and NUT Rank and File, refused to accept this. A mass meeting of the Students Union on Monday, 19 March, voted to continue to recognise him as S.R.T. and to refuse to have any dealings with any 'replacements'.

By Thursday, Churchill had been forced to withdraw her arbitrary notice of dismissal. But she replaced this with his suspension as lecturer as well as S.R.T. Thus she raised the stakes and at the same time undermined legalistic arguments on constitutional lines.

OCCUPATION

Another mass meeting of the Students Union was held on Friday, 23 March, but a motion calling for strike action and a teach-in in the Union Building until his reinstatement was narrowly defeated. It was agreed, however, to allow "any members who feel strongly about the issue" to occupy the Administration Building for an hour on Friday and then for the day on Monday. However a further vote has now extended the occupation to Friday, the day the college closes.

Support from outside is now flooding in, with messages of solidarity from other students and a letter from teaching staff at York University supporting his reinstatement. NUS Vice-President Roger Haworth has also sent a message stating that: "We give you unconditional support in your action to gain his reinstatement and will do everything in our power to assist you in your struggle. In particular, we completely support your continued occupation of the College Administrative Offices."

This is especially important since the NUS called on all teaching staff to support the one-day strike. It is hoped that Steve Whitley will be allowed to outline his case at NUS Conference next week, and an emergency resolution will be tabled calling for the full backing of all students for the defence campaign.

On Tuesday night a meeting was also held in Newcastle to mobilise trade union support. Over 100 people attended, including the local NUPE convenor and representatives from the NUM, ASTMS, ATTI, T&G, NUT and Newcastle Trades Council. An ad hoc committee to fight for his reinstatement was set up from the meeting.

After the occupation, the next action planned is a picket of the Governors' meeting on 9 April which will review his suspension. This will be at 10am at the college.

Messages of support etc. should be sent to: Steve Faulkner, Chairman of Steve Whitley Defence Committee, 19 Levens Walk, Beacon Hill Estate, Cramlington, Northumberland.

CONFERENCE

THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT AND THE BRITISH ARMY IN IRELAND

Conway Hall Red Lion Square, (Holborn).
Saturday, 19th May 1973.

Details from Anti-Internment League,
88, Roslyn Road, London N.15.

What's On ?

FILMS FROM NORTH VIETNAM. Speaker: Steven Rose. Admission free. Thursday, 5 April, 8pm at Polytechnic of North London, Holloway Road, N.7. Called by Islington Indochina Solidarity Group.

READINGS IN STATE CAPITALISM: Main articles from the International Socialists/Fourth International debate on the class nature of the Soviet Union and the related questions of the nature of modern capitalism, strategy of revolutionary parties, etc. Includes Ernest Mandel's articles, 'The Inconsistencies of State Capitalism' and 'The Mystifications of State Capitalism'. Excellent value at 20p. Bulk orders of 10 or more copies available at discount rates of 20% prepaid, excluding postage. From IMG Publications, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

'WOMEN IN THE TRADE UNIONS': Merseyside IMG public meeting. Speaker: Chris Lenton. Weds. 11 April, 7.45pm in the Warrington Co-op Meeting Hall (Small Room).

WOUNDED KNEE: The Sioux Nation is at war again. Would anyone wishing to help please write to: Anglo-Dakota Solidarity Campaign, c/o Compendium Books, 240 Camden High Street, London N.W.1.

CEYLON SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN: Public Meeting to mark second anniversary of the JVP uprising, at Camden Studios, Camden St., London N.W.1., on Friday 6 April, at 7.30pm. Speakers: Tariq Ali (IMG), Ted Crawford (IS), Ernie Roberts (Asst. Sec., AUEW) and speaker from Ceylon.

Also PICKET next day, Saturday 7 April, from 12.30 to 2.30pm outside the Ceylon Tea Centre, Lower Regent St (near Piccadilly underground).



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