

# RED WEEKLY



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# VIETNAM: A GIANT STEP FOR HUMANITY!





# VIETNAM- VANGUARD OF HUMANITY

What more can be said on Vietnam? The red, blue and gold flag of the Provisional Revolutionary Government flies over Ho Chi Minh City. The United States, the greatest military power on earth, has suffered its first ever defeat in war. The international working class has celebrated one of its greatest ever May Days. Humanity has taken one long stride nearer its liberation.

But as revolutionaries glory in the triumph of Indochina, we should understand what made such a victory possible: — first, last and above all else the heroism and will to struggle of the Indochinese workers and peasants.

— the solidarity of revolutionaries throughout the world, from Che Guevara in Bolivia to the anti-war movement in the United States, who helped sap the belly of the imperialist monster.

— the endeavour of the working class of the entire world, whose unrelenting struggle dispersed the power of the capitalist system and its war criminals.

The Vietnamese triumph—in a way that no revolution has been since Russia in 1917—is the victory of the international working class and its struggle.

Vietnam—the spark which relit the flame of revolutionary struggle for millions of people in the imperialist countries—is the ultimate disproof of the lie that imperialism and the world working class could 'peacefully co-exist'. Vietnam is the living example that the socialist conquest of power must involve the violent destruction of the capitalist system.

Finally, Vietnam expresses something which has never been seen so clearly until this day. No country in the world has ever met an imperialist onslaught on the scale of that in Indochina. The allied invasion of Russia in 1918 was nothing compared to the nightmare of Vietnam. Five times as many bombs as in the entire Second World War rained down on a country with a population only half that of Britain. The forests were stripped, the people were attacked with poison gas, and the soldiers were asphyxiated with bombs which sucked the oxygen from the air. The United States created a South Vietnamese army of over a million and gave it the third largest airforce in the world. *And it was the Americans who lost.*

Their puppet army was pulverised to defeat in eight weeks. Nothing in history has ever shown in quite the same way the superiority of the working class and its struggle to brute force, the superiority of politics to weaponry, the superiority of revolutionary will and courage to the mechanical power of the paid puppets of imperialism. Indochina is the ultimate lesson that no matter what horrors capitalism can unleash, it will be the working class that will triumph in the end.

Vietnam resounds around the world because it confirms the great cry that once echoed from Havana through the slums of Harlem to Hanoi: 'Venceremos—We Will Win!'



## Eight Weeks That Shook The World

The whole struggle of the last 35 years in Indochina was repeated in a shortened form in the few weeks before the liberation of Saigon.

A week before Saigon fell it was obviously fast coming under the control of the NLF. The ARVN (the South Vietnamese Army) were mutinous. Large numbers of them were changing sides. Those left behind were either the fanatics boasting about fighting to the end or those who were just too demoralised to fight at all.

The Provisional Revolutionary Government delayed its final assault for a number of reasons. Firstly, to give the puppet regime the choice of surrendering. Secondly, to allow the United States time to complete its evacuation of its personnel and hangars-on, thereby not giving them any pretext for a last-minute military intervention. Thirdly, to re-form the units around Saigon and, more importantly, organise the forces of the PRG inside the city itself.

Even at this stage the treacherous bureaucrats of the USSR showed their true colours by urging a 'negotiated settlement' on the grounds that a military assault might imperil their detente with the US.

### III UTTER CONFUSION III

In the final days imperialism tried to manoeuvre a face-saver. The Saigon ruling clique was in utter confusion. No one showed this confusion more than Marshal Ky. Only last February he was berating Thieu for allowing the town of Phuoc Binh to be liberated. In March he appeared in a self-styled 'Government in hiding' urging a cease-fire. Last weekend he was joining the generals in a call for a 'fight to the finish', denouncing the evacuees for cowardice and desertion.

On 30 April he was found in the cargo hold of a US aircraft carrier steaming to safety.

Other more 'realistic' members of the clique were urging the formation of a 'neutral' government

and perhaps maintain an independent Saigon—which would of course need to keep its army! Meanwhile the aged and ailing President Huong was denounced by the PRG and exposed by the urban opposition which had flared up as a result of the crisis of the regime and the flight of the Americans.

The indecision was finally resolved when the NLF fired a few rockets into Saigon and cut the roads to the Mekong Delta and the port of Vung Tau.

### III PUPPET SHOW III

Duong Van 'Big' Minh was hurriedly sworn in as president. But it quickly became clear that the puppet show was largely an irrelevance. The demands of the PRG put forward on 28 April showed the confidence of the NLF and illustrated that the balance of forces was completely on the side of the liberation forces. They demanded that the new regime should have no links with the Thieu administration or with imperialism. Furthermore they insisted that it must guarantee the immediate withdrawal of all US intervention and totally dissolve the army and apparatus of the puppet state.

This was quite simply a demand for unconditional surrender. Despite the pacifist rhetoric of Huong's successor, 'Big' Minh, none of these things happened.

On 29 April the US had completed its evacuation. Small offensives and local insurrections had disarmed the ARVN posts in the suburbs and handed over power to the revolutionary committees. The regime was paralysed but did not have the authority to negotiate a surrender.

### III CHEERING CROWDS III

The next day, meeting hardly any resistance, the NLF entered Saigon to be greeted by cheering crowds. By 11 a.m. the PRG flag was flying over the Presidential Palace.

The US Seventh Fleet meanwhile lay off the Vietnamese coast and fumed. The most powerful military force in the world, unable to get authorisation for intervention because of Congress's deep fear of a

one role to play. It provided a taxi service to the crowd of bandits, CIA agents, capitalists, pimps and racketeers who had bought and bribed their way out of Saigon.

The PRG have taken power in South Vietnam under the best possible conditions that could be achieved given the history of counter-revolutionary destruction in Vietnam. From the way Saigon was liberated it seems that neither the USA nor the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies have been able to impose any conditions on the PRG's victory.

### III WORKERS STATE III

Of course total victory has not yet been achieved. The building of a workers' state will not be easy. Many hard political struggles lie ahead. This includes a struggle against the bureaucratic conceptions of the Vietnamese Communist Party and the PRG—both of which display a deep distrust of organs of popular democracy. Nor will imperialism willingly renounce South East Asia. Finally there is the heavy toll of imperialist destruction and the ideological divisions that imperialism created to be overcome.

At this stage it is not yet clear how power will be exercised. If the same pattern is followed as in other liberated areas, the Military Committee will give way to an organisation of the PRG which will include representatives of the left wing of the urban opposition, trade unionists, and rural and religious minorities. This will be structured from village to national level.

Whether or not any capitalist forces will be included remains to be seen. Certainly this is a possible variant in the PRG programme—a variant which the Fourth International condemns.

But the possibility of a significant coalition government, something that looked likely given the Vietnamese Communist Party's past political positions, now looks much less probable. Whatever the exact details, there can be no doubt that the orientation of the PRG is firmly fixed on the goal of re-unification of the country and the creation of a





# THE DOMINOES TREMBLE

by David Johnson

'The fall of Saigon was a dramatic sign of the decline of Western dominance', according to Lee Kuan Yew, Prime Minister of Singapore. With a pleading glance at the imperialists he added: 'The battle of South East Asia is not yet lost. All I need is a little help.'

The Singapore Prime Minister was summing up the crisis of the neo-colonial rulers of South East Asia. The inability of the USA to go to the aid of the South Vietnamese puppets or their Cambodian counterparts has raised grave doubts in the minds of other Asian despots about their own future.

Lee in Singapore and Tun Abdul Razak in Malaysia have both begun to make overtures to China. President Marcos of the Philippines has said that the US-Philippines axis must be reviewed. Even the extreme right-wing regime in Thailand has demanded the closing of US bases.

Of course none of these regimes can break with imperialism, but their publicly voiced disquiet and puny threats are a symptom of their deep decline.

## • OVERFLOWED •

The Vietnamese revolution has long overflowed its national boundaries. The offensive against the

of Saigon

The victories scored in Cambodia and Vietnam have cut deeply into the ability of the imperialists to manoeuvre in Laos, and it is in Laos that the most direct repercussions of the liberation of Phnom Penh and Saigon can be seen.

After the signing of the Paris Peace Accords, the Fourth International took the position that the coalition government in Laos was a dangerous step which could imperil the revolution. Nevertheless we also made it clear that it did not represent the freeing of the class struggle. The withdrawal of US intervention, the presence of Pathet Lao troops



Upsurge of student radicalisation in Indonesia against Tanaka visit was viciously repressed

French in the 1950s forged close links between the Vietnamese and the Laotians. In its turn the US was forced to include first Laos and then Cambodia in its counter-revolutionary war.

This drawing of Cambodia into the war brought an entirely new dimension to the Indochinese revolution. The Vietnamese spring offensive of 1972 was prepared by the successes of the Pathet Lao in Laos in 1970-71 and the rapid development of the National United Front of the Cambodians (FUNK). The Paris Accords on Vietnam and the defeat suffered by the US in 1973 provided a framework for the Accords on Laos and the ending of the US bombing of Cambodia.

## • IMPACT IN LAOS •

The fact that the US was unable to respond to the Cambodian dry season offensive this year gave the green light to the PRG to step up its own activities. Then the collapse of the ARVN in the Central Highlands of Vietnam intensified the crisis in

in the main cities of Vientiane and Luang Prabang, and the splits produced in the right-wing camp all tilted the balance of forces in favour of the revolutionary process.

The Accords elevated to the centre of the stage the political struggle in Laos, but we said then that its pace would be considerably affected by the dynamic of the struggle in Cambodia and Vietnam. That prediction has now been confirmed in action. In response to events elsewhere in Indochina, movements of urban workers, students, peasants and soldiers have recently emerged in at least two former right-wing strongholds.

In Vientiane there have been demonstrations and small-scale strikes in solidarity with struggles in the provinces. These developments are significant because they are completely new and have all gained the support of the Pathet Lao. On 23 April an armed confrontation took place between Pathet Lao and US-trained troops in the province of Salavan.

the side of the Pathet Lao.

On 15 April the National Assembly was dissolved. This had been agreed in principle nine months before, but had been delayed and blocked by the manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie.

## • RADICALISATION •

Right across South East Asia there is a coming together of the struggles of youth, students, urban workers, peasants, ethnic and racial minorities with the struggle of the communist guerillas. Nor is the process of permanent revolution confined to the countries which comprised the old Indochinese empire of French imperialism. In Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and even Burma the guerilla struggles have gained fresh impetus from the Indochinese victory.

Of enormous significance is the new radicalisation that is being stimulated in the urban centres. In these areas a vanguard role has been played by the students and the youth that are breaking out of a simple anti-imperialist framework and are beginning to take up the social grievances of the peasants and urban workers.

These developments are all the more important given the past history of the students. In Thailand they were long noted for their passivity, while in Indonesia they even supported the 1965 Suharto coup in which hundreds of thousands of communists were slaughtered. Only in Malaysia has there been any previous history of student resistance to a repressive regime.

## • DEMONSTRATIONS •

The tour of Asia by the Japanese Prime Minister, Tanaka, in 1974 became a focus of the students' radicalisation. The protests of the Thai, Malaysian and Indonesian students were however not just against the oppressive presence of Japanese imperialism. In Thailand, the CIA offices were sacked and US bases occupied. In Indonesia a general strike erupted against the repressive labour laws. In Malaysia the demonstrations turned against the university authorities and through them against the regime itself.

In the region Thailand best reflects the new balance of forces. There were 60 US bases in Thailand, seven major air bases—from which the B-52s flew to blitz Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam—10 US naval ports, and 58,000 US servicemen. In Laos 20,000 Thai mercenaries served with the US special forces.

It was the defeat of the US in Indochina which stimulated the radicalisation of the Thai students. This rapidly merged with the radicalisation of the workers and peasants to form a mass movement which although confused in its aims led in late 1973 to the overthrow of the ruling military junta of Kittiachorn and the subsequent formation of a Constituent Assembly. Now the unstable regime of Prasitkancha-Wawat is forced to demand that the US quits Thailand for fear of a new mass resurgence. What is more, the US has to agree

intervention in South East Asia.

The Philippines have been so dominated by the US imperialists that it has been seriously suggested that they should be made another state of the USA!

In the Philippines anti-colonial guerilla resistance has a history going back for more than a century, and US involvement has an equally long history. Many of the tactics used in Vietnam—such as forced urbanisation, free-fire zones, and strategic hamlets—were pioneered by the Americans in the Philippines.

After a period of relative stability there emerged both an urban resistance and scattered guerilla activity directed against the Marcos dictatorship. In 1972 Marcos was forced to declare Martial Law. A few years later, he is desperately trying to 'liberalise' his regime. Although little news leaks out of the Philippines, reports of political trials show that the regime is beginning to be challenged by mass movements in the cities.

## • DOMINOES TOTTER •

In the northern and southern islands reports of a secret war slip past the dictatorship. These show that entire islands have been bombed and napalmed. The guerillas of the Mindanao Liberation Front—based on a Moslem minority—have liberated several islands in the south. In the more northerly islands Maoist-orientated guerillas, after suffering an initial setback when Marcos signed a trade agreement with China, have also experienced a resurgence.

The defeats of imperialism and the new radicalisation plus the increasing morale of the workers and peasants is making the dominoes totter all over Asia.

The Japanese cannot escape this process. Japanese capital has succeeded in penetrating and distorting the economies of most of the countries of South East Asia. But this economic penetration is dependent on US military back-up. The US defeat in Indochina throws big doubts on the viability of the Japanese investments—and this at a time when there is a new upsurge of struggle in Japan itself.

In the workers' states, however, the response to the victory of the Indochinese revolution has been muted to say the least. Concerned above all with the future of its *detente* with the USA, the USSR bureaucracy has consistently tried to hold back the revolution in an attempt to forestall any threat to peaceful co-existence. The liberation of Saigon was not even mentioned in the Politbureau speech from the

May Day rostrum in Moscow. Only one banner in solidarity with the Indochinese revolution appeared on the May Day parade.

## • NOT CHINA'S FAULT •

In Peking the response of the bureaucrats has differed slightly. They have welcomed the victory, claiming that it frees the US to play a 'more constructive rôle' in Asia. The Chinese have made it clear that if the dominoes fall it is not their fault!

The Chinese do not believe that revolution is for export: speculation in the capitalist press that a new confrontation is on the agenda in Korea is idle gossip. Of course new demands for the re-unification of the country will be raised in the South and will find an echo in the North. But for the bureaucracies in China and North Korea a new war would be too risky, despite the ravings of Kim Il Sung.

The effect of the Indochinese revolution has not just been restricted to Asia. The recent successes in the old Portuguese colonies owe much to the inspiration of that revolution. And these events played in their turn a direct role in toppling the fascist regime in Portugal.

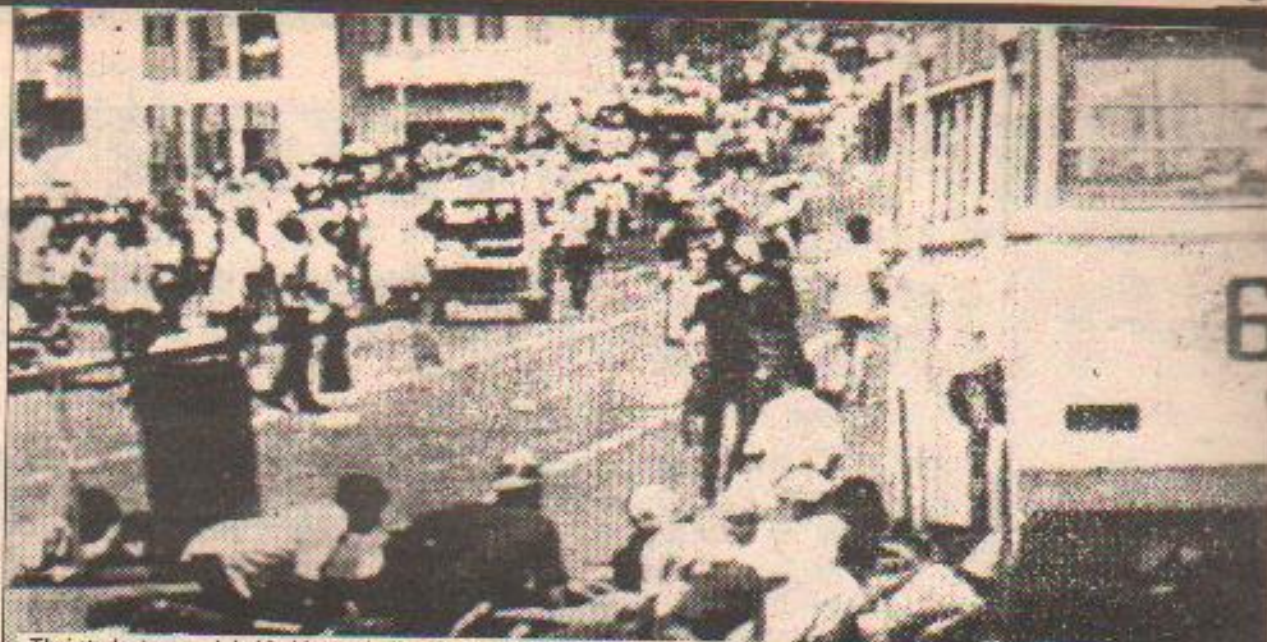
In the USA the crisis in the administration is a direct result of the debacle in Indochina. This more than anything else broke the students and sections of the working class from their previous passivity. That crisis has now been compounded by the liberation of Vietnam and Cambodia.

## • QUESTION MARK •

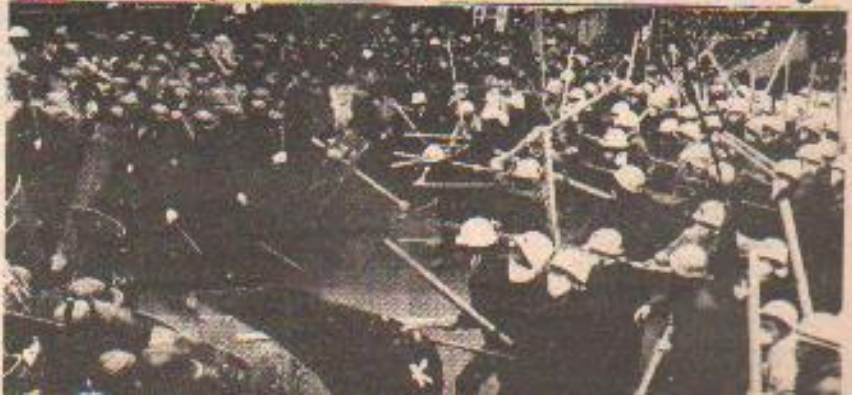
On 28 April Kissinger said: 'One lesson we must learn from this experience is that we must be very careful in future on the commitments we make, but that we should honour scrupulously the commitments we do make.'

The failure of the US imperialists to 'honour' their commitments to the corrupt cliques in Vietnam and Cambodia places an enormous question mark over their ability to intervene directly with success anywhere. There are voices being raised in the US Congress now saying that rather than risk another defeat the US should not even attempt interventions in Europe, let alone anywhere else.

The repercussions of the victory of the Indochinese revolution will be felt throughout the world. The only way that the world working class will ever fully repay the heroic people of Indochina is by the final victory of the world revolution.



Thai students crouch behind bus as bullets fly during 1973 demonstrations which led to fall of Kittiachorn regime



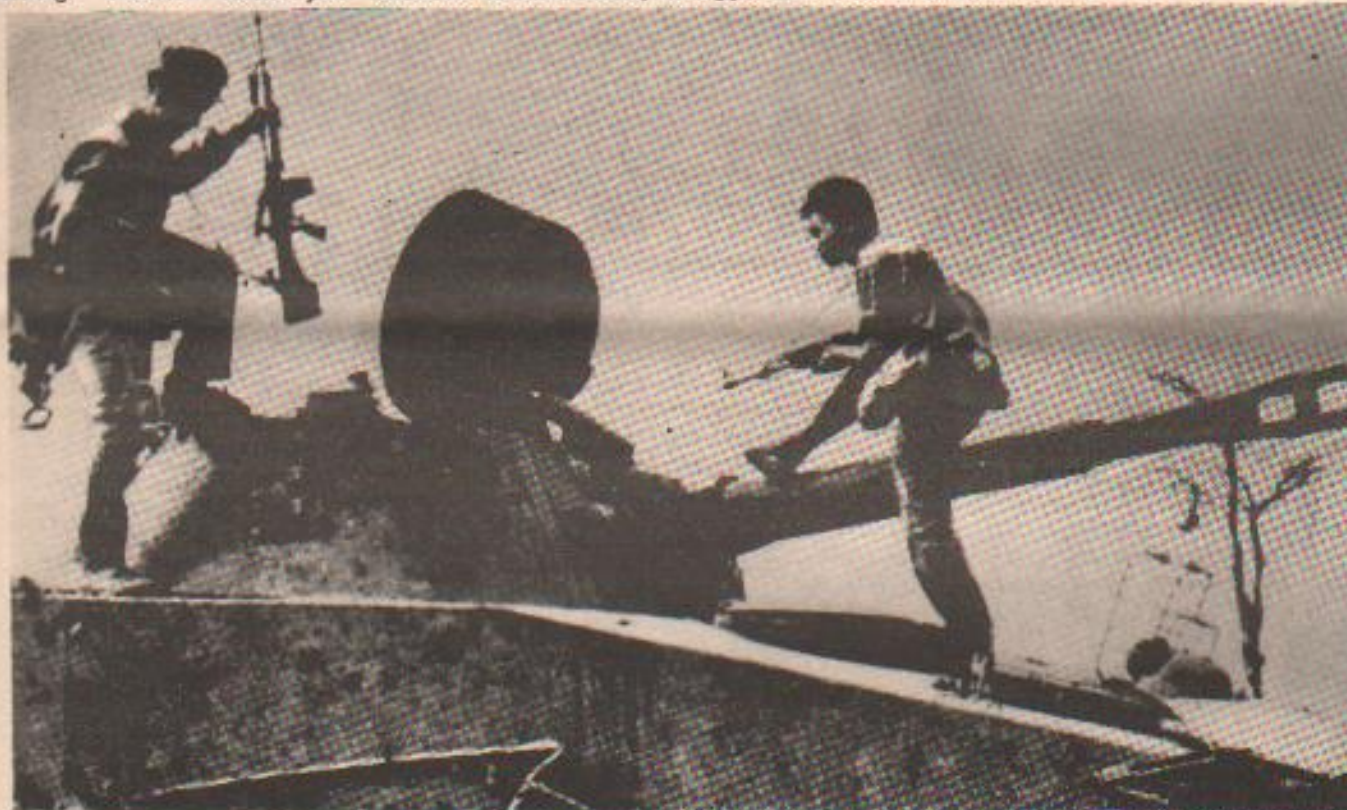


# VIETNAM VICTORY —‘TURNING POINT IN WORLD HISTORY’

After 1945 it was the advance of the revolution in the colonial countries which prevented the real political stabilisation of the capitalist world system and maintained the tempo of the class struggle when the working class in the imperialist countries was passing through 20 years of relative passivity. It was also this revolution which helped to exhaust imperialism economically and politically and to create the basis for a new revival of revolutionary consciousness in the population of the imperialist countries. The war in Vietnam was precisely the outcome of the decision of the United States to smash the colonial revolution. Instead it was the United States which was humiliated. The Americans lost their first war in history and the U. S. and international capitalist economy was stretched to the limit. This in turn helped lay the basis for a new rise in revolution throughout the world.

The outstanding analysis of this development still remains the 1969 Political Resolution of the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International. In order to understand fully the significance of the events which have just taken place in Vietnam we therefore reproduce extracts from the chief section of that resolution dealing with the Vietnam war.

For those who have come into revolutionary politics in the last five or six years it is difficult to understand the significance of the Vietnam war. Since 1968 there has been the May General Strike in France, the 'hot autumn' of 1969 in Italy, the struggles and coup in Chile, and now the working class upsurge in Portugal. Vietnam appears just as one struggle, although a great one no doubt, among many. No view could be more wrong. Vietnam is not just 'another' revolutionary struggle but a turning point in the history of the world



After the victory of the Cuban revolution, the colonial revolution unquestionably marked time.

In fact, starting early in the sixties the colonial revolution suffered a series of spectacular reverses. The rise to power of military dictatorships and the momentary decline of the mass movements in Brazil and Argentina (the two principal countries of Latin America); the overthrow of the Lumumba regime in the Congo, the Nkrumah regime in Ghana and the Ben Bella regime in Algeria; the victory of the Indonesian counterrevolution in October 1965; and the military defeat of the United Arab Republic and Syria in the six-day war of June 1967 constitute the main milestones in each of the epicenters of the colonial revolution.

The colonial revolution had reached the point where it could go no further unless it made the transition into a socialist revolution—and for that the subjective factor was lacking. On the other hand, American imperialism, drawing its own conclusions from the victory of the Cuban revolution, shifted more and more openly to repressing by military force all revolutionary movements which in its view threatened even incipiently to touch off the process of permanent revolution.

Caught between the masses seeking a clear revolutionary socialist solution and imperialism, which strove to crush such tendencies in embryo, the Sukarnos, the Nkrumahs, the Nassers, and the Nehrus, who had dominated the scene in the semicolonial countries for fifteen years, reached the end of their era.

Since the formation of new revolutionary vanguards, even of the Fidelista type, lagged behind this process, the initiative passed for a whole stage to American imperialism, with its CIA-financed plots, its counterrevolutionary interventions, and its ever-widening wars of aggression.

An acceleration of economic growth in the United States

imperialists could finance these projects for five or six years—which from "military missions" and "counterinsurgency" in Latin America to the war in Vietnam, including the upkeep and expansion of dozens of air-naval bases throughout the world, cost tens of billions of dollars—without opening up an assault on the living standard of the workers in the United States.

The might, expansion, and arrogance of Yankee imperialism seemed to reach new heights after its failure in the fifties.

The Vietnam war also was the culmination and, as it were, the crest of this imperialist counteroffensive. The Vietnam war became the turning point in the situation. As a result of the indomitable resistance of the Vietnamese masses, the colonial revolution was able to regroup its forces and stage a comeback in several important sectors.



## ESCALATION

In escalating its aggression against the Vietnamese revolution, American imperialism aimed not only at blocking the revolution's advance in a region of obvious economic and strategic importance (Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia); it sought not only to create a "deterrent" against a victorious revolution in Asia, which would represent a catastrophe of global scope for the international imperialist system. It wanted also to intimidate the exploited masses in all colonial and semicolonial countries, if not the entire world. It wanted to put them on notice by a terrifying

in the world and pay a terrible price in blood and destruction for an attempt to liberate themselves from the yoke of capital. Thus, the outcome of the confrontation in Vietnam assumed crucial importance.

Today, the militant revolutionary enthusiasm of the Vietnamese masses, unparalleled in recent history, has blocked the imperialists and kept them from achieving the principal objectives of their aggression.

At the same time, a sector of the American bourgeoisie has recognized with dismay that even its colossal resources are not sufficient to simultaneously finance the nuclear arms race with the USSR, the "conventional" war in Vietnam, the worldwide consolidation of capitalism, and the minimal reforms necessary to put a damper on social tensions in the mother country itself. The economic price which imperialism has paid for continuing the war in Vietnam has been accelerated inflation, with a deepening crisis in the international monetary system and an accompanying exacerbation of inter-imperialist contradictions; reduced "aid" to the colonial bourgeoisie; and a cut-back in the "war on poverty" in the United States, which was intended to defuse the explosive nature of the Afro-American problem. Together with the encouragement of the victorious resistance of the Vietnamese masses has given to the formation of a black and student vanguard in the United States on the subjective level, the objective effects of the war in Vietnam made possible both an unprecedented growth of the antiwar movement and broadening radicalization of the black masses, which in conjunction are creating the most explosive domestic crisis the United States has experienced since 1929-36.



## FAILURE

In the last analysis, the failure of the imperialist counteroffensive is an expression of the fact that the global balance of forces is already too unfavorable to imperialism for it to be able to reverse the trend on its periphery. There is no question that the international situation could have developed in a way much more favorable to the revolution if there had been an international revolutionary leadership able to marshal all the anti-imperialist and anticapitalist forces in a united front pursuing a global strategy counterposed to the global counterrevolutionary strategy of imperialism. But even in the absence of an effective world revolutionary leadership, imperialism was unable to reverse the balance of forces. Once the most oppressed and exploited classes, or at least their most alert sectors, began to become conscious on an international scale of the crucial fact that in today's world the heroic fighters of a little country like Vietnam can stall the war machine of the greatest imperialist power in history, a new and grave deterioration in the imperialist position began to develop.

First of all, the contradictions and difficulties faced by imperialism have mounted on numerous fronts. The revival of the colonial revolution in Southeast Asia has been spurred. Inter-imperialist contradictions have been accentuated. Secondly, the defeat which imperialism has suffered on its periphery has greatly contributed to reviving the revolutionary crisis in the very heart of the imperialist system, including in the United States itself.

The links between the victorious resistance of the Vietnamese revolution and the revival of revolutionary struggle in the central imperialist countries are obvious, both on the subjective and objective levels.

On the subjective level, this resistance impelled the formation of a new youth vanguard in the imperialist countries, strongly contributed to making it independent of the traditional reformist and Stalinist apparatuses, and helped it to gain experience and assume increasing boldness in its ceaselessly escalating clashes with the traditional parties, with the bourgeoisie, and with the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state.

On the objective level, the economic and financial consequences of the Vietnam war have aggravated the dollar crisis, increased the tensions in the international monetary system, and sharpened the inter-imperialist contradictions, thus draining the reserves with which the international bourgeoisie could have cushioned the effects of the 1966-67 recession. Instead of a policy of concessions, the bourgeoisie, under the pressure of all these economic factors, has been forced in almost all the imperialist countries to attack the standard of living and certain improvements considered by the workers to be established rights (particularly full employment and fringe benefits). This in turn impelled a revival of the class struggle in those sectors freed from control of the trade-union bureaucracy and shook the relative social stability that existed in most of the imperialist countries in the preceding period.

It is in the last analysis this exacerbation of the social contradictions within imperialist society—stimulated by the objective and subjective effects of the failure of the imperialist counteroffensive against the colonial revolution—



# LABOUR REAPS ORANGE WHIRLWIND

The press have pretended to be surprised at the size of the Loyalist victory in the Constitutional Convention elections in the North of Ireland. But these results should surprise only the blind. The Labour Government has made retreat after retreat in the face of the Loyalists. They have encouraged the Loyalists at every step to believe that they can restore the old political set-up in the North of Ireland. It has been made clear that the Army will be kept there to give time for the Loyalists to organise forces to deal with the Catholic minority itself. Now the Labour Government is reaping the whirlwind.

The Loyalists have been consolidating their power ever since the Ulster Workers Council general strike smashed the Sunningdale power-sharing Assembly a year ago. The parliamentarians—West, Craig and Paisley—have been able to draw the paramilitary sectarian gangs under their wing through the creation of the Ulster Loyalist Co-ordinating Committee. What the Loyalists can't get through the Convention alone, they will force through with mass Loyalist pressure on the streets and in attacks against the Catholics.

An indication of how events have moved in the Six Counties is that Faulkner, the so-called moderate, was completely annihilated. But Faulkner's 'moderation' was the repression and brutality of the British Army over the past six years. It was the 'solution' of internment. It was the policy of torture against the minority. In rejecting this, the Loyalists are clearly calling for blood.

## CEASEFIRE

Northern Ireland Secretary Merlyn Rees has been manoeuvring over the past period to ward off this inevitable victory of the Loyalists. His policy has had two thrusts. On the one hand, he has tried to undermine the Loyalists by making compromises just short of their most extreme demands. The most notorious move here was his creation of the extended special reserves, which put the paramilitary Loyalist thugs in uniform.

Coupled with this was an attempt to crush the resistance of the Catholic minority. He tried this first through increased repression. Then seizing on the political crisis of the Provisionals and a certain demoralisation of the minority, he agreed to the ceasefire.

## 'MODERATE BLOC'

With all these things under his belt Rees then attempted to get a moderate coalition of the SDLP, Faulkner and the Alliance Party to present a common front against the UUUC. This bloc never saw the light of day—although links remain at the informal level—because the ceasefire had not meant a defeat for the Catholic minority. To win backing from the minority for this 'moderate' bloc still required the defeat of the Republicans. Without this, keeping the ceasefire going meant that real concessions had to be granted to the minority. The British Army, let alone the Loyalists, balked at this.

At the same time the attempt to reintroduce the 'Ulster' police, the RUC, under cover of the Provisional ceasefire was an abysmal failure. The vigilance of the minority saw mass protests developing against the RUC patrols.

Despite the massive vote for the Loyalists, however, their plan to achieve once again an open Protestant ascendancy will not be easily achieved. The Republicans still have wide support in the Catholic areas, and the very large abstention in the election reflects some of this even in voting terms. What the election victory for the Loyalists will do, however, is to spur on mass Protestant action to take the 'law' into their own hands if the British Government shows any tardiness in handing things over.

by **Brian Grogan**

The last few weeks have given us another foretaste of what this means. For example, the Orange procession a fortnight ago for the opening of the World Orange Headquarters (sic) saw Protestant Tartan Gangs running amok amongst Catholic bystanders. The response of the RUC and the British Army to the attempts by the Catholics to defend themselves against this was to attack the Catholics.

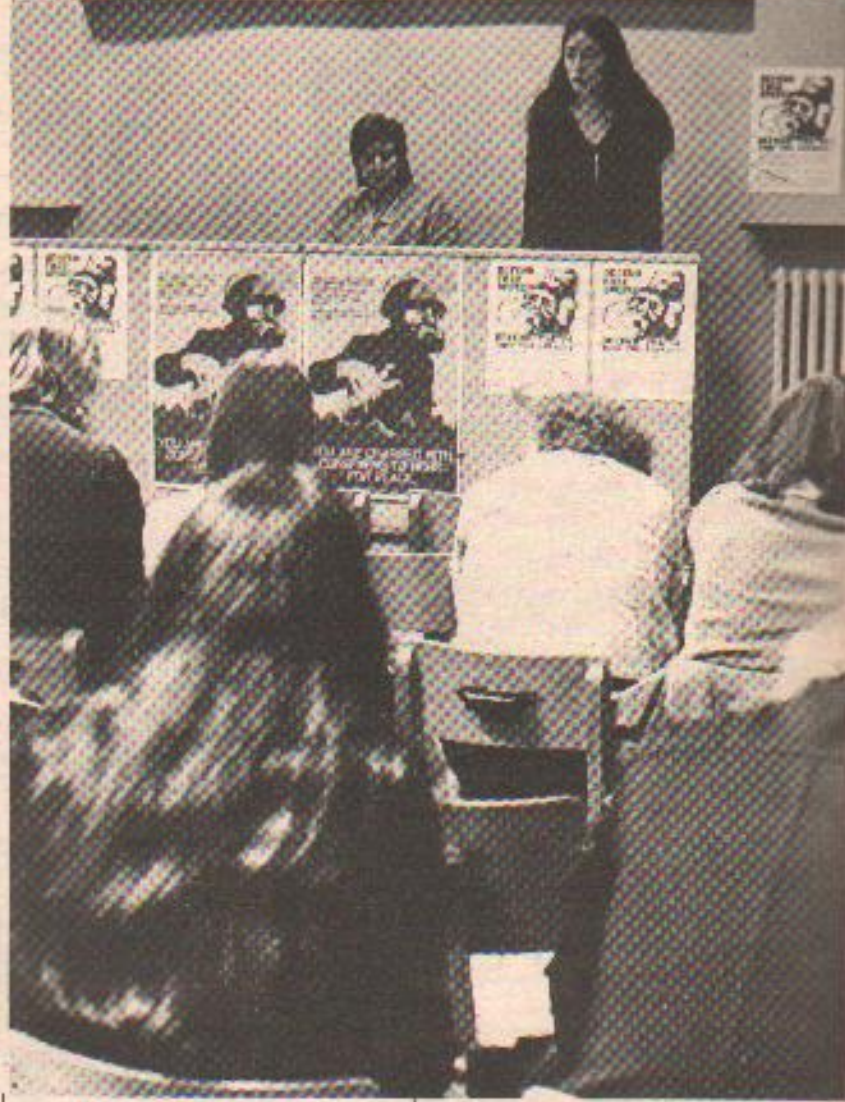
The response of the Catholics must therefore be to develop their mass self-defence against the Loyalists and also against their 'defenders' the British Army and the RUC.

The Loyalist victory brings the crisis of British imperialism to the surface once again. The Convention was originally seen as a way of buying time and warding off the need to take any decisive measures. But the Loyalists will now ensure that the Convention cannot be ignored. All the talk about the Convention being the 'authentic voice of Ulster' will now translate itself into action.

Without doubt, sections of the British political parties are prepared to give in to all the most extreme Loyalist demands. This position probably now commands a majority of the forces inside the Tory Party and sections of the Labour Government also share this view.

It is now more possible than ever to show that British imperialism can bring no progressive solution in Ireland, that the British creation of a Six County sectarian state can only be held together by sectarian Protestant bonds. We must raise loud and clear the demand that the British Government make 'No Compromise With The Loyalists' and that the British troops and British imperialism 'Get Out Now'. This should be the message which comes from the TOM Labour Movement Conference scheduled for 24 May.

# DEFEND THE 14!



Stephanie Cronin of the IMG was among the speakers at last Saturday's meeting called to build a campaign in defence of the pacifists (originally 14 but now 15) charged with conspiracy to contravene the Incitement to Disaffection Act by handing out leaflets to British soldiers.



## MASS IRANIAN JAILINGS IN LONDON

Not content with hounding the Irish population in Britain through the use of the so-called 'Prevention of Terrorism' Act, the British police have just claimed another 21 'foreign' victims. Twenty-one members of the Confederation of Iranian Students have been charged with 'conspiracy to trespass' under the notorious conspiracy laws—the same laws that sent the Shrewsbury pickets to jail.

Their crime? Staging a non-violent sit-in at the Iranian Embassy in London on 29 April to protest the torturing to death of nine prominent political prisoners in Iran. For this they are still being held in prison, bail having been refused when they appeared in court last Thursday.

It would be an obvious embarrassment to the Iranian Embassy if it were to prosecute Iranian students for entering its own embassy—which, according to international law is after all Iranian soil. By using the conspiracy laws these students are being prosecuted not by the Iranian Embassy—which has long been exposed as a front for SAVAK, the infamous Iranian political police—but by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The Shah's regime in Iran has butchered over 300 political prisoners in recent years, and another 40,000

political prisoners are held in its torture chambers. At present 5,000 prisoners are on hunger strike against the recent killings. Last year Iran spent £2,000 million on armaments, and all those who do not submit to the new one-party system instituted by Royal Decree will also find themselves in jail. Trade unions are illegal and striking workers are machine-gunned down.

Enough to move even the Labour 'lefts', you might think. Think again—with a few exceptions the Labour 'left' is helpless because its alternative to the Common Market, a capitalist 'Little England', precisely involves building 'independent' links with countries like Iran. Peter Shore in particular has been active in promoting such trade deals.

The Iranian Students Society in Great Britain (c/o 101-103 Gower St., London WC1) have started a hunger strike in London in solidarity with the 5,000 hunger-strikers in Iran and with the 21 arrested in Britain, who are hunger-striking until their release. They are calling on British students and trade unionists to help them in preventing the further use of the repressive conspiracy laws by joining their pickets and sending letters of protest to the Home Office. MPs and the press demanding the immediate release of the 21.

# WHAT'S ON

**BENEFIT CONCERT** for those facing charges in connection with the leaflet 'Some Information for Disorientated Soldiers'. Jazz and poetry. Monday 12 May, 7pm in Unity Theatre, 1 Goldington St., NW1. Tickets 80p.

**WANTED**—permanent accommodation in London for Chinese political refugees. Contact Box RW/3/5

**LONDON Revolutionary Communist Group** meeting: David Yaffe on 'Inflation, the Crisis and the Social Contract'. Friday 9 May, 7.30pm, in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square/Holborn tube. All welcome.

**WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER Campaign:** Briefing meeting on low pay, equal pay/job security and redundancies, and the general relationship of women to the trade union movement. Sunday 11 May, 2-4pm at the Brent Trades Council Hall, 375 Willesden High Road, London NW10. Creche facilities. Speakers will be women from local workplaces including Invoers and Associated Automation.

**CONFERENCE ON REDUNDANCY IN THE MEDIA INDUSTRIES:** Officially supported by the NUJ, this is a conference open to all members of unions in the printing, publishing, press and broadcasting industries. London College of Printing, Elephant & Castle, SE1. Saturday, May 17, 10.00am-6.00pm. For further details, plus delegate or observer credentials, write to Carl Gardner, 50 Ingham Rd., NAB.

**REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST GROUP:** Edinburgh public meeting—David Yaffe on 'Inflation, the Social Contract and the Crisis'. Sunday 11 May, 2.30pm, the Trades Council, Prandy Place.

**READ YOUNG SOCIALIST:** Labour's independent Marxist youth paper, obtainable from 98 Gifford St., N.1. 10p p/bp.

**NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN:** Labour and trade union movement meeting. Saturday 10 May, 10.30am-6 pm, NUFTO Hall, Jockey's Fields, London, WC2. Speakers from NAC, Working Women's Charter, trade unions, LPYS and women Labour MPs. Creche available. Details from 14 Hunt Street, London SE24.

**WOMEN'S CONFERENCE ON IRELAND:** Speakers from Ireland, video, workshops, creche. Saturday 10 May, 10 am-5 pm, North London Poly, Holloway Road, London, N.7. Women only.

**SOCIALIST WOMAN FORUM:** 'The fight for free abortion on demand'. Speakers include IMG representative on NAC Steering Committee, and from local abortion campaign group. Report from 20 April international meeting on abortion. Thursday 8 May, 7.30 pm, University of London Under (Room 3C), Malet St., WC1.

**FILMS ON CHINA:** 25 years of a revolutionary youth service. 'Our Man's China' and 'Away with all that'. Thursday 8 May, 7.30 am, Centreprise, 136 Kingsland High St. Entrance 45p.

**PRESTON WOMEN'S GROUP** meets at the Moonbrook Hotel (North Road) each Wednesday at 8.

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**BENEFIT PERFORMANCE** for the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class—Fred Ladder play 'A Woman's Work is Never Done'. Plus 3 other 2-woman worker from Portugal. Thursday 8 May, 7 pm in Conway Hall, The Lion Sec, Abchurch Lane. Organised by PWOC.

انشارات طلبه  
مجموعه انتشارات، دیسمبر ۱۳۵۳

Revolutionary marxist literature in Persian  
Three Concepts of the Russian Revolution  
Trotsky 20p  
Imperialism and Permanent Revolution  
Jacques Valier 25p  
From Red Books, 97 Caledonian Rd., N1

Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS



# Short-time...Speed-up...Sackings...Short-time



attacks on employment'. As far as taking action, however to fight present attacks of the company, the meeting only produced a resolution which paid lip-service to public ownership of Ford's. It did not say how this was to be achieved, and left the campaign in the hands of the union leaders leaving the shop-floor open to the attacks of management.

It is utopian nonsense to believe that left-talking Labour MPs are going to resolve the situation in the car industry in the interests of workers, unless the workers launch a struggle first and then demand that these MPs support this action if they are at all serious about fighting unemployment. Carworkers can use their own independent action as a focus for winning support from other workers who are also threatened with the dole, as well as forcing the trade union and labour bureaucrats into action.



Under pressure from the shop-floor of the Body Plant, Dan Connors was forced at a meeting on 29 April to call for an occupation and support for the sections in dispute. But the workforce had not been prepared for the importance of an occupation and what it entails, and only a minority remained behind to secure the occupation. Nevertheless the gates were barricaded up and eventually nothing could move in or out of the plant.

A section of the plant continued to work (Press Shop) and no real fight for solidarity action was put up by either the Press Shop stewards or the convenor. They gave moral support to the laid-off workers (nothing about

# FORD'S WORKERS IN THE FRONT LINE

Ford's British Empire has been rocked twice in the last two weeks by occupations. First the barricades went up at Swansea as workers protested against massive increases in workloads - a productivity offensive so intense that one man had been vomiting on the line under management pressure.

Then it was Dagenham's turn. On Tuesday 29 April the Body Plant was occupied following a week of speed-up walk-outs and lock-outs as management tried to implement cuts in manning levels on 'B' shift.

These events are of vital importance for the whole working class. British capitalism is using soaring unemployment and short-time working to intimidate workers into accepting productivity drives. The crisis in the car industry is particularly acute because of the collapse of the world car market. All the problems of under-investment, ancient equipment and low productivity are now thrown to the fore. There is only one capitalist solution - rationalise or die.

British Leyland is on the point of collapse. And Ford's too is in dire trouble. The shrinking of the British car market has hit Ford's UK hard, as it mainly produces for the home market. Now as it attempts to break into the European market, production of the new Escort at Halewood has reached only 600 a day - 250 behind the level of the old Escort and 500 below the level Ford's want. For management the only solution is a productivity offensive.

But the cuts in the manning levels and the establishment of a 'Labour pool' at Dagenham in the Body-in-White department alone, 137 men out of a total of 800 are being put in the pool - is only the first step. Ford's aim, which is the aim of all car manufacturers, is a smaller, more efficient and more productive workforce. If the present wave of short-time and productivity increases are not resisted the sackings are certain

to come. Ford's is the shape of things to come for all workers - both in terms of management strategy, and in terms of the totally inadequate response of the existing plant union leadership. By introducing the new measures to one shift at a time and even to individual sections one at a time, Ford's hope to split up and defeat the workforce bit by bit. The company have already stated that once it has sorted out the Body-in-White section, 370 Balcony, KD and Welding, it will look at other departments.



If the company succeeds in its attacks on the door-hangers, setters and other sections in dispute, it will have split the workforce and won half the fight. It will also have a ready-made labour pool to use as a scab force to push through manning cuts and speed-up in the rest of the Body Plant.

The use of the labour pool has already been shown when the door-hangers stopped work. The men already taken off the lines were told by the company to do the work of the strikers. Eventually, if Ford's get away with it, the labour pool will have done its work, and because they have no economic power those in it will be the first to face the sack.

In the face of mounting short-time (14,000 out of Ford's 52,000 manual workers are on short-time), cutbacks in manning levels, speed-up and lay-off threats in every section of the company, the trade union officials and the Communist Party and left Labourites who dominate Ford's Shop Stewards Committees have done nothing to organise the shop-floor into building a united response.

They have been content to lobby so-called 'left' Labour MPs with demands for a public inquiry and the need for public ownership. This is the song CP Convenor Dan Connors sings whenever he's engaged in giving up Ford worker's hard-won gains to the company without a fight.

Many weeks ago the unions at Ford's and in other car plants accepted short-time without a fight. Since then the car firms have been increasingly strident in their calls for 'voluntary' redundancies. Vauxhall chopped 2,000 at Ellesmere Port. Leyland are seeking 3,500 redundancies at the Austin plant in Birmingham. Many more jobs have already gone.

On March 10th convenors, shop stewards and union officials from all over the national Ford combine lobbied Parliament to call for a Government inquiry into Ford's UK. The only result was verbal sympathy from some Labour MPs who were careful to commit themselves to do nothing more than mentioning the car workers' demands to Tony Benn. This didn't deter Ford's in the least.

Now, as the time comes once again for car workers to look to their leaders to unite them in struggle against the employers, they get more of the same. First the national meeting of leading stewards called by the British Leyland Combine Committee in Birmingham on 23 April failed to hammer out a common jobs policy. Instead of a clear demand for the nationalisation of the entire motor industry under workers control, and demanding worksharing with no loss of pay to combat short-time and sackings, it contented itself with clichés about public ownership and threats to combat non-voluntary sackings in the future.



Then it was the turn of the Ford's national shop stewards' meeting in Coventry on Sunday 27 April. With struggles breaking out at many different plants and the vital need for national co-ordination only about 200 stewards turned up out of a possible 1,000. The Conference was supposed to be 'the first of many to raise the fight for job security and for public ownership of Ford's.' Sid Harroway (AUEW, Body Plant, Dagenham) 'congratulated workers at Swansea, Dagenham and Halewood for their stand against



## OCCUPATIONS - A VITAL TACTIC

Recent events at Swansea and Dagenham have once again demonstrated why occupations are such a vital weapon in the arsenal of car workers' struggles.

- Occupations take the initiative away from the management, who are otherwise able to call the tune in terms of when and how workers will be called back to the plant after they have been laid off because of a dispute in a particular section.
- At Dagenham the occupation swiftly closed off the KD section - the 'knock down' section in which parts are boxed up for assembly overseas - and sealed off wheels for the Halewood plant. A shortage of wheels could swiftly have brought Ford's nationally to a halt.
- Occupations provide a militant focus for a nationally co-ordinated campaign against speed-ups and short-time.
- By involving the mass of workers and operating through a democratically elected occupation committee, occupations unite the whole workforce and provide a framework within which the correct policies can be hammered out to meet the crisis.

## IMG CAR-V

- Only a policy that starts by saying that Ford is that the bosses must pay for it, can defend jobs.
- All Ford stewards and delegates should meet against the company's lay-off agreement. The with no loss of pay and under workers' control of workers' representatives from the entire Labour Government to nationalise the whole industry.
- No to the Speed-Ups. Reject the production can reduce recruitment and full-time working.
- No to the Lay-Off Agreement. This allows dispute, bringing about divisions and retreat in.
- For Work-Sharing with No Loss of Pay. All car workers and workers generally. The total and divided amongst the total workforce - just enough cars for the market. This stops the they can hold out against stoppages of work.
- For a Workers' Inquiry. To carry through detailed workings an inquiry needs to be set up investment and production plans and sales figures, schedules and length of the working week.
- This workers' inquiry should insist that the this business, and demand that the Labour Government before the management and failure to a Picket of Car Stocks.



# ...Speed-up...Sackings...Short-time...Speed-

those in dispute) but carried out no action. The number of stewards in the occupation could be counted on the fingers of two hands.

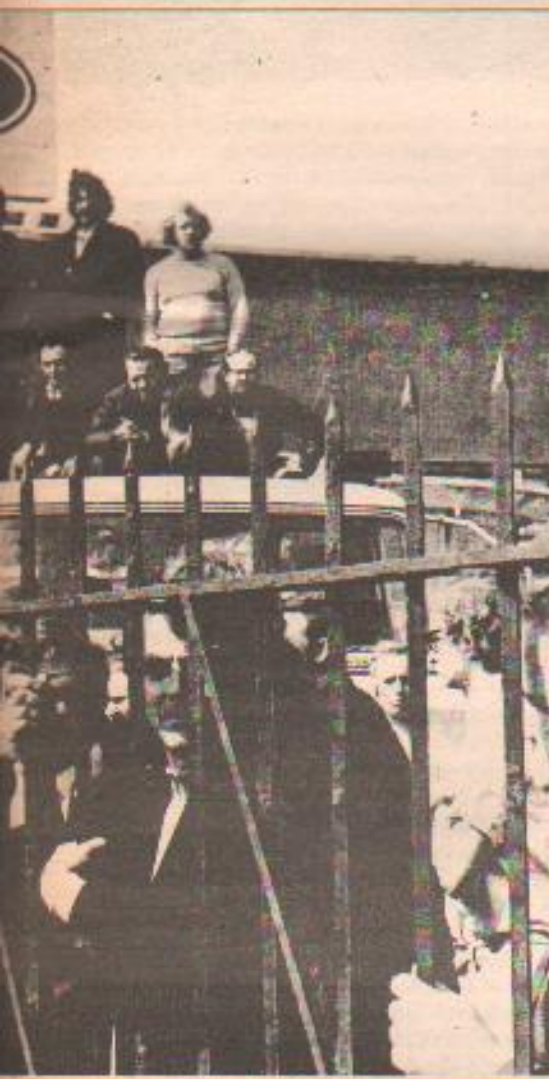
The management was so afraid of a united opposition that they decided to pay the laid off workers for the Monday and Friday for which they would normally have been laid off because of short-time working. Then Dan Connors used the mass meeting on May Day to wind up the occupation!

The fact that management had reversed its position on not talking to the unions about the manning cuts was good enough for him. But these talks had only come about in the first place because of the militant action of the workers. A resolution from IMG militant Steve Harper calling for the continuation and the building of the occupation was narrowly defeated by 39 votes to 37, with massive grumbling abstentions.

It's not that the reformist leadership does not want to fight for no redundancies, or does not believe that it is possible to mobilise car workers to enforce this. They don't know how to, because they accept the framework of the capitalist market system. Hence they have no real answer when Ford's say the market has shrunk and short-time and increased productivity is necessary to survive, because they are telling the truth in terms of the capitalist system.

But the struggle at Ford's is far from over. The door-hangers and fender-fitters are still in dispute, and both shifts remain locked-out till 6 May. The outcome of last Thursdays talks will be heard then and the possibility of another occupation remains. ■

by IMG car-workers at Dagenham.



## WORKERS SAY —

accept no responsibility for the capitalist crisis, immediately to hammer out a common jobs policy should be replaced with a workers' plan of work sharing the meeting should support all moves towards a conference industry to set in motion a campaign to force the under workers' control. drive. If the company wants to increase production it management to play off workers laid-off against workers in work force. wide policy of no redundancies will gain the support of unt of work available should be calculated by the stew loss of pay. The present workforce should produce any shedding workers or acquiring large stocks whereby above policy and the nationalisation of Ford's in its workers of Ford's themselves to investigate Ford's with this Ford workers could work out line speeds, work ment Open the Books so that this inquiry can go about nt orders Ford's to obey. These demands should be met with a renewed Occupation of the Plant and

## JAGUAR STEWARDS FAIL TO LEAD ST RUGGLE

# 'REASONABLE CO-OPERATION' - IN SACKINGS!

**SHORT-TIME, CUTBACKS IN MANNING LEVELS, SPEED-UP** : every section of car workers are facing at least one of these threats. None more so than the workers at British Leyland. The recent Ryder Report 'made clear that each stage [ of the Government's £2.8 billion capital expenditure programme] will depend on evidence that some tangible contribution is being made both by British Leyland's workforce and its management to the reduction of industrial disputes and the improvement of productivity [which] will inevitably mean a gradual reduction in the number of workers required to produce a given number of vehicles (Ryder Report, p.33).

Intensify exploitation and slash the workforce : that's what Labour's funds for Leyland will depend on. But a frontal assault on car workers' hard-won rights would meet with massive resistance. So Ryder, whose report is going to be a model for other industries, has another 'plan'. Negotiating and bargaining procedures will be streamlined to 'avoid' disputes, improve 'efficiency', and get better (for the management) manning levels.

How is this to be done? 'The most crucial factor in improving industrial relations at B.L. and in creating the conditions in which productivity can be increased is, however, that there should be some significant progress towards industrial democracy' (Ryder Report, p.42).

Ryder no doubt had in mind the success of Geoffrey Robinson — prominent Labour Party member and 'whizz-kid' managing director of BLMC's Jaguar plant at Browns Lane in Coventry — in soliciting this 'new spirit of reasonable co-operation' from the trade unions. Jaguar stewards have been 'reasonably co-operating' for years. And a closer look underneath the surface of the wage increases achieved reveals a record which should serve as a warning for the whole trade union movement. Now read on.....

After the 11 week strike in 1972, many of the old Jaguar management team were replaced. Several members of the strike committee took over as managing director to see through the next step of British Leyland's plan.

In 1973 the Measured Day Work proposals arrived. British Leyland called it 'The Secure Earnings Plan' (SEP). Management agreed to stop production while a series of section meetings were held to discuss the proposals. This led to an overwhelming rejection of the plan by mass meetings in the assembly and engines plants.

The senior stewards then re-negotiated the deal. The most significant amendments dealt with the role of the shop stewards. The new deal accepted 'the management's right to manage', allowed full mobility of labour, and so on. It also stressed that management decisions must be carried out in consultation with the shop stewards. You might think this provision allows the stewards and the workers on the shop floor some control over management decisions. In fact, it means that the stewards are more under the control of management.

Although the first SEP was rejected by mass meetings, the senior stewards arranged a secret ballot on the new deal. It was accepted by a 2 to 1 majority. The minimum skilled rate from 1974 was to be £54.



But the new SEP deal accepted the restrictions of the Tories' Phase III pay laws, so the new rates were delayed. It also meant a threshold clause was written into the deal. When the threshold was triggered, Jaguar management and stewards had a problem. British Leyland policy was against any form of cost-of-living settlement. If Jaguar was openly to meet its commitment, this policy would be in ruins within a few months. Every worker in British Leyland would want the same minimal protection for his or her earnings against rising prices.

The Jaguar stewards were made aware of the 'danger'. Of course, it would be too bad for the employers to be put out by rising prices. So the stewards met the company and together they worked out a 'responsible' solution. Instead of adding the threshold money to the weekly wage, Jaguars would hold onto it. They would then make a lump sum payment on top of agreed holiday pay. The shop floor accepted this arrangement on the stewards' recommendation.

Jaguar management insisted that they were not paying the threshold; but the money paid was the exact amount due under the threshold agreement. Their aim was clear : to get away with making

by **JOE SAUNDERS**

cost-of-living increases to 8,000 British Leyland workers at Jaguar while keeping another 160,000 employees in the dark - with inflation eating away their pay packets.

Jaguar stewards participated in the deception. When Red Weekly reported the 'concealed threshold' payment, senior stewards at Cowley telephoned a convenor at the Browns Lane plant who said: 'No, we are not getting the threshold'.



The plant leadership has a fast answer on shady deals like this. They say they are acting in the best interests of their members in Jaguars. The guiding principle for collaboration is: 'We play ball with management, management will play ball with us'. The theory is that if the shop stewards co-operate in enforcing discipline, mobility of labour and so on then the 'barriers of mistrust' are lowered, and management responds to further the best interests of the workers.

Does it work? The senior stewards claim there's no arguing with the facts. In November last year, British Leyland paid its workers a £1.80 cost of living increase. At Jaguar threshold payments totalled £4.40, which were consolidated with the basic rate before the April 1975 review.

But there is a heavy price to pay. It's not simply a question of principle — dumping trade union solidarity and working class unity in favour of collaboration with management. Among the first to suffer are the Jaguar workers.

The centre of union-management participation is the Monthly Meeting. Senior stewards meet with top management who present the latest market figures, investment plans and production targets for discussion. This is reported back to the joint stewards and finally the shop floor — just as the Ryder report says it should be done.

Throughout last year Jaguar was expanding



Ryder—calls for 'gradual reduction' in workforce

New assembly-lines were built, old ones extended and modernised, production increased. Order books were booming, especially for the American market.

But in January the plant leadership participated in a special meeting. American dealers had cut their order by 70%. The managing director admitted that a mistake may have been made in increasing production capacity. And because the shop stewards were involved in this mistake from the start, they had to participate in sorting it out. They agreed to short-time working from the middle of January.

A month later the full effect of the crisis for Jaguar was clear. The collaborators took another responsible step. A system of voluntary redundancies was brought in to cut the workforce by 10 per cent. Geoffrey Robinson explained: 'We are planning for the future — there is no alternative to a cutback in labour.' Seven hundred jobs were lost.

While 700 paid the price for participation with their jobs, the remainder are still on short-time. And recent events have shown yet more dangers in sacrificing independent organisation and working class solidarity in favour of collaboration with the bosses.

After the redundancies, management wanted to speed up production. The shop floor withdrew agreement to the short-time working. Then the ball game changed. Jaguar's broke their lay-off agreement. Although management was able to dump the spirit of 'responsible co-operation' as soon as it suited them, it wasn't so easy for the stewards.

Finally they worked out an alternative where short-time working goes on and everybody works overtime each day. It's a messy arrangement trying to balance between the needs of the management and the interests of the workers. Although it was accepted by a majority vote

across the factory, it caused big divisions among the workforce. Whole sections, including the main assembly, voted against the plan. Shop stewards then had to enforce the vote in every section.

The 1975 wage review is only the latest lesson in how participation ties down the working class. The shop stewards are recommending acceptance of a 13 per cent rise. They claim there is 'no alternative' to falling living standards given the present state of the car market.



The results of a policy of co-operation are clear. Workers rely on the bosses and accept responsibility for falling markets and rising prices even where the boss won't. When the crisis comes (and it has) the workers end up carrying the can for capitalism — with redundancies on the one hand and wages eaten away by rising prices on the other. The defenders of class collaborationist policies have nothing to offer except idle boasts — like the fox who lost his tail and claimed he was better off without it. ■

# ...time...Speed-up...Sackings...Short-time...Spe



# THE DUBCEK LETTER

## part 2



Exclusive extracts from his open letter to the Czechoslovak leaders  
On the opposite page we analyse this document

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The enforced dismissal from the industrial and cultural spheres of large numbers of qualified people who have expressed and continue to express a different *opinion* from the leadership is causing and will continue to cause immense damage. I think that the working class and its leading role has been morally affected. I should like to be mistaken when I say that the working class, as the most important component and nominal bearer of power in a socialist state, feels that it is being thoroughly manipulated. It has been deprived of what it regarded as progressive and has had a different conception forced upon it. Worker participation in public affairs and state administration has been reduced to a minimum insofar as it exists at all.

In my view the most serious consequences of the present policy is the fact that the people have been deprived of the possibility of discussing party policy without fear, i.e. freely, and thus of making decisions about matters affecting society.

*I am forced to conclude that the present Party line has been successfully implemented, social values have been successfully destroyed, but none of the conflicts which led to the crisis in the Party and society in the sixties (i.e. not in the years 1968-69, but before 1968) have been solved.*

The present leadership has not led the Party and society out of this crisis through the so-called policy of 'consolidation' adopted after the invasion. On the contrary, the Party's development has been set back not only to the stage prior to 1968, but to a situation the like of which has not been seen during the whole of its history. Since April 1969 the Party, having failed to solve the existing crisis, has fallen into an even deeper crisis, the seriousness of whose consequences it has not yet fully appreciated.

I refute the thesis that 'socialism can be overthrown by imperialist bourgeois propaganda'. The latter can merely exploit mistakes and deficiencies in the socialist countries. Such propaganda can be defeated only by overcoming the causes of the shortcomings it exploits. The above thesis is harmful for it deflects the attention of the Party and the socialist state from the solution of their own shortcomings, mistakes and distortions, and from the internal causes thereof, which are the major and decisive ones.



Underestimation or ignoring of internal differences in the activity of the Communist Party as the leading force in society after the victory of the working class leads inevitably to a gradual weakening of the Party's influence

on the masses, to a decline in initiative and initial enthusiasm, and mainly to a gradual loss of the voluntary spirit with which the masses launched the revolution and the building of socialism.

The Party leadership becomes divorced from the rank and file, and the Party line from the working class and the people as a decisive subject of power. . . . *The masses cease to understand the Party.* The Party and State leadership, seeing no other way out, resorts to the exercise of administrative power through which it imposes respect for its line, and the obedience and 'uniform discipline' of communists. This is how power begins to be exercised over those in whose hands power ought to be invested, with regard to their leading role in society.

The principle of respecting special features and differences in socialist revolution and socialist construction is important not only in the implementation of internal policy, but also in relations between communist, workers' and socialist parties. Violation of this principle can damage and has damaged the communist, social and also national-liberation movements.



Would it be right for us to instruct the comrades in Poland on how to collectivise their agriculture, a problem which we solved a long time ago and which has not yet been solved in Poland? And if, in addition, we were to construct a theory that they were thereby conserving capitalism and private enterprise? No, this would not be right, for they know best why, when and how they will solve this problem.

At the same time I must state that it was not right of the leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party to attempt to drive us to ill-considered actions in 1968 while we were trying to solve our own problems; when at that time all the universities in Warsaw were closed, the lecturers had been dismissed from their posts, and there was general dissatisfaction with their policy which eventually led to such tragic events as shooting at workers. Perhaps the Party leadership in Poland at that time thought that by attacking our policy and our leadership they would solve their own domestic conflicts.

If there are to be firm and good relations between communist parties, the principle should be observed in practice that the solution of internal problems in a Party and a country is the exclusive concern of the respective Party. Perhaps this principle should be chronicled in a

resolution at a world or European forum of communist parties. The resolution passed by the Government of the USSR in 1956 could serve as a basis.

Regarding principles governing the mutual relations between communist parties, a factional policy inside another CP should not be supported. I mean by this the actions of a group which six years ago formulated a conception of the solution to our internal problems which differed from that of the Central Committee of the CP, the Government and the National Assembly, going as far as military intervention by some Warsaw Pact countries. (I am referring to an official report issued by the Soviet Press Agency on 21 August 1968 concerning an appeal for intervention in Czechoslovakia by the troops of some Warsaw Pact countries.)

This group took upon itself too great a responsibility without the knowledge of the authorities competent to take this step. Although today they brandish Leninism, they have jettisoned the principle of a democratic majority. They have gone to extremes unparalleled in the communist movement—beginning with the arrest of leading official representatives and ending with the gradual liquidation of the policy accepted by the people; exploiting a favourable situation to impose their own views which they try to pass off as Marxist-Leninist and internationalist. (If Lenin could only rise from the dead for a while to see everything that is sanctified by his name . . .)

Today they cry out on all sides that they are loyal to the Warsaw Pact, and so on. This is common demagoguery. Did such a question ever arise in our Party and State leadership? Did our leadership violate this Pact? The existence of the Warsaw Pact is given by the need for the collective defence of its members in the event of an attack on any one of them. Our attitude to the obligations arising from the alliance is expressed in the documents signed by all the members, as is the attitude of the other countries including Rumania. There has been no violation on our part. This fully attests to our internationalism.



I understand now more than ever that the *system of personal power* is an amalgamation of political, ideological, organisational, cadre and other instruments and measures wielded primarily from a position of power. It is not enough

to agree with this analysis: it is necessary to overcome this system consciously, to thwart it through legal norms, prevent its perpetuation and existence; we tried to do this partially.

This method is incompatible with Marxism-Leninism. What is important is not so much the individuals and personalities who put this system into operation under the pretext of protec-



ting orthodox Leninism, threatened by various 'improvers'—although this factor is by no means negligible. It is crucial that the very concept behind this method of governing based, among other things, on manipulating the masses into obedience and discipline 'in order that socialism may not be threatened'—be destroyed theoretically, organisationally and politically.

Not to unmask this method, damaging to socialism ('to avoid playing into the hands of hostile propagandists') means to cultivate, particularly in the young generation, undesirable conformity and apathy—to nurture the idea that conforming, even to unjust, gains some advantage for oneself, albeit at the expense of others, not infrequently of one's closest friend or comrade. The idea and active defence of human rights is therefore fully justified even under socialism. The Party primarily should uphold this, and its leadership should bear the banner.

The main content of this letter is intended to show more clearly that my 'guilt' (and not mine alone) consists of a different evaluation of our development than the one expressed in the 'Lesson of the Crisis Period' [December 1972 CC document], and a different view of the necessity to overcome the lasting and deepening crisis in the Party and in society than that held by the present leadership of the Party. I reject the injustice shown toward me and comrades who think the same way, including even the use of security organs. (In their defence it would perhaps be more correct to say that they are misused.) In this connection it is worth mentioning the fact that the President of the Republic had the habit of placing transistor radios at the windows before opening any discussions. This I think requires no comment and speaks for itself.

The whole life of our country is festooned with webs, and those who spin them need sustenance and sanction. I cannot call it other than by its real name: it is the misuse of power and violation of socialist principles and Party principles. It is a violation of human rights.

1968 500 1000 1500 2000

### The Revolutionary Left in Czechoslovakia

Dr. Miroslav Holub, Prague, 1968

The Agrarian Reform in the Czech Republic and the Moral Workers' Party

The Manifesto of the Revolutionary Left, 1968

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Hungary 1956: Russian army controls the streets of Budapest. Twelve years later it was the turn of Czechoslovakia.

Twice the Russian Army has been thrown against the governments of workers' states: in 1956 against Imre Nagy's Government during the Hungarian revolution; and in 1968 against the Government of Alexander Dubcek in Czechoslovakia. Similarities between the two men are striking: both spent more of their lives in the USSR than most other East European leaders; both showed immense courage and honesty. Furthermore, both sincerely believed in the traditions of the international Stalinist movement, yet tried to break with aspects of those traditions in order to resolve the crippling crises which Stalinism had brought to their countries, and finally fell from power being accused of playing into the hands of the counter-revolution.

The fates of these two men were different. Nagy, tricked by Khrushchev's promise of safe conduct, was kidnapped to Rumania and butchered there on the Kremlin's orders in 1958. Dubcek was also seized by the Russian military. But because of the mass resistance of the Czechoslovak peoples, including the great bulk of Communist Party members, who held the 14th Party Congress clandestinely in occupied Prague, Brezhnev was forced to release Dubcek and his colleagues.

Alexander Dubcek would not welcome comparison with Imre Nagy, who is still vilified in CP circles throughout the world as a counter-revolutionary. And Dubcek still evidently hopes that the expelled leaders of the Czechoslovak reform movement will be able one day to return to their places at the head of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. He hopes that the path of peaceful and gradual reform started in January 1968 can eventually be followed again by the Czechoslovak Communist Party.

## CONSISTENCY OF POLITICAL VIEWS

Dubcek has maintained a remarkable consistency of political views during the last six years. The orientation in his present letter differs very little from his last speech to the Party Central Committee in September 1969. He continues to defend the policy pursued from January to August 1968, and still supports the Action Programme which outlined the Reform Project of the Prague Spring.

In spite of vigorous attempts by the secret police to intimidate him, Dubcek does not mince words in describing the present situation in the country. He explains that 'a deeper and qualitatively new crisis was brought about by the August intervention' (of the Warsaw Pact armies in 1968). The Husak Government's policy can only lead to 'the degradation of the human personality', and the working class 'feels that it is being thoroughly manipulated... worker participation in public affairs and state administration has been reduced to a minimum, insofar as it exists at all'. Dubcek reaffirms his own commitment to democratising the Party and state, declaring: 'One cannot look upon the Party rank and file as a blind mass to whom the leaders pass down chewed-over morsels for them to swallow'. He denounces the systematic use of force and coercion against the working class and insists on the right of opposition to be freely expressed within the Party.

The sweep and vigour of his description of the present situation inside Czechoslovakia makes Dubcek's document a profoundly embarrassing one for the CP leaderships of Western Europe, who would dearly like to forget about Czechoslovakia. At the same time there is nothing in Dubcek's letter which Western CP leaders could use to prove his ideological capitulation to the bourgeoisie. True, for revolutionary Marxists his remarks about the German Social Democrats are particularly outrageous: he calls Brandt's policy the 'main force and bulwark against the advance of revanchism and fascism'. But such views should not lead British CP leader McLennan or his Italian counterpart Berlinguer to bat an eyelid: after all, the Italian CP is busy trying to shack up with the Christian Democrats without a whisper of critical comment from other CPs.

## FATAL FLAWS OF ANALYSIS

Yet Dubcek's undeniable courage in taking an open stand against the Husak regime and exposing the travesty of socialist democracy in Czechoslovakia must not blind us to the fatal flaws of his own analysis and perspective.

In the first place, while Dubcek defends the general political orientation of the Reform movement he does not unequivocally defend the traditions of the Czechoslovak CP of 1968. He makes it clear that he is prepared to take the November 1968 Central Committee resolution as the starting-point for a new policy. He fails to insist on the validity of the traditions

explicitly refuses to describe the present regime as traitors to the Czechoslovak working class; instead he gives them labels which would allow future coexistence in one Party: he calls them 'sectarians' and 'dogmatists'. He does not explicitly acknowledge the existence of Communist and Socialist political prisoners, nor does he demand the release of such men as Sabata, Hubl and Mueller. Most strikingly of all, he identifies the Kremlin, not as the organiser of the counter-revolutionary forces in 1968, but as the linchpin of any socialist foreign policy for Czechoslovakia.

Dubcek has not been able to combine a defence of the Reform movement with a convincing answer as to why it failed, for to do so would involve going beyond phrases about the system of 'personal power' in Czechoslovakia. The forces that crushed the upsurge of the Czechoslovak masses in 1968 were more than just a handful of unscrupulous politicians and time-servers: they were and are a distinct social caste of bureaucrats, whose power rests on the socialised property relations of the workers' states but who possess sharply different interests from those of the working masses themselves. This point was thoroughly grasped by the Association of the Revolutionary Left. In a memorandum to the 14th Party Congress written in May 1968 the group explained: 'Those social groups commanding the nationalised means of production—the party bureaucracy and possibly the economic-technocratic plant managers and the top layer of the intelligentsia—can move away from the concrete interests of the producers and finally turn against them as manipulators, monopolistic employers and social managers.' Because this escapes Dubcek he is able to indulge the fond hope that the problems of the working masses in Eastern Europe can be resolved through gradual, peaceful reforms, without the convulsions of political revolution.

## WORKERS' DEMOCRACY

Since the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR the Leninist slogan of Soviet Power has been drained of its radical, democratic content by the official Communist Parties. The Reform movement in 1968 ended press censorship and allowed a free expression of grievances by the masses at public meetings and within their organisations. This was enough to provoke the Warsaw Pact invasion, but it was still a long way from reorganising the state into a system of democratic workers' councils on the lines of the Soviets of the October Revolution; and Dubcek, who has not attempted to re-think the history of the revolutionary workers' movement since Lenin's days, retains the framework of the 1968 liberalisation.

A different spirit is contained in the Manifesto of the Party of Workers' Councils, written in 1974: 'We shall prepare for the establishment of workers' councils. When the workers take over power in the factories, we shall not wait for the workers' councils to be confirmed by the ministry of the interior or any other organ of the present regime.' Only through the building

inevitable in any workers' state while the world is still dominated by capitalism and where the disappearance of the state machine is therefore impossible.

With the winning of freedom of expression various different currents of opinion will emerge within the working class, and these currents must be granted the right to organise themselves and struggle within the mass organisations — above all the workers councils — to win a majority. Without the existence of Soviets, which bring the masses directly into the running of the affairs of state, the tendency for the political parties to become bureaucratised is greatly strengthened. But without the right to form political parties, the workers councils inevitably become empty shells, since all the key decisions will be taken not in the Soviets but inside the single party.

Today, as in 1968, Dubcek has been unable to grasp these fundamental lessons of the history of the revolutionary workers' movement.

## REAL INTERNATIONALISM

Implicitly, Dubcek repudiates the Kremlin's notion of internationalism. But to find an alternative internationalist perspective we must turn to the Manifesto of the Revolutionary Socialist Party in Czechoslovakia, published clandestinely in 1969.

This declares: 'Our struggle and our organisation must have an international character. Our position is very little different from the position of the workers in the neighbouring peoples' democracies' — and it is above all with them that we must link up — and it is finally little different from that of the people in the USSR, where social oppression is often joined to oppression of nationalities — in the Ukraine, the Baltic Republics, Transcaucasia, etc. Even if the political awareness of the people of these countries is often lower than here, they are our allies, our brothers, who are gradually becoming our comrades in struggle, just like the French and Italian workers, just like the oppressed people of Africa and Latin America, just like the workers of the whole world.'

Again the Party of Workers' Councils puts forward clearly internationalist aims. It proclaims its task to be 'to acquaint the workers of the Warsaw Pact countries with our Party's prog-

# THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE

ramme and to co-ordinate our campaigns with those of other parties with similar programmes. We are aware of our affinity with the whole of Eastern Europe.'

The crime of the Soviet bureaucracy does not simply lie, as Dubcek's letter suggests, in its rejection of the particular, peculiar forms of development to socialism in each country. It lies in crushing the basic content of proletarian democracy and socialist development in every country under its sway. Its crime does not lie in trying to export a form of development only valid for the USSR. That form of development is above all not valid for the USSR itself, and never has been. Furthermore, the politics of the East European regimes are not simply 'sectarian' and 'dogmatic': the Kremlin's policy internationally has trampled on the basic doctrines of Marxism-Leninism, not least in its thoroughly class-collaborationist policy in relation to imperialism.

## SOCIALIST OPPOSITION

Dubcek's letter will give new confidence to thousands of socialists and Communists resisting the vicious dictatorship in Czechoslovakia. But he has not been able to advance a positive programme for resolving the problems of the Czechoslovak masses. There is no possibility of a re-run of the 1968 Reform movement being able to reconcile the interests of the Czechoslovak working people with those of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

The choice facing the expelled Communists in Czechoslovakia is a brutally harsh one: either the road of clandestine organisation and struggle for a thorough-going political revolution throughout Eastern Europe; or the road of the Gomulka of Eastern Europe: the road of providing a left face for the bureaucracy in a future crisis — as Gomulka did in Poland in 1956 — only to be discredited in the eyes of the masses and finally overthrown in ignominy, as the shipyard workers of Poland disposed of Gomulka in 1970.

Whichever road is taken by the Czechoslovak Socialists Opposition, our task must be to demonstrate our revolutionary solidarity and to take its defence throughout the British working class movement.

Oliver MacDonald





# PORTUGAL AFTER THE ELECTIONS

Now that the detailed results of the Portuguese elections are available it is possible to draw some more specific conclusions about what they reveal.

The first feature is the undeniable emergence of the Socialist Party as the chosen spokesman for an important section of the working class. While the SP undoubtedly acquired a lot of middle class support, and even votes from reactionaries who saw it as the best bet to stop the Communists, it also received a massive vote in the most important proletarian areas.

A second major fact is the decisive rejection by the Portuguese working class of the parties of the bourgeoisie. In Lisbon for example, the two parties of the bourgeoisie—the Centre Democrats and the Popular Democrats—received less than 20% of the vote (compared with the more than one-third nationally). But even this pales in comparison with what happened in proletarian bastions. In the industrial district of Setubal just south of Lisbon (one of the major concentrations of large scale heavy industry) the parties of the bourgeoisie could only muster a little more than 7% of the vote!

The poor showing of the Communist party nationally (12.5%) flows from the failure of its class collaborationist policies to establish it as a political leadership of the workers movement on a national level

Where the CP has a strong local organisation and is seen by the more politically advanced workers as a leading force in the struggles—as in Setubal and Beja—it did very well, taking more than a third of the votes. But in other proletarian areas it did badly. In Portugal's second major city, Porto, the CP received a pathetic vote of less than 7%, while the Socialists got over 42% and the revolutionary left over 4%.

The election figures also suggest that a politically advanced vanguard layer of the workers movement has emerged which is as yet very small, but exists on a national level. While the vote for the CP varied immensely from region to region, the revolutionary left's vote was relatively uniform.

This produced some rather curious results in the more backward areas. In Castelo Branco, for example, the organisations of the revolutionary left got more than 6.6% of the vote compared with only 5.6% for the Communist Party!

One of the revolutionary groups standing in the elections was the Trotskyist LCI (Internationalist Communist League). Below, we interview a militant of the LCI, Joao Cabral Fernandes—who for the last week has been speaking along with Ernest Mandel at a series of anti-EEC meetings up and down the country organised by the IMG—about the significance of the election results and the perspectives put forward by the LCI.



Joao Cabral Fernandes of the LCI

Although the Portuguese workers have launched some very advanced struggles during the past year, it would appear that the election vote for the Communist Party—which has played a prominent role in these struggles—failed to reflect its position in the mass movement. How do you explain this?

for long in the face of the strategies of the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. The AFM—that is to say, the officers—will be obliged to make a choice in this debate.

This is most likely to lead to a strengthening of the fight in preparation for the attacks the AFM will be driven by the crisis to launch on the mass movement. These will take the form of attacks on strikes and so on—as was already outlined last week by Major Costa Martins [the Labour Minister].

Another question on the politics of the AFM concerns the discipline inside the barracks. On 11 March it was the soldiers who had organised at the base who were best able to respond to the fascist attempt. I am talking here about the soldiers' committees, and there are also even some officers who have individually taken up a revolutionary position to the extent of making statements on the radio and in the press that it is necessary to arm the workers.

This situation cannot last for ever, and I believe that it will be very important to see how the AFM will react as a whole and also in its component parts

workers control and if they are carried through without compensation to the bosses.

But the policy of the Communist Party on nationalisation is completely different: just to nationalise certain sectors, to democratise the state, an anti-monopoly-alliance—which does nothing to develop the revolutionary process.

### What is the significance of the vote for the revolutionary left?

It was mainly a vote from layers which have broken from reformism in a very specific way—as a result of struggles in which the reformist policies of the CP have been shown up. At the national level it amounted to 4 per cent, which is an amazing figure when you compare it to that for the CP.

This vote came largely from vanguard workers who have been involved in the most important struggles since 25 April.

laws we were able to explain all the major points of our programme at length on radio and television and in the press—for example, to explain the events of 11 March, the need to arm the working class and so on.

Generally it was an important step forward for us. We held well over a hundred meetings during the campaign; we doubled our membership during this time; most importantly, it was our first really centralised campaign, and this had certain good consequences—for instance, by the end of the campaign our newspaper, *Luta Proletaria*, was appearing on a regular basis every week.

### What perspectives is the LCI putting forward for the mass struggle in the present period?

Well of course we stood in the elections on the basis that they wouldn't resolve any of the fundamental problems facing the

of dual power—the workers' commissions, neighbourhood councils etc. As an immediate demand we call for a government solely of the workers' organisations—excluding the capitalist ministers of the PPD along with the military.

One of the key points of our programme concerns our attitude towards the army—our anti-militarist activity. This centres around demands for democratic rights in the army, wage rises, and explaining the concrete tasks facing soldiers in the face of another military coup. Against illusions in the unity of the Armed Forces Movement we pose the unity of the soldiers in the barracks—the building of soldiers' and sailors' committees which can link up with the workers' organisations.

### Finally, could you say something about your work in solidarity with the struggle against the Francoist dictatorship in Spain?

In our campaign for a United Socialist States of Europe we consider that the highest point of struggle has been reached in Spain, where the working class has made some tremendous advances through the regional general strikes etc. We know that the establishment of close links between the Spanish workers' movement and ourselves is of vital importance in helping to advance the struggle for socialism in both countries, as well as on a European and even world scale.

The imminent fall of the dictatorship in Spain and the events which follow will have a tremendous effect in developing an internationalist consciousness among the workers of Europe, and will lay the basis for a European-wide (at least) solidarity campaign. In the context of building international campaigns against the Common Market and against NATO, support for the struggle in Spain—together with that in Portugal—will be vital.

In the first place, you must understand that the vote for the Communist Party varied enormously from area to area. In areas of struggle like Setubal and Beja, the vote for the CP was quite high.

But you also have to understand the meaning of the vote for the Socialist Party. This came partly from sections of workers only indirectly involved in the wave of struggles which followed the 25 April coup, particularly from those not centrally involved in production—service workers, in transport and so on. On the other hand, of course, the SP also got the votes of the petty bourgeois sectors, the professional layers etc as well as from right-wingers who see it as the best guarantee today of the survival of the present capitalist system.

What is most important is that the openly right wing parties which directly defend the interests of the bourgeoisie—the Social Democratic Centre (CDS) and the Popular Democrats (PPD)—suffered a spectacular defeat at a national level.

While the election wasn't by any means a victory for the working class, it certainly was a defeat for the right. The workers won't be demoralised in any way by the results—their struggles and demands won't be at all affected. That's not the problem.

The real problem is how to maintain the unity of the workers' movement after these results, how to develop its struggles, and how to break the hold of the reformist Communist and Socialist Parties through developing concrete slogans which can advance the revolutionary process—in the army, in the working class, and in the countryside.

The events of 1 May in Lisbon show that the Socialist Party aims to build on its electoral position via mass mobilisations while the CP is trying to retain its weight and influence in the mass movement by posing as the sole connecting link between the Armed Forces Movement and the masses. And that will have consequences for the unfolding of the revolutionary process.

### What will be the effect of the election results on the relationship of forces between the various currents inside the Armed Forces Movement and on the policy of the AFM as a whole?

There are a whole number of currents inside the AFM, although many of them are not openly expressed or are only expressed very cautiously. Because of the present close alliance between the leaders of the AFM and the political parties, the effect of the election results will, I am sure, be to strengthen the right inside the AFM.

But at the same time, that will also lead to a lively debate on the political way forward and the concrete positions of the AFM in the political arena. For the game which the AFM has been playing up till now—'above', as they said, the struggles of the political parties—cannot continue



New tensions after election results were seen in events surrounding May Day demonstration in Lisbon

### What is the strategy of the Communist Party in this situation?

The strategy of the CP remains basically the same—one of class collaboration. It aims to strengthen its ties with the AFM, thus giving it a privileged position against the Socialist Party in its manoeuvres with the masses. This ties in with its policy of gradual transformation of the state and of the army.

The CP will therefore propose some modest measures of nationalisation and so on. But it will go on—and already this has been stated in a recent interview given by the CP general secretary Alvaro Cunhal—to say that in the nationalised sectors the working class must work harder, step up productivity, etc.

In other words, the CP ignores the bourgeois nature of the state, that it's a question of whether the working class or the capitalists are dominant at the level of the state. These nationalisations will only have a class dynamic if they are

like those at Lisnave (the dockyards), TAP (airline), etc. It went mainly to groups like the UDP (Maoist)—which even won a seat in the Constituent Assembly. Of course the strategy of the Maoist groups is not that different from the CP in terms of slogans etc., but in struggle they show a certain willingness to deepen the anti-capitalist struggle.

### What about the vote for the LCI?

We stood in four districts, obtaining a total of 11,000 votes. That's not particularly significant in the overall context, but for us it means 11,000 people who have taken a conscious decision to vote for our programme and position, and that's an important step forward in the construction of the Portuguese section of the Fourth International.

The main importance of the campaign was that it marked out a clear revolutionary marxist pole in the elections with distinctive positions both from those of the reformists and those of the Maoists and

working class: the attacks on democratic freedoms, the consequences of the economic crisis, the economic sabotage of the capitalists, etc. The main themes of our programme were therefore the defence of democratic liberties, the struggle against fascist reaction, against the exploitation of the capitalist system, for the unity of the working class in its struggles, for the self-organisation of the masses via independent structures, with specific objectives and demands: against unemployment, and for nationalisation without compensation and workers' control.

We advance these themes in the workers' movement with the perspective both of building a class struggle tendency in the trade unions and at the same time developing independent organs of working class action.

The fundamental axis of our programme is the call for a workers' government, a government of the workers' organisations with a programme of anti-capitalist measures which can develop the revolutionary process unchecked. We also put forward the strategic slogan of a National Workers' Assembly, and we stress the need to develop structures which form-

## International Marxist Group



(British section of the Fourth International)

97 Caledonian Rd. London N.1.

I would like more information about the IMG and its activities

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Photo: ANDREW WARD (Report)



'This is an historic and appropriate occasion—today the Indochinese revolution is victorious', said chairman Brian Grogan when he opened the packed London IMG rally against the EEC last week. Among the speakers, who stressed the need for international workers' solidarity as an alternative to the capitalists' Common Market, were Ernest Mandel from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (centre) and Portuguese Trotskyist leader Joao Cabral Fernandes (right). Full report of Mandel tour next week.

# Labour 'lefts' flop again

Prior to last week's meeting of the Labour Party National Executive on 30 April the 'left' MPs had been dropping heavy hints that they were going to make sure that the Labour Party's resources would be mobilised for the anti-EEC campaign. The special meeting of the NEC—called at the request of 15 anti-Market members—set the scene for battle. But the swords of the left were never drawn. Instead Ron Hayward, the Party's general secretary, cracked down. Bluntly he told them 'that conference had not instructed him to organise the sort of general election campaign for withdrawal which some anti-Marketters wanted...'

**BOB PENNINGTON**

After Hayward's broadside the 'revolt' fizzled out. For a few minutes the 'lefts' groped around for the odd word. Benn remained silent. Mikardo, who had led the much vaunted onslaught—he had collected the 15 signatures—meekly put himself forward to sign the surrender. He humbly moved the acceptance of Hayward's statement, and just to rub the 'lefts' noses in the dirt, right-winger Mrs Shirley Williams obligingly seconded the motion. The meeting had lasted exactly 27 minutes—the shortest on record in the 75-year history of the NEC. Not one single solitary 'left' voted against the Hayward statement. The right-wing emerged unscathed from the battle; the 'left' crawled out defeated and demoralised.

### CAPITULATED

The 'left' have not just given in to the right wing, but have capitulated to the capitalist class on whose behalf the right wing are fighting the pro-EEC campaign. Because the

'left' have no alternative to the pro-capitalist policies of Wilson they can only restrict their opposition to particular issues and constrain that within the parliamentary framework. All the right wing had to do to bring the 'left' to heel was to organise a letter from 54 backbenchers—anti- and pro-Marketters alike—saying that no attempt should be made to use central party funds, staff or machinery in the campaign. A contrived 'revolt' was organised amongst the staff at Transport House, and the horrific vision of a split was held up before the by now thoroughly frightened 'left'. The failure of the 'left' to organise against the central policies of the Wilson clique leaves all the initiatives with the right wing. If, like most of the 'lefts', you believe in the social contract, which is the cornerstone of the right-wing's policies, you cannot afford to risk splitting the Labour

Party on the EEC. The right wing do not suffer from any such difficulties. They have a coherent policy based on serving the needs of a capitalist Britain. Furthermore they have a social base in the capitalist class for their policies.

### INCAPABLE

The 'left' are incapable of fighting to put into practice the majority decisions of the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress because they cannot fight capitalism. A struggle against unemployment, factory closures and inflation needs the mass involvement of the working class, which entails radically different forms of organisation than those which restrict the working class to parliamentary democracy. That involves challenging parliament, not subordinating the struggles of the working class to pressure on parliament.

The Labour 'lefts' suffer from the worst of all worlds. Without an overall socialist policy to counterpose to Wilson they cannot mount any effective challenge to his politics, but can only squabble on aspects of policy, or how they see policy being interpreted.

Irrevocably committed to parliament they dare not take up any fight that might lose Labour's slender majority. This in turn permits the Cabinet clique to overrule the majority decisions of every significant section of the labour movement.

to be continued ...

### DEMONSTRATE AGAINST THE EEC

London Saturday 31 May  
Vote No to the Bosses' EEC - For a Socialist United States of Europe  
Assemble Hyde Park, Speakers' Corner  
2.00pm move off 3.00pm

Speakers:  
Joan Lester (Labour Party NEC)  
Nick Bradley (LPYS representative on NEC)  
Peter Taaffe (Editor *Militant*)  
Eddie Loyden (MP, Liverpool, Garston)  
The demonstration has been called by the Labour Party Young Socialists.  
The IMG will be giving the demonstration its full support.



## Authority summons students

TWO THOUSAND STUDENTS from all over the country rallied on the campus of Lancaster University last week to demonstrate in support of students victimised for their participation in the Lancaster students' campaign against the education cuts.

Five students have been expelled, five suspended for one year, and heavy fines imposed on over a dozen others. This ferocious attack reflects both the intensity of the cash crisis facing the university authorities, and the measures that the Labour Government will use against both students and workers in education to force through the new budget cuts.

But within hours of the demonstration dispersing, a Union General Meeting voted against a motion proposed by the IMG, IS... and the Young Liberals (!), calling for a re-occupation to force the administration to drop the disciplinary measures. The call was opposed by a motley combination of Tories, Broad Left supporters and Communist Party members, although before being whipped into line by CP student organiser Mike Bloomfield, Communist Party members had earlier spoken in favour of a re-occupation.

This sharp about-turn is a clear indication that the CP believes the fight against the cuts is over, and hopes that an 'orderly' retreat will encourage the university authorities to have mercy at the appeals. By capitulating to the university's 'right' to discipline students carrying out union policy, they have only opened the way for further attacks because more cuts are on the way.

Several hundred students at Lancaster are still on rent strike but because the rent strike was not politically prepared—unlike at Surrey where as well as a full explanation of the grants and cuts campaign students going on rent strike were told to expect summonses—it will be more difficult to get them to stand firm against the legal threats that are now arriving.

Students and workers on the campuses will face a new round of cuts this autumn. A necessary preparation to fight these will be the development of joint union committees of students and all campus workers to throw back the university authorities' offensive. The desire of the CP-dominated NUS Executive to avoid this inevitable confrontation can only repeat the disorderly retreat now being seen at Lancaster.

Lancaster IMG

## GAY WORKERS CONFERENCE

On 10-11 May there will be the first-ever conference of gay workers. It has been supported by militants from the NUT, EEPFU, NALGO, NUPE, AUEW, and NUJ among others. This conference probably represents the most important step ever taken by the gay movement.

The conference will discuss amongst other issues the case of John Warburton, a London teacher who was sacked for being gay. This case is an example of the way the ruling class use anti-homosexual prejudices as a weapon to aid them in victimisations and lay-offs. At the same time the workers' movement remains confused over questions of sex, this creating splits in its ranks.

The gay movement in Britain up to now has not had a big impact. One section of it has confined its activities to calling for law reform. While an attack on the laws regulating sex is undoubtedly necessary, a change in the law of itself will change nothing. It is worth remembering that since the law on homosexuality was 'liberalised' in 1967, the number of arrests for homosexual acts has increased.

Even more importantly, a gay movement based on law reform cuts itself off from the roots of the problems. For the law has nothing to say about gay women. And it is the need to deny women's sexuality, to transform them into glorified breeding machines, that is at the root of all sexual oppression. And this treading down of women is a basic need of the ruling class. A gay movement that does

not understand this is nothing but a liberal mish-mash.

The gay movement however is not composed exclusively of reformists. There have been many other struggles, not least the agitation starting in various trade unions to get the labour movement to fight on the gay question. The forces involved have faced great difficulties. Often they meet with hostility even from would-be revolutionaries.

At this weekend's conference the gay militants must not simply bemoan their fate. They must get down to the job of deciding how practically the struggles now going on in various unions can be united, and how the links between the gay question and the oppression of all women can be made clear—not just in words, but also in action (and in doing this the experience of lesbian militants will play a crucial role).

The gay movement must also prepare itself to face up to the growing threat from the right. A fortnight ago in Bradford the Gay Liberation Front mobilised 70 people for an anti-fascist demonstration. Last summer they were present at every major anti-NF demo. They must go on from there.

Janice Mills

### CORRECTION

The article in *Red Weekly* 24 April on the Scottish TUC stated that the new NALGO claim included a threshold clause. In fact the Special Local Government Group Meeting held on 10 April advanced a claim for the consolidation of existing thresholds (which has now been agreed), and £10 a week plus 5 per cent, to be backed up by industrial action if not met in full by 1 June.

The article's reference to a pay claim hold for every one per cent rise in the Retail Price Index referred to the Islington NALGO Branch amendment (which was for £15 per week, 1½ per cent threshold per 1 per cent rise in prices, and a minimum of £40 per week). This amendment, however, was referred to the National Local Government Committee for consideration. This unfortunately means that it will be forgotten about; the pay claim submitted does not include any

## RED WEEKLY

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# RED WEEKLY

'an over-enthusiastic programme of re-patriating our Commonwealth citizens'

Brian Hosie was jailed for life in Glasgow last week for the murder by shooting of West Indian Hector Smith. But this murder was no ordinary one; Hosie, an Orange bigot and UDA supporter, murdered Smith because he refused to pay Hosie protection money.

What sealed Smith's fate was the fact that he was black. Hosie also just happened to be a member of the National Front.

In Hosie's wallet when he was arrested was found the following letter from NF headquarters: 'Dear member, Welcome to the National

Front. We acknowledge receipt of your subscription and enclose your membership card.'

According to evidence in court, the last words Hector Smith heard were those of NF member Hosie sneering: 'Do you think you are a brave nigger?' He then pulled the

## ANTI-FASCISTS ACT

Oxford's Labour Council has finally decided, with only a single vote against, to allow the fascist National Front to use the Oxford Town Hall for a public meeting on 12 May. To clear the way for the fascist scam they have decided to boot the Oxford Committee for Community Relations out of the Town Hall on that day.

Fortunately the Oxford Anti-Fascist Committee—a united front of local working class organisations—has refused to be deterred. A consistent local campaign, following the rout of the NF at the last election, has alerted the local labour movement to the danger. Hard work in the unions, the colleges, the women's movement and amongst the youth of the town is bringing rewards. The Oxford and District Trades Council is putting its full weight behind the campaign. A declaration of support has also come from Ruskin College students, who have voted to turn over the College to the Anti-Fascist Committee on the day of the meeting.

The demonstration is also receiving wide support from outside Oxford. Coventry Trades Council has given its backing. Anti-fascist forces from Birmingham, London, Swindon, Reading and Bristol will be there. All anti-fascists should respond to the call for the demonstration outside Oxford Town Hall at 6.30 p.m. Those arriving early should go to Ruskin College, Walton Street. A crèche will be provided.

## \*\*\*\*FUND DRIVE\*\*\*\*FUND DRIVE\*\*\*\*FUND DRIVE\*\*\*\*

The Fund Drive got off to a good start this month. We received £123.50 in the first five days, including another £90 from teachers who support Red Weekly.

But your paper needs more. Last month's bills have to be paid at the beginning of this month, and the bills file is still looking ominously thick—with the cash box nearly empty.

This week Red Weekly celebrates its 100th issue with the victory of the Vietnamese revolution. So take this opportunity to give us a little more. Follow the teachers' lead, and rush in every penny you can get—collect at meetings, ask regular readers for donations. Send all monies to 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.



## CROSFIELD'S MASS PICKET CALL

The seven-week-old occupation against redundancies at Crosfield's Electronics in North London is hotting up. Management have told convenor Frank Gore that he is trespassing on company property as he has been sacked. They have also refused to engage in any serious negotiations with the occupying workers.

The Joint Shop Stewards Committee have now called for a mass picket of the factory. The call is likely to be supported by a meeting of the London Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions. Bro. Howe, of the Executive of the Transport and General Workers Union has pledged T&G support in circulating their London-based members in support of the Crosfield workers. The vital blacking on the transport of goods of the De La Rue firm, who now own Crosfield's, has however not yet been imposed.

The Crosfield occupation comes against a background of rising unemployment in London. In areas of East London rates of unemployment are as high as 9 per cent, while in areas of North London rates of 6 and 7 per cent are common. A recent Greater London Council research report showed that the number of skilled manual workers in Greater London fell by about 200,000 in the 1960s. And an intensive onslaught is being made on the jobs of dockers and car workers.

The mass picket at Crosfield's on Tuesday 13 May at 9 a.m. can become a demonstration against the Labour Government's policy of deliberately allowing unemployment to rise in the hope of deterring workers from fighting for wage increases that protect their living standards against inflation.

Donations and resolutions of support for the occupation should be sent to Crosfield Joint Shop Stewards Fund, c/o Bill Hayward, 34 Dresden Road, London N10 3BD.

# NATIONAL FRONT FASCIST MURDERS BLACK

trigger

A few minutes after the murder NF member Hosie—described by one of his co-defendants as 'a madman, a nutter and a headcase'—remarked: 'Niggers are nothing to me. It's just like shooting a dog, niggers make good fertilisers.'

From Barlinnie prison when awaiting trial, Hosie described the murder as 'an over-enthusiastic programme of re-patriating our Commonwealth citizens'. He also boasted that his policy was to 'boost emigration start extermination'.

This is the first time that the murderous racism of the NF has been openly proved to be mixed in

factor in such a trial. Only a few months ago an Edinburgh UDA man was sentenced to seven year's jail for possession of self-loading rifles, which, he alleged, he kept for poaching!

**'It's just like shooting a dog, niggers make good fertilisers.'**

Police who arrested him found his bedroom plastered with NF posters and stickers.

When the Edinburgh NF Organiser, Martin Heath, was challenged to explain this connection before a crowded meeting addressed by *Guardian* journalist Martin Walker

**'boost emigration, start extermination'.**

with the sinister gun-running and extortion rackets of the para-military UDA and UVF outfits in Scotland.

But it is not the first time that the NF itself has been a prominent

in Edinburgh last year, he scurried from the meeting.

He similarly failed to amplify on the fact that after being driven out of Edinburgh in October 1973, NF

leader Martin Webster addressed a meeting called in the name of the Vanguard Party in the Tullis Street Orange Hall in Bridgeton.

The Tullis Street Lodge has previously been noted for its involvement in the organisation of assaults on Irish demonstrations in Glasgow and for the connections of many of its members with the Orange fanatic Jack Glass and other Orange extremists. The then Grand Master of the Tullis Street Lodge was prominent in the attack on the Irish Solidarity Campaign demonstration in Glasgow in October 1971, and was arrested for his pains.

Unfortunately, one of the NF's most prominent activists in Glasgow, Gus Macdonald, probably does not wish to comment on these matters either. He goes on trial next week charged with a serious assault on a left-winger, and rumour has it that he has made a judicious resignation from the NF. James MacLean

# THE UGLY FACE OF THE RULING CLASS

The dregs of British society set themselves on striking stable hands at the Newmarket race meeting last week. The strikers had tried to use sit-down tactics in the middle of the race course to stop horses going down to the post.

Led by Lester Piggott, a group of jockeys—including Bruce Raymond, who rides for TV rental millionaire David Robinson—drove into the picket. Former champion jockey Willie Carson swung his whip at the pickets, trying to lash his way through. To defend themselves the pickets dragged Carson from his horse and clobbered him with his own whip.

The 'Light Brigade' charge of the jockeys delighted the louts in Tattersalls and the Members enclosures, who between double scotches spend many a happy hour berating the working class for its idleness.

Giving the underlings a taste of the whip was one thing—but seeing one of their highly-paid lackeys getting a return dose was too much. The layabouts bayed in anger and scrambled to the railings. Led by General Sir Randle Feilden, chief steward of the Jockey Club, a mob dressed in military-style overcoats, cavalry-tweed twill trousers and suede boots waded into the strikers.

## WELL-HEELED BOOT

Zeiss binoculars were swung at the pickets' heads. Moss Brothers shooting sticks were jabbed into the stable hands. The well-heeled boot was put into more than one picket's ribs.

According to General Sir Randle Feilden, chief steward of the Jockey Club: 'The idea of regulated wages is tantamount to telling Jeremy what to pay his butler'.

In a voice mellowed by many a bottle of vintage port, Feilden urged his upper class louts to get 'stuck in'. He fervently believes in the defence of property, and he equally believes in using violence to defend it. He explained: 'The lads were trespassing on private land. If it had gone on the

terical at the thought that the stable hands whom they treat like servants should have the effrontery to interfere with their pleasure. As a city broker said: 'We were bloody angry.' Another complained bitterly: 'We paid good money for our racing. These people have no right to stop it.'

## DEMENTED

Those who believe in the intrinsic democratic and law-abiding nature of British society should have another look at Newmarket. They should remember the savage demented faces of the brokers, the generals and the landowners. They should remember how they waded in with a fury and savagery that would have put many a Hells Angel to shame.

Red Weekly had to go to press a day early this week at short notice due to the NGA overtime ban imposed in support of their wage claim. We apologise that this cut out some of the news items, but hope to be back to normal service soon. More than usual, we wish the NGA a speedy victory in their struggle!!!

