

FIGHT MUST BE PREPARED



TUC President, Joe Crawford — well-being of capitalism must come first

Bombs have been going off across Britain during the past three weeks. These explosions have left behind them many unanswered questions about the identity and political aims of those responsible.

In order to make even an informed guess about these questions it is necessary to take a look at the present state of the struggle in Ireland against British imperialism.

The arrest of a number of experienced Provisional leaders in the last two months has made a pause in IRA military operations necessary to permit the regroupment and retraining of their forces. Previous pauses of this kind have been exploited by the British propaganda machine to loudly proclaim the demise of the Provos. While this has had little effect in the past, there are two major differences in the present situation.

Firstly, the British have been having some success in the propaganda war — the Assembly elections showed confusion among even the strongest Provo supporters. Secondly, there is a growing mood in favour of troop withdrawal in Britain which the Provisionals take very seriously. They see continued military action on their part as an essential element in speeding up this trend.

For these reasons, a lull in military action on their part could result in tangible benefits for British imperialism. A decision to take some form of military action in Britain would therefore be logical, since it would keep the military struggle going while enabling a regroupment of IRA forces to take place in the North.

An error made by many on the left is to assume that the Provisionals have not learned from the past mistakes of the Republican movement.

Bombs in Britain

While it is true that they have not traced these mistakes to their source in the lack of clear political ideas in Irish Republicanism, they are far more advanced in both their military and political thinking than the IRA of the late '30s, which launched the last, disastrous bombing campaign in Britain.

The fact that over the last three years such a campaign has not been launched suggests that the Provos understand the likely results of a repeat of 1939: anti-Irish hysteria leading to wider support for the troops. It seems safe to assume, therefore, that if they have decided on military action in Britain it will be a limited campaign only, designed to tide them over until regroupment in the North is completed.

The car bombings in Dublin last December and the activities of the Littlejohns reveal the tactics being used by British Intelligence: terror is directed at civilians and then blamed on the Provos.

While the Provisional IRA probably did launch a campaign of incendiary bombing in West End stores during the August shopping spree, as a means of demonstrating their continued military capacity, British Intelligence may well have got in on the act with its own campaign of parcel and letter bombs in order to promote confusion and anti-Irish hysteria.

The leadership of the Provisional IRA ought seriously to reconsider the continuation of even a limited campaign in Britain. Already the events of the last three weeks have cut across the effects of the Littlejohn revelations, and prevented the organisations in Britain who have campaigned against British imperialism in Ireland taking advantage of these revelations to push forward the 'Troops Out' campaign. A military campaign in Britain, while completely defensible in principle, is in the circumstances tactically mistaken.

It is the responsibility of revolutionaries in this country to take advantage of the attention that has been focussed on the Irish struggle by the bombings to explain our solidarity with the Republican movement to a wider audience. The left and the labour movement must undertake to seriously build the 'Troops Out' movement — only then can we expect the IRA to listen to our advice on tactical questions.

BOB PURDIE

MISSED TARGET

Last month, as we feared, we finished up well short of our £300 Fighting Fund target.

This is understandable in view of the pause in our publishing schedule. However, we still had to meet the same expenses during that fortnight, and the money has to come from somewhere.

The final total last month was £227. We must have a big effort this time to make sure the Fund goes over the top — to make sure we can carry on improving the quality of your paper.

The crucial votes at this year's Trades Union Congress are over. On every major issue — the TUC's attitude towards the National Industrial Relations Court, the Pay Board, and negotiations with the Government — the trade union 'leadership' served clear notice that they were more interested in collaborating with the Tory Government than in fighting it.

The right wing carried the day at the conference. This was the result of the bind in which the trade union bureaucrats now find themselves. They face two alternatives. Either they launch a struggle against Government policy which must inevitably develop towards a general strike, or they decide to go along with the Government's Phase 3 and accept a further decline in working class living standards.

The fierce opposition to the demand to call off the talks is due to the unwillingness of the TUC bureaucrats to face up to this choice. The TUC can

by Alf Jennings

hardly collaborate openly with the Government after the defeats suffered by the trade union movement last winter and spring, and the wearing down of working class living standards by spiralling prices during Phase 2. But neither are they willing to lead an all-out showdown with the Government.

So the TUC wants the talks to continue for as long as possible to provide a smokescreen for their betrayal of the working class. When the bankruptcy of the negotiations can no longer be hidden, they will break off the talks and retire to Congress House to write their policy documents for next year's Congress. Meanwhile, individual unions and groups of workers will be left to fight alone against the organised might of the ruling class, the capitalist state, and the Tory Government.

The ideas which lie behind the bureaucrats' action were stated clearly by TUC President, Joe Crawford, of the Colliery Deputies union: 'Trade unionists know better than anyone that they have to shape their ambitions within the context of the economic situation. They do not live in ignorance of the balance of payments, world trade, or the state of the pound.' In other words, it's capitalism first — only then can a few crumbs be negotiated for the working class.

No wonder that the TUC should show such little interest in actually leading struggles. After all, what would that do to 'the balance of payments, world trade or the state of the pound'?

The trade union 'lefts' Jones and Scanlon showed clearly what part the bureaucrats will play in big struggles to come when, shortly before the Congress opened, they ordered their members at Chrysler plants in Coventry to return to work and scab on striking electricians who were actively fighting the very pay laws which Jones and Scanlon claim to oppose. The bureaucrats will not be the organisers of united working class action in the coming struggle. They will be the *disorganisers*.

The TUC may have decided to continue the talks, but the talks can be smashed by massive industrial action directed against the Tories' wages policy. Big claims, such as those of the engineers or the miners, are in the pipeline. If these claims are seriously fought for the talks will be swept away like a house of cards.

The immediate task is for militants in these industries to prepare an all-out fight against the Government. Militants in other industries must begin to prepare solidarity, throughout the entire working class for whichever group of workers is the first to take on the Government.

Such a united struggle would threaten the very existence of the Tory Government, and allow the working class movement to strike a blow against the organiser of all the capitalist policies from which it has suffered over the past few years: the Industrial Relations Act, the Housing Finance Act, the Pay Laws. A general strike to bring down the Tory Government is a real possibility, and could win an immense victory for the working class. It is the aim towards which we must work.

Smash the Talks — Strike Against the Pay Laws!

Solidarity with all workers Fighting the Government Pay Laws!

For a General Strike to Bring Down the Tory Government!

Photo: Peter Harrap (Report)

NO REDUNDANCIES!

say Adwest workers

The management of the Adwest Group are still trying to convince everybody that the sit-in occupation at Adwest Engineering (Reading) is the result of a simple misunderstanding.

Yet at the same time, they are already trying to transfer the most important part of the production work from Reading to their new factory in Pennywell, Sunderland, and are investigating a second site in the docks area of Sunderland to help accommodate further production work moved from Reading.

Since they are so clearly aiming to cease all production at the Reading factory, why are they so anxious to convince everyone that there is no danger to jobs?

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Adwest Group has a very high rate of profit. Their latest figures show a return of 23.9% on capital invested, and they claim it's still rising.

They have achieved this high rate of exploitation by fragmenting their workforce into no less than 21 different subsidiaries with different names, individual plant bargaining, and intensive use of work study, job evaluation and other management techniques for introducing

speed-up.

Naturally their response to the seizure of one of their factories and the demands put forward in the sit-in is tempered by their desire to preserve the situation in which they can make such profits. So the thought uppermost in their minds is to avoid the sort of sharp confrontation over redundancies which could serve to unite the workers of the whole combine in solidarity with the Reading workers.

An example of the danger which threatens them was the way Bowden Controls, their subsidiary in Llanelli which had its own sit-in dispute over a pay claim only 3 months ago, sent representatives to the Reading sit-in as soon as it began and not only pledged support but also called for the setting up of a *combine shop stewards committee for the whole Adwest Group* — something unheard of before.

It follows that the kind of agreement they would like is one in which the unions abandon the principled defence of jobs. For there are two ways of meeting the threat of redundancy: you can *either* accept the redundancies and just fight for the 'best possible' redundancy payments, *or* you fight the redundancies themselves.

The first alternative isolates the workers con-

cerned into a *sectional* struggle. Therefore it achieves nothing as far as strengthening the organisation and confidence of the working class movement is concerned. It also seldom produces the goods even for those made redundant.

THE WAY FORWARD

The Strike Committee has correctly taken up the second alternative. They are fighting the threatened shut-down of production and have seized the plant as a bargaining counter in the negotiations on that issue.

But to win, they must use every opportunity which fighting on this principled issue affords to rally support throughout the combine and take the fight into the car industry itself.

To win, they must forge firm links with shop stewards and staff representatives in other threatened industries in Reading so that together they can mobilise support throughout the local trade union movement.

To win, they must have the support and backing of workers throughout the car industry, where production is already being affected by the dispute.

Paul Hunter

Donations and messages of support should be sent to: Adwest Strike Committee, Adwest Engineering Ltd., Headley Road East, Woodley, Reading.

CURRENT ACCOUNT

TUC prices policy

In its latest report last week the capitalists' most reliable economic soothsayer, the *National Institute Economic Review*, predicts that even if the Phase 2 wage control laws could be maintained, the rate of inflation in the coming year would remain at its present unprecedented level of 10 per cent.

The immediate need of the working class, therefore, to protect itself against the rapid destruction of the purchasing power of its wages, is becoming more compelling than ever. This destruction is not some accidental result of an inflation washed onto our shores from overseas; it is central to the Tory Government's strategy to deal with the mounting capitalist crisis.

ILLUSION

In its treacherous talks with the Heath government, the TUC is peddling the illusion that the living standards of the working class can be protected through the control of prices — especially those of food and other basic necessities. It poses this as an alternative to the Tories' plan for threshold agreements (analysed in this column last week).

In theory, food price controls could be introduced with or without a subsidy from the State to the producers of the goods with controlled prices. But if there is no subsidy, then any temporary gain to the working class would be quickly outweighed by the capitalists' efforts to extricate themselves from the effect of price control in reducing their profits. Either they would stop putting their goods on the market in the normal way, and so shortages and black markets would develop; or else in some cases they might stop putting their goods on the market altogether, either selling them abroad in more lucrative markets or else stockpiling them in anticipation of higher prices later.

Nixon's panic price control measures, introduced as a sop to the working class in June of this year, give a most dramatic example of this kind of result. Most of the controls were rapidly abandoned in response to the food producers' hysteria. But as a result of the control on beef prices, which remains until 12 September, producers have simply left beef on the hoof and slaughtered less cattle, while distributors have held it in deep freeze. The result is that beef has all but disappeared from American shops, and there is an outburst of wild west style cattle rustling.

SUBSIDY

The TUC, however, is advocating the other kind of subsidy — combined with subsidies to the producers and distributors who are subject to the control. This gift from the State to maintain profits, however, has to be financed from resources somewhere else. There are in the present situation of little spare productive capacity only three places that such resources could be drawn from. One is from abroad, which means permitting the current balance of payments deficit (now running at the staggering level of £1,350 million annually) to worsen even further. This is not open to the Tory government without the risk of a further collapse of sterling, which would only exacerbate inflation in general. The second alternative is to draw the needed funds from profits. This is, of course, directly contrary to the whole aim of the Tories' economic strategy. There remains only the third alternative — to draw the resources from the working class itself. Anything gained from price control would have to be lost in other ways — through taxation for example.

This stark inevitability is a further illustration of the consequences of the TUC's talks with a government whose unswerving strategy is to reduce the real living standards of the working class. The TUC is inevitably landed in a dialogue not about whether the real needs of the workers can be met or not, but about the details of how they will be sacrificed in the Tory Government's attempt to salvage capitalism from its economic crisis.

Michael Price

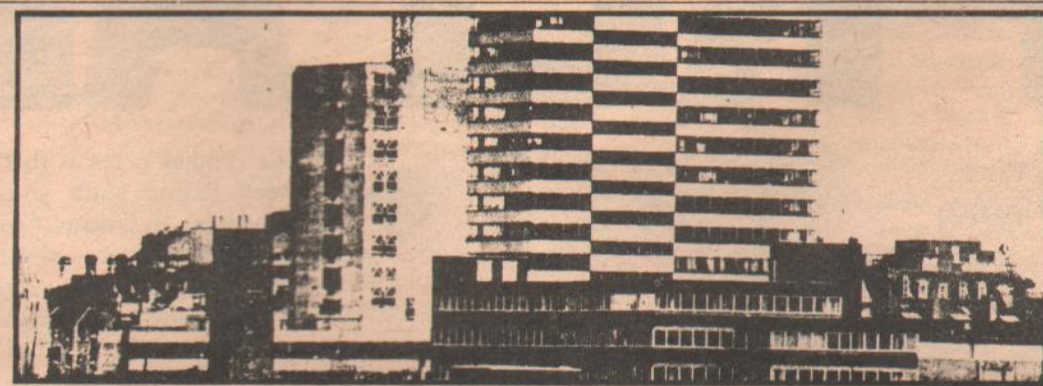
Development of capitalism in Reading

The last twelve months have seen industrial closure plans in Reading turn from a trickle into a flood. At the end of last year Huntley and Palmers, part of the Associated Biscuits' combine, announced plans to transfer production from Reading — where it has been a staple industry for nearly 150 years — to their other factories, beginning the rundown in 1974. In June, Gillette said they intended to switch some production lines away from Reading.

Even more recently, Suttons Seeds have decided to move away from Reading to East Berkshire, and planning permission has already been granted for warehouses to be built on their seed trial grounds. And we report elsewhere on the workers' resistance to moves by Adwest Engineering to shift production of power steering gears for the motor industry to a new plant in Sunderland.

On top of all this has now come the announcement on 24 August by Courages, part of the Imperial Tobacco Company, that it intends to close down its brewery in Reading, and centralise all its breweries at a single new site. Eleven hundred jobs are involved here.

This spate of closure plans is all part of the transformation which the town of Reading is undergoing. Over the past decade Reading's closeness to London has begun to tell in an unprecedented way. Since the mid-1960s the movement of businesses and people out of London, with its restrictions on new office building, over-crowded suburbs, and rocketing rents and land prices, increased tremendously.



The main attraction of Reading is its well-placed position in the communications network: it is on the M4 motorway, has extremely easy access to London, and is close to Heathrow Airport, making it quicker to get to Paris than to Manchester, for instance.

But this movement from London has gone ahead with no serious attempt to plan these changes, which are affecting the lives of tens of thousands of people. It is not only the production and distribution of goods, but also the development of the cities where industries are located, which goes on in a chaotic way in capitalist society.

Thus, in 1971 Reading's 'town planners' envisaged a growth of up to 1.5 million square feet more office space by 1981. But now, only two years later, half the total planned for the whole ten-year period is already either under construction or planning permission has been granted.

One result of these developments is that Reading and London land and house prices are now virtually the same, with industrial land currently fetching £100,000 an acre, and houses selling for an average of £11,500. No less than two-thirds of all the employment in the insurance, banking and finance

belt of central Berkshire — North Hampshire — North-west Surrey is concentrated in Reading, and new office blocks are going up faster than workers can be found to fill them.

And as these businesses move in, so the old industries move out. Firms like Courages and Huntley and Palmers occupy vast acres of land which others are clamouring to buy. Courages' 14 acre site close to the town centre would probably sell for over £1½ million; the sprawling biscuit factory covers an even larger area of land; and the Adwest Group own hundreds of acres which will bring them a vast sum of money if they put it on the market.

So the Reading which was the overspill and commuter town for what London could not take in the 60s, is now increasingly confronted by the same pressures for which it earlier provided London's relief. The workforce from the factories closing down is generally not well-suited to the needs of the new employers in Reading, and many of these workers will face great difficulties in finding comparable jobs in the area. Meanwhile the shortage of skilled labour grows and grows, and the lucky landowners pocket millions. And where will the offices move to after Reading?

Robert Pearce

squatters and tenants, 100 of whom belong to such a body, Student Community Housing. Threatened with homelessness as a result of redevelopment plans, they decided to stay put in their homes until everyone in the street was guaranteed re-housing and the redevelopment plans for the area were discussed and approved by them. However, this of course meant breaking the agreement which SCH had made with the Greater London Council to vacate all the properties by a certain date.

This struggle, around the slogans of 'No Evictions! — Housing For All!', has received considerable support from local tenants and community newspapers, as well as the unanimous support of the Camden Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (the largest body of its kind in London). Despite this, however, SCH went ahead with an attempt actually to evict its tenants in Elgin Avenue. This was foiled by the combined action of the newly-formed All-London Squatters Federation and the SCH tenants. But then another 'official' 'squatter' body to which SCH is affiliated, the Family Squatting Advisory Service, moved in and unsuccessfully attempted to force SCH to evict its tenants!

Such moves amount to an attempt to consolidate the previous weaknesses of the movement, reflected in the 'agreements' with the GLC, when it is now actually strong enough to fight back. By agreeing that they, organisations for the homeless, should themselves evict the homeless, they are accepting that the responsibility for the situation rests with them.

These divisions come at a dangerous time. The attacks by the courts and increasing homelessness have meant an expansion by the squatting movement into new areas. In Herne Hill, for example, luxury flats owned by Grandiose Ltd. were taken over, while at 220, Camden High Street, a shop-front owned by speculator Joe Levy has been taken over for use as an information and organisation centre to aid the struggle of tenants and squatters locally and all over London.

The ruling class is obviously not going to tolerate such moves to take over properties which it actually wants. Already it is limbering up for the attack. Tower Hamlets Council recently sent thugs to smash up the interiors of squats (containing families) in East London. On Tuesday Camden Council was applying for court orders to carry out mass evictions of the organising centres of important squats in the area.

London squatters are increasingly in the front line of the struggle for better housing for all. On Monday, demonstrators against the threatened Camden evictions marched around the local council blocks explaining how squatters and tenants, who are fighting rent increases under the Housing Finance Act, are engaged in a common battle against the threat of rising homelessness. It is through such actions that sections of the working class can begin to be drawn into a struggle whose outcome will have important implications for the whole labour movement.

Piers Corbyn

Squatters fight false friends

New advances are being made by the rapidly growing squatting movement in London in response to attacks not only from the courts but also from so-called 'friends' of the movement.

A few months ago the Law Lords reinterpreted the laws relating to squatting in order to make it more difficult for courts to grant suspension of eviction orders. They also made it illegal to conspire to commit the *civil* (not criminal) act of squatting. Furthermore, it has recently come to light that as from April 1974, Housing Authorities will no longer be legally obliged to guarantee accommodation to *anyone* — even children or families.

However, squatting activists are under attack not just from this direction but also from the 'official' 'squatter' organisations (which do *not* squat but use empty properties which the councils allow them to borrow). In Elgin Avenue, W.9., for example, there are 200

British chauvinism and the SLL

In its issue of 1 September, *Workers Press*, 'Organ of the Central Committee of the Socialist Labour League', continues its campaign of slander against the International Marxist Group.

Its methodology is simple - it turns into questions of *principle* matters that have always been *tactical* questions for the revolutionary movement. It is a tactical question whether or not a revolutionary who is summoned to be interviewed by the police agrees to go or not. It is a tactical question whether or not revolutionaries make statements to the capitalist press.

The SLL accuses us of a 'cover up', but it is the one with something to hide: its capitulation to the backwardness of the British working class and to British chauvinism on the question of the war in Ireland. It has not denied, because it *cannot* deny, what we said last week: the SLL has been 'conspicuously absent from the demonstrations, meetings and campaigns against internment and the whole series of repressive measures carried out by British imperialism in Ireland.'

The explanation of the SLL's absurdities is simple. The International Marxist Group has taken a principled stand on the London bombings. Inevitably this places us under threat of repression by the capitalist state. The SLL condemns the bombers *whoever they are* (our emphasis), and would prefer not to be seen in the company of a disreputable group like the IMG which has the habit of affirming its *solidarity* with the Irish struggle on the most difficult occasions.

Increasingly *Workers Press* resorts to unattributed and anonymous 'republican sources' to bolster up their flagging case. Meanwhile the only clear, written statement by any section of the Republican Movement is the letter from Brendan Magill, National Organiser of the Republican Movement in Britain, printed in last week's *Red Weekly*.

That supports what we said last week: at no time during these events has any member of the IMG - including comrade Gery Lawless - violated the principles of the revolutionary movement.

The *Workers Press* article of 1 September gives even further proof of the bankruptcy of the SLL's politics. It says 'The IMG contemptuously rejects the main question of the hour facing the workers in Britain and

in Northern Ireland: a massive political and industrial campaign to force the Tories out of office'. It is, of course, a lie to say that we reject the need for a fight against the Tory Government. The IMG has a clear position in favour of a general strike to force the Tories out of office, and is working at least as energetically as the SLL to bring this about.

What we do reject is the blatant British chauvinism of the SLL which lumps together 'Britain' and 'Northern Ireland', and assumes that, because the central task of the British working class is to kick out the Tories, the Irish working class can have no independent tasks of their own. Presumably if the SLL had its way the Irish Republican Army would turn in their guns, forget about the fight for national unity and independence, forget about the hold of counter-revolutionary Orangeism over the Protestant working class, and organise peaceful parades through the streets of Belfast with placards calling for the downfall of the Tories. After all it would be so much more *British!*

We, on the other hand, recognise that the central task for the working class in Ireland (including that section designated 'Northern Ireland' by imperialism) is to lead the national struggle against imperialism. The armed struggle of the IRA against the British Army in the North is the decisive front at the present time.

We do not feel that this fight is a 'diversion', or that it weakens the struggle against the Tory Government in Britain. On the contrary, the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland is a serious thorn in the side of the Tories, and will be a crucial factor in throwing any pro-capitalist Government, Tory or Labour, into crisis. The IRA is a determined 'enemy of our enemy' and is therefore one of our best allies.

We do not cringe at the sight of armed struggle in Ireland. We welcome it as a means of demonstrating in practice to the mass of British workers the lesson which they must learn if there is to be successful revolutionary struggle in this country: the capitalist state rests on organised violence, and revolutionary, armed struggle will be necessary in the fight against that state.

That is why we are proud to say:

Solidarity with the IRA!

Long Live the Armed Struggle Against British Imperialism!

IMG STATEMENT 'GREAT', SAYS INTERNEE

AINE WALSH

INTERNEE
ARMAGH GAOL
ARMAGH
29. 8. 73.

Dear Sir
I get your weekly paper and enjoy the reading matter very much. So I wish to send my condolences to you and your members, at the recent trouble you had to take from Her Majesty's forces of law and order. Also for the statement in the Red Weekly it was great. Thanking you. Keep sending the papers every one here loves them.
fraternally
Aine Walsh.

PAKISTAN ACT RACISM WITH LABOUR'S BLESSING

Last Saturday the first steps were taken to deprive some 30,000 people in this country of their civil rights. Over the next year they will lose the right to vote or stand for office in Parliamentary or local council elections, the right to work in the Civil Service, and will become subject to laws which, if applied, would deprive many of them of the right to strike.

All these measures are contained in the infamous Pakistan Act - one of the most viciously racist laws ever passed by Parliament - which became law on 1 September. The architect of this law was the Tory Government, but it was accepted by the vast majority of Labour MP's. In both the House of Commons and the Lords the bill was adopted without a 'division' (i.e. agreement was so complete that it was not necessary to actually count votes).

Using Pakistan's withdrawal from the Commonwealth last year as a pretext, this Act makes all Pakistan citizens in this country into 'aliens'. As a result they lose all civil rights. They also become subject to the Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act - adopted during the post-World War I working class upsurge to combat 'alien communists' - which, among other things, states that 'If an alien promotes or attempts to promote industrial unrest in any industry in which he has not been *bona fide*

engaged for at least two years immediately preceding in the United Kingdom he shall be liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months.' In other words, for many Pakistani workers striking is now illegal.

The Pakistani community will also suffer disadvantages under Britain's racist immigration laws as a result of this change in their status.

The only way around this law is for Pakistanis to register as British citizens: but that is a step which can only be taken after they have been in this country for five years. Those who do not meet this criterion will have to suffer until they are eligible for registration.

LABOUR'S BLESSING

Some of the worst provisions of the Act will not take effect for another year: Pakistanis will not lose the right to vote until the new voting registers are drawn up next February, those who are already local councillors will be allowed to serve out their term of office, and those already employed in the civil service will not be sacked for twelve months.

There are several reasons for this concession. In some cases it would not have been practical to move faster. There was also the danger that too drastic action - such as an immediate purge of Pakistani civil servants and local councillors - might touch off a wave of resistance within the Pakistani community. But one of the most important considerations was the need to buy Labour Party support for this measure. The original Tory proposals only provided for a six months period of grace; it was only in response to Labour's criticisms that this was extended to one year. And in exchange for this miserable concession almost the entire Parliamentary Labour Party gave its blessing to this racist law.

NEW AND DANGEROUS

There is something new and very dangerous about the Pakistan Act. It is the first racist law that directs its whole force against those *already settled* in this country. The immigration laws have had little direct effect on those already here - their main aim has been to make things more difficult for others to get into the country, or to make the position of newcomers more

difficult after they have entered.

But the Pakistan Act is an outright and vicious attack on the black community in this country. If the immigration laws have made racism in this country respectable and built up the confidence of fascist rabble like the National Front, then the Pakistan Act will serve this purpose even more effectively.

Yet it is precisely this measure that the Labour Party has gone along with most completely. The main body of Labour MP's have accepted the basic arguments behind previous racist laws, and this new move is presented by the Government as just a logical development of these laws: a 'tidying up operation' made necessary by Pakistan's withdrawal from the Commonwealth.

Even those sections of the party who have opposed racist measures in the past made no attempt to lead a real fight against them outside of Parliament. They now accept them as 'facts of life' and make their criticisms within the framework laid down by those racist laws.

Moreover the Labour Party has long posed as the champion of 'Commonwealth' ties, as opposed to the European connections sought by the leaders of the Tory Party. Their opposition to the Immigration Act in 1962 was based on the fact that it might 'upset' relations with the Commonwealth. Even the Labour 'left' has relied heavily on this chauvinistic attachment to the Commonwealth in its anti-Common Market campaign. What could they say, then, in opposition to Alec Douglas Home's argument that: 'the value of the Commonwealth should not be diluted by allowing a country which had left the Commonwealth, or its citizens, indefinitely to enjoy those privileges which derive solely from Commonwealth membership.'

Labour MP's thus found themselves unable to attack the proposed Act on *principle* and simply called for it to be applied more 'humanely'. When the Tories conceded this point, Labour just tagged along quickly behind the Government.

RESISTANCE

Over the next twelve months the Pakistani community will be paying the price for the chauvinism and racism of the British working class movement. It is important that immediate steps be taken to resist this new racist attack. So far *Red Weekly* has been the only paper on the left to call attention to this Act and its dangerous implications. The whole left must take up this question.

A campaign should be launched immediately throughout the trade unions to make it clear to the Government that any attempt to use the Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act against any group of workers will be met with mass industrial action. Resolutions to this effect should be passed by every trade union body. Militants in the civil service should insist that their unions fight all attempts to apply the Act, whether by harassment of Pakistani civil servants now, or their outright purge in 1974. The entire working class movement must be won to the fight for an end to all this country's racist laws - the Pakistan Act, the Aliens Act, and the Immigration Act.

Brian Slocock

BANNED IN IRELAND, available from RED BOOKS:

FREEDOM STRUGGLE BY THE PROVISIONAL IRA



100 pages. Retail: 50p. Special Offer: Mail order: 50p post free.

From: RED BOOKS, 24 Boundary Road, London N.W.8.

Trade: write for terms or phone 01-624 4504



Pakistan Act 1973

This week one of the most powerful unions in the country, the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, will be submitting its claim for a ten pound increase.

TERRY CRAWFORD explains how this challenge to the Government's pay policy could determine the balance of class forces for a whole period to come.

THE ENGINEERS CLAIM

AND THE STRUGGLE TO BRING DOWN THE TORY GOVERNMENT

Earlier this year in Torquay, the National Committee of the Engineering Section of the AUEW decided that the union would present a new claim to the employers after the present agreement had run out on 25 August.

This claim calls for an increase of £10 per week on the national basic rate for skilled workers and proportional increases for other grades, equal pay for women, a 35 hour week, and four weeks paid annual holiday. This claim, which is being put to the employers on 14 September is one of the biggest ever lodged in any British industry – the employers estimate that it will cost them £7 million per year.

AUEW President Hugh Scanlon has constantly pointed out that pursuing such a large claim will inevitably mean a clash with the Government. Judging by his reluctance to withdraw from the TUC-Government talks, that is a prospect which he probably doesn't feel too happy about. At stake in such a clash would be much more than just improved conditions for engineering workers and reduced profits for the employers – the Government's entire economic strategy would be threatened.

The claim is being submitted at a time when the working class have been on the defensive against Government attacks. Nobody has successfully challenged the £1 + 4% norm imposed by Phase 2. Even strongly organised sections of the working class, such as the miners and the Ford workers, have steered clear of confrontation with the Government. The Tories have attempted to drive home their advantage by attacking pickets – an attempt to weaken the rank-and-file organisation of the working class in preparation for the coming battles. The 24 building workers on trial in Shrewsbury, some on charges of 'conspiracy', have received only a fraction of the support that is necessary for an effective defence.

This is in sharp contrast to the situation last year, when the Tories were sent reeling by the miners' strike and the struggle which freed the 'Pentonville 5'. If ever there was a chance for the working class to put the boot in that was it. It is the gentlemen of the TUC who must be given much of the credit for the fact that the Government was not only able to recover from those blows but found itself able to resume the offensive. When the Tories desperately needed something to prevent the working class from heading towards an all-out offensive, it was the General Council who came to the rescue.

By participating in negotiations with the Government and the Confederation of British Industry, the TUC accepted that the working class were responsible for the economic problems of capitalism. No wonder they ended up by being prepared to consider the Tories' suggestions about how to keep wages down. With this kind of 'leadership' it is hardly surprising that the working class have been unable to fight Phase 2 and find themselves in the present situation. Almost exactly a year later, the TUC are around the table with Heath again (with Scanlon wishing he could be there too), talking about capitalism's economic problems and 'negotiating' the reduction of working class living standards in order to try and solve these problems of the ruling class.

In this situation, the rank and file leadership of the working class are faced with a burning question – which way forward? The Labour Party 'lefts' and the trade union bureaucracy are anxious to make sure that the road taken does not lead to any serious struggle which might upset their more serious business of making Parliamentary speeches and indulging in cosy chats at Downing Street. They promise that the grass will be greener over the next hill – and that, of course, is the next general election. The recently adopted 'left-wing' programme of the Labour Party is dangled in front of the working class: more nationalisation and 'workers' participation' are offered as the key to the future. All our efforts, they tell us, must be concentrated on making sure that the Labour Party wins the next election. This conception of the way forward for the working class is counterposed to organising a real struggle in the Autumn.

General Strike

The issues raised by the Labour Party programme, such as nationalisation and workers' control, should undoubtedly be taken up and discussed throughout the whole working class movement. But an electoral struggle for a Labour Government is clearly *not* the next key step forward for the working class.

Getting rid of the Tory government is an objective which the whole working class must set itself. If we simply concentrate on combating particular policies of the Tories, we will find ourselves jumping from one Tory attack to the other without any clear perspective of winning the war. Support for every struggle against the government should be organised throughout the whole working class, thus preparing to draw the whole movement into a general strike to kick out the Government altogether. This is the way forward which should be offered by the militants to the working class – not the promise of a vote and a programme at some future election.

This is why the engineers' claim can be so important for the working class in the present situation. The AUEW is one of the most powerful unions in the country, and has often been in the front line in combating the attacks of the Government on the working class (at least in words, if not always in deeds). A struggle between the Government and the AUEW over such a massive claim as the one being submitted this month would be the most decisive showdown since the miners' strike. Its outcome could determine the balance of class forces for the whole period to come. A national engineering strike could easily spark off a struggle of general strike proportions – a struggle which would challenge the very existence of the Government. It is for this kind of struggle that working class militants must be preparing now.

Scanlon and his companions in the bureaucracy of the AUEW obviously do not feel at all happy about such a prospect. Like most trade union bureaucrats, their main concern is to secure the quietest possible life for themselves and they much prefer amiable negotiations to organising struggles. The claim, however, poses them with certain problems.

When Bill Carron was President of the AEU in the 1960s, decisions of National Committees,

conferences, etc., would just have been ignored. Carron was the standard-bearer for the right wing of the bureaucracy, and just stamped on the necks of the militants if they stuck them out too far. Any initiatives which were taken at rank-and-file level soon came under the hammer of 'Carron's Law'.

When Carron retired, the election for President centred around Boyd and Scanlon. The former stood for the continuation of Carron's policies, with Scanlon as the candidate of the left. Scanlon was billed by his supporters not just as a man with progressive ideas, but as someone who would give a free rein to militants in the industry to take their own initiatives without the officials cracking down. This was the basis on which militants in the industry, organised mainly by the Communist Party, supported Scanlon. With this kind of base it has never been possible for Scanlon to blatantly sell out in the same way as Carron did.

But neither does it mean that the 'left' bureaucrats are any more interested in organising real struggles than the right. Scanlon adopted a different kind of tactic to prevent any major struggles – he passed the buck to the membership. The classic example of this was the decision to throw the struggle over last year's wage claim into the laps of the shop stewards. The engineers in Manchester were forced to stick their necks out because of this policy and, as a result, got their heads chopped off. Without a national struggle for the claim there was little hope of the demands being won – and Scanlon knew it.

The call to the membership to do their own thing to 'defend the union's policy' after the National Industrial Relations Court fines was again a way of ensuring that no big struggle would break out – that would have required leadership at a national level. By passing the buck in this way, Scanlon has managed to utilise the militants' lack of political perspective to prevent any major struggle unfolding. He has thus been able to avoid getting his own hands too dirty from openly selling out.

But the limits of this tactic have been reached. After last year's fiasco, any suggestion that this year's claim should be fought for on a local basis would be treated with contempt. The militants are looking for a lead on the national level, and for the bureaucracy to try and pass the buck over this claim *would* now be seen as a sell-out.

That is why Scanlon is so annoyed at being pulled out of the talks with the Government. The bureaucracy were pinning their hopes on a deal with the Tories which would contain enough concessions to isolate the militants from the mass of the working class and so avoid any big struggle. Now that a deal looks extremely unlikely, the bureaucracy will be faced with the problem of what action to take when the claim is rejected.

Communist Party

This headache of the bureaucracy is a problem for the Communist Party. The CP have emphasised the need for an 'autumn wages offensive' in the columns of the *Morning Star* and in public meetings up and down the country. Their strongest industrial base is in the AUEW, and the engineers' claim ought to offer the best possibility for smashing the Tory pay laws. Yet the CP have remained uncommitted, so far, on what kind of struggle, if any, should be waged.

The CP, if they wanted to, could organise meetings and publicity throughout the engineering industry to prepare a struggle over the claim. The trap that they are caught in, however, is that they have continually built up Scanlon as someone who is a vital ally in the struggle against the Tories. When that 'vital ally' openly supports the TUC-Government talks (which the CP themselves call a 'crime and a scandal'), and when he is clearly *not* prepared to back an 'autumn wages offensive', the CP find themselves in something of a dilemma. The whole logic of preparing for an autumn wages offensive means fighting people like Scanlon who want to make deals on incomes policy with the Tories. But the CP will not do this. For the CP, as always, their alliance with the 'left' bureaucrats comes before the real interests of the working class.

Size of claim

In spite of the apparent size of the claim, it does not have as much to offer workers in the engineering industry as the figure of £10 would seem to suggest. This increase would be on the National Minimum Time Rate (NMTR). The problem is, however, that a simple increase in the NMTR would not automatically give all workers in the industry an increase in their wage packet. This does not mean that such an increase would just be an irrelevancy to many workers in the industry, however, first of all, the NMTR is taken as the figure on which overtime and shift rates are based, so in that



Outside Pentonville jail last year—chance to put the boot in was lost then. (Photo: Serena Wadham)

sense *all* workers would gain from an increase in the NMTR. But more important, the NMTR is taken as a reference point for determining the level of earnings of *every* category of worker in the industry, even though their wages may not be *directly* tied to it. Pieceworkers, for example, constantly have an eye on the difference between their actual earnings and the NMTR (the piecework incentive). If this difference was reduced drastically, as it would be by a £10 increase in the NMTR, the only course open to pieceworkers would be to submit claims on a local basis for increased piecework prices in order to restore the differential. As can well be imagined, a *local* struggle over such a large increase is not a prospect which any section of workers in the industry could face with confidence.

The other main category of workers who would not automatically receive an increase from the claim are those who receive a fixed bonus on top of the NMTR. The question facing them is, would that bonus disappear or would it remain in the event of the claim being won? Last year's agreement actually contained a clause stating that where workers received earnings above the level after the increase, the bonus would be eroded by the amount of the increase. Consequently, they would receive nothing.

Such problems are real obstacles to militants in the industry who are trying to win support for the claim. There must be solutions to these problems which ensure that the fate of the earnings of such categories of workers is determined by the outcome of a *national*



struggle and that the militants must not be allowed to face the prospect of going out on a limb *after* such a struggle. We should press for the negotiators to demand from the employers that there be *no reduction in the piecework incentive and no erosion of bonus*. This would give these workers a *direct* interest in winning the claim and would unite these sections behind a struggle.

Although the words 'equal pay for women' appear in the text of the claim, this is something different from the resolution adopted by the N.C. calling for a 'vigorous campaign for equal pay'. It will probably not play any major role in the union's objectives for a settlement with the employers. One of the problems is — and this was probably intentional — that 'equal pay' is useless as a specific demand over which to wage a struggle. Equal pay with whom? Men? Which men?

The lack of clarity on this question causes great confusion as to precisely what the objective is in any specific struggle. The demand which the AUEW *should* be pushing for as part of the claim is for the *abolition of the category of 'women'* in the industry, and the grading of women into the grades of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled. This would abolish the whole concept of 'women's work' which the employers use as their justification for discriminating against women.

Finally, whatever the terms of any agreement made with the employers, there should be strong opposition made to any proposals for another package deal. By tying wages at a specific level for a period of one or two years, the workers are at the mercy of constantly

rising prices, as well as having sold their right to fight for higher living standards at *any* time. The resolution adopted by the union's national committee instructed the Executive Council to 'mobilise the membership for national industrial action if necessary'. Time and time again since then the term 'national industrial action' has been used in relation to the projected struggle over the claim.

No one has ever clarified precisely *what* national industrial action is necessary. Scanlon has already spoken of a national overtime ban. The question of what action should be taken to fight for the claim is already looming large to militants in the engineering industry, and will increasingly become the burning question. Every militant should be fighting to get the union committed to a national engineering strike.

As Scanlon has already pointed out, the struggle will be against the Government, who will undoubtedly use all the forces of the State against the engineers. If the engineers are to win the claim then there can be no half-measures. All the forces at their disposal must be utilised. A national overtime ban would not only be completely ineffective as a weapon of struggle. It would also completely divide the workers, as some sections of the industry depend to a large extent on overtime to boost their income whilst others do not.

Nothing short of a full scale national engineering strike can hope to win the claim. It is the preparation for this kind of struggle that militants in the engineering industry should be engaging in. Resolutions calling upon the E.C. to prepare a national strike should be put through branches,

shop stewards committees and quarterlies, District Committees etc. A call for a national strike from the 'Engineering Voice' conference in Birmingham on 9 September could be extremely important in initiating a campaign in the industry for this perspective.

Resolutions should also be put to District Committees and local sections of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions to organise conferences of shop stewards in the industry in the area to elect a local strike committee and to run a publicity campaign in support of the claim. A national delegate conference of shop stewards committees should be held to elect a national strike committee to organise the forces at a national level. Such a conference could make other vital preparations such as centralising information about the state of preparation of the enemy. If the strike committee knew what firms have vital orders to meet this year, which are well-stocked, which depend on exports etc., mass picketing and occupations of the most vital companies could be organised with the maximum efficiency.

The maximum amount of pressure should be put on the bureaucracy to take such initiatives. But we cannot rely solely on them to prepare the workers for the struggle. Initiatives should be taken by the rank and file leadership independently of what the officials do.

Some District Committees have already taken steps to organise special shop stewards aggregates to discuss the claim. But where the D.C. is not doing this, steps should be taken by shop stewards committees to organise such a conference. Special bulletins publicising the claim should be put out by shop stewards committees

in the factories; mass factory meetings to discuss what other steps can be taken would also be an important way to involve the mass of the workers in the preparation of the struggle.

All these kinds of activities are not only necessary to ensure the success of a struggle should one break out, but they are also essential to demonstrate to the mass of workers in the industry that they have a determined and serious leadership and that they can have a direct say in the conduct of the struggle. Winning the claim would then be seen as a real possibility, instead of just the day-dream it seems to many at the moment.

Another vital factor in boosting the confidence of the engineering workers would be demonstrations of support from other sections of the working class. AUEW branches, D.C.s, shop stewards committees, etc., should press other unions to send delegates to any conferences that may be organised on the claim to pledge solidarity with any action that the engineers take. Trades Councils should organise delegate conferences of shop stewards committees throughout the district to prepare to organise practical assistance to the engineers.

Undoubtedly, the National Committee did not have this kind of thing in mind when its resolution spoke of 'mobilising the membership'. But if such steps can be taken at a rank and file level, they could be a vital factor in determining the outcome of the recall N.C. to take a decision to call a national engineering strike. Such a struggle could quickly pull in other sections of the working class, and could well sink Phase 3 and the Tory Government itself.

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND CAPITALIST CRISIS / conclusion

Between two stools



Georges Marchais, leader of the French Communist Party

There are at present three main forces in favour of the Labour Party moving to the left. First is the left wing of the party. Second is the leadership of the party, which hopes a left shift will help propel Labour back into office. Third is a section of the trade union bureaucracy which wants to avoid leading massive industrial struggles in the coming period and hopes instead to turn people's thoughts to ideas of an election.

But the thing which will determine the significance of Labour's left shift will not be the aims of anybody but the actual objective effect which this shift will have on the class struggle. This will be determined by the attitude of the ruling class to the new Labour programme and by the questions and expectations that such a programme raises in the working class.

'LEFT' PROGRAMMES

The new 'left' programmes being adopted by the social democratic parties all have roughly the same form. They include increased social security services, a national minimum wage, and some provisions for worker participation in management of industry. All this is to be financed by increased economic growth. This growth is to be achieved by two main methods: increases in working class income and demand are to be stimulated by redistributing income away from the rich to the working class and the lower paid; and an increase in investment will result from increased state intervention in the economy — including a programme of nationalisations.

These programmes are completely contradictory and unrealistic. Increasing money income for the working class will simply produce inflation, not a higher standard of living, unless output of goods is increased. This could be done by putting unused economic resources to work and by increasing investment. The first method can be used very effectively in periods of economic recession and high unemployment (the Allende Government in Chile, for example, cut unemployment dramatically in its first year in office). The crunch comes when all unused resources have been put to work: if investment does not then increase dramatically there can only be a rapid rise in inflation. In Chile the rate of inflation now runs at over 100% a year. The 'left' programmes of social democracy are quite incapable of overcoming this problem. The capitalist class will not invest while wage increases are cutting into their profits and they are permanently afraid of being nationalised by a left wing government.

LEFT BOOKSTORES!

Freedom struggle by the Provisional IRA

— the book Cosgrave banned from Dublin — is being wholesaled through RED BOOKS. 100pp., £0.50 retail. Inquiries to: Dept FS, 24 Boundary Road, London N.W.8. Tel: 624 4504.

BACK IN PRINT Lenin's What is to be done?

20p (inc. p. & p.) from: RED BOOKS, 24 Boundary Road, London N.W.8.

RED BOOKS

The left programmes of social democracy do not propose that sufficient firms be nationalised to end the domination of the economy by private industry and investment. In France, the proposed nationalisation of 13 industrial groups, and in Britain the proposed nationalisation of 25 companies would still leave decisive sections of the economy in private hands. Under a 'left' government, investment by these private firms would inevitably collapse, even if conscious sabotage were not carried out, and the economy would be thrown into chaos. In short, the 'left' proposals of the social democracy for the economy are totally unrealistic because they fail to take the economy totally out of the hands of the capitalists. On the political plane they are equally utopian because they do not tackle the question of the bourgeois state.

However the fact that the new programmes of social democracy are unrealistic, will not achieve the goals they set themselves, and certainly will not achieve socialism, does not mean that these programmes are in the direct interest of the ruling class. It is not at all in the interests of the ruling class for the capitalist economy to be plunged into crisis by an attempt to carry out a left Labour programme. The 1945 Labour programme objectively strengthened the capitalist class and was therefore, in general, passively accepted by them. But the implementation of the type of programme now being proposed would not at all strengthen the position of the British ruling class. For this reason the polarisation around this programme is not a fake polarisation. When Wilson vetoes the nationalisation proposals, for example, he acts in the direct interests of the ruling class. When the Labour left attacks his veto they act against the interests of the ruling class even though the actual measures they propose would not achieve socialism.

REVOLUTIONARY RESPONSE

Even more crucial than the objective effects of Labour's programme is the impact such a programme can have on the working class even if it were not actually carried out. When the Labour party talks of nationalising 25 companies, the question is raised in the minds of the working class as to why only 25? When the Labour Party talks of some 'workers control' (by which it really means worker participation) the obvious question is raised as to why not real workers control? The effect of this turn by the Labour and Social Democratic parties will therefore be to raise a whole series of questions in the consciousness of the working class. Furthermore, revolutionaries can use individual points in the programmes in order to take the struggle of the working class forward and go far beyond the aims of the social democrats.

A leading member of the former Communist League explained how revolutionaries in France could take advantage of the 'left' programme of the Communist Party-Socialist Party.

Gaining support around [our] demands and utilising, by going beyond them, certain aspects of the common programme of the 'Union of the Left', revolutionaries will press agitation for workers control. The common programme projects a certain number of measures aimed at limiting the employers' absolute power. It says "The factory and work place committees and the personnel delegates — including delegates from the shops and departments wherever these exist in the factory — must be consulted on all decisions involving hiring and firing, distribution of positions, transfers, classification of workers, setting of work pace, and more generally, all working conditions... Implementation of these decisions shall be held in

abeyance until agreement is reached among all concerned parties" . . . We have stressed the ambiguities of these formulations. Suppose, as is inevitable, that the "parties concerned" fail to "reach agreement". Then who makes the decision? The common programme implicitly concedes that the employer will decide. If the parties can't reach agreement, it says, then "the employees' representatives can appeal to the labour courts". Starting from the criticism of these equivocating formulations, and strongly conscious of the workers' democratic aspirations revolutionaries will press for workers control with veto power over firings, hirings, transfers, distribution of occupational positions, the way wages are paid, the work rate, health and security conditions, in short, all working conditions. This control must be exercised by control committees composed of delegates from the shops, the assembly lines, or the departments, democratically elected by their fellow workers, responsible to them, and recallable at any time. Their functioning must involve opening the companies' books and management records, as the common programme itself calls for. The control committees must be accorded a sufficient time during each work day to consult with the workers and to discharge their duties.

In Britain in the coming period revolutionaries can do exactly the same type of thing. Take for example the TUC proposals on 'industrial democracy'. These are completely ambiguous or wrong on all central questions. One one page they say that it will be the workers and the company (in the last analysis the company) who will decide the question of sackings, speed up and so on. However only six pages before that they suggest that it should be 'representatives' of the workers alone who should make the decision — although even here they do not propose that it be made by the mass of the workers. But this raises in the consciousness of the working class an idea of unilateral decision-making by the workers — of real workers control.

Another example is prices. The Labour Party calls for price controls. But who is to police and enforce them? The industrialists themselves or a 'prices board'? The experience of Phase 2 has already shown this is useless. Any call by Labour for control of prices immediately raises the question of the organisations of the working class taking up the regulation of prices. In the coming period these questions will be raised in the consciousness of the working class

Francois Mitterrand, leader of the French Socialist Party



by the working class bureaucracies themselves, far more powerfully than the revolutionaries could ever do by themselves.

LABOUR IN OFFICE

The adoption of a 'left' programme by Labour will arouse expectations and questions throughout the working class which will result in political ideas well to the left of Labour, whether Labour in office actually tries to carry out that programme or not. If it comes to office on a programme which goes against the objective interests of the capitalist class, Labour has only two basic choices. The first would be not to implement the programme, and function more or less openly as a government acting in the interests of the capitalist class. That would be to repeat the experience of the 1964-70 Labour Government.

However the effects of this experience would be qualitatively greater than 1964-70 in terms of working class resistance. The attacks the Government would have to carry out on the working class would be much greater, and the expectations dashed far greater. The ties between the Labour Party and large sections of the working class would be threatened and an entirely new period in British political history would open up. The growth of the revolutionary left under such circumstances would be extraordinarily rapid.

The other choice would be to attempt to implement the programme. This would be met with resistance from the ruling class through economic sabotage and so on. Economic crisis, sky rocketing inflation, and massive working class mobilisations would be the inevitable outcome of such a government. Demands for workers control, for stopping capitalist sabotage, for resistance to the attacks of the capitalist state, would find rapidly growing support in the working class.

It is as yet too early to say which of these courses would be adopted by a new Labour Government. A Government formed in the wake of a massive working class upsurge would be in a very different position than one which came into office through an ordinary election.

We can be certain of one thing. It is the revolutionaries and not social democracy who will, in the long run, gain from social democracy's new left turn.

'I swear on my honour that I have not received unemployment benefit or social security allowances during the period from 1 to 31 August 1973. I am taking part in the struggle for full employment, against the restructuring of the company, and in defence of the gains we have previously won. I will continue the fight decided upon and led by the entire workforce of Lip. This payment represents the salary due to me for the month of August. It comes from the proceeds of the sale of watches.'

This statement was signed last Friday by each of 1,167 workers from the Lip watchmaking factory in Besancon in eastern France, evicted by 3,000 armed police on 14 August after occupying the factory for two months. The pay-out was the second organised by the workers themselves since the struggle began, financed by the 'illegal' sale of watches 'illegally' produced in the 'illegally' occupied factory.

MORALE-BOOSTER

The successful completion of this operation was a big morale-booster for the Lip workers. Three weeks after their eviction, they have now even restarted the production of watches in a secret workshop with parts smuggled out before the police moved in. Despite thorough searches, the police have failed to find any of their large stock of completed watches, or to locate the missing machine-parts, computer tapes etc. without which it will be impossible to restart the factory.

Moreover, the self-organisation of the workers remains as solid as ever. Every day the course and conduct of the struggle is discussed at a mass meeting of all the workers in the local cinema, where all major decisions are made. And the commissions originally set up at the

Last Thursday the dignity of one of the lesser daughters of our 'Mother of Parliaments' was rudely assaulted as 150 striking railway workers invaded the Canadian Parliament, protesting against planned Government legislation that would make their strike illegal.

The 'non-operating' railway workers — clerks and station hands — had been engaged in strike action for almost six weeks, to back up their claim for a pay rise of 11% a year for the next two years. For the first four weeks they had engaged in 'rotating' strikes — hitting one area of the country at a time for 48 hours, and then shifting to another area. But on 23 August a national strike began. In a country like Canada, heavily dependent on the railways for transportation, this had a shattering effect on industry.

ORDERED BACK

The Liberal Government of Prime Minister Trudeau — which does not hold a majority of seats in Parliament, and has depended upon the New Democratic Party (Canada's Labour Party) for support — replied by recalling Parliament six weeks early and preparing a law to order the strikers back to work.

There is nothing new in this. Since 1950 the Government has used the force of the law to order striking workers in 'essential services' back to work eight times. The railwaymen themselves have been subject to such orders three times in the past ten years.

As a result of the settlements imposed on them in 1966 and 1969, the wages of railway workers have been unable to keep up with the rapid inflation that has plagued the Canadian economy, along with the rest of the world's capitalist economies.

The Government measure was passed by Parliament on 1 September. It was supported by the governing Liberals and the Conservative opposition, with only the New Democratic Party voting against. A Conservative sponsored

The long-awaited Tenth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party took place in Peking between 24 and 28 August. This was the first full-scale Congress of the Party for more than four years.

The Congress took place in secret, and its existence was not announced until after it had ended. The main outcome appears to have been the consolidation of the leadership and political line that has dominated the Party since the purging of party leaders Lin Piao and Chen Po-ta in 1971.

LEFT CURRENT

These two men represented a left political current within the Chinese bureaucracy that gained temporary power during the 'Cultural Revolution' by both suppressing the threat of a real political revolution against the bureaucracy from the Red Guard left, and, at the same time, supporting some of the anti-bureaucratic and anti-imperialist ideas which arose during these years of mass upheaval.

LIP STRIKE STILL SOLID

start of the occupation to deal with particular aspects of the struggle have been reconstituted and are functioning as effectively as before.

NEW COMMISSION

A new commission has also been set up — the Anti-Repression Commission. Since the police took over the factory, there have been countless incidents of police harassment and provocation of the local inhabitants. At one state they even fired gas grenades into nearby blocks of flats and into the railway station, nearly igniting a tank full of diesel fuel. There have also been numerous arrests as a result of the skirmishes between police and workers outside the factory.

The press has attempted to portray those arrested as 'outside agitators', and this refrain was at first taken up by the reformist trade union and political leaders, anxious to safeguard the respectability of the struggle. But it was quickly stamped on by the Lip workers themselves. In issue No.7 of their bulletin, *Lip-Unité*, they stated quite unambiguously: 'The clashes are the result of the occupation of our factory by the police. Although we think that these people are fighting in the wrong way, we know that almost all of them are workers like us or others who seek to support our just cause.'

The Anti-Repression Commission is not only providing legal assistance for those arrested, but has also taken on such tasks as arranging for the care of families where the father has

been jailed, fighting the cases of workers who have been sacked after being arrested, etc.

NATIONAL SCALE

The key to the Lip struggles however, remains its extension on a national scale. When the police were sent in three weeks ago, it became a trial of strength between the French Government and the whole working class. The Lip workers are well aware of this, and have devoted an increasing share of their resources to the activities of the Popularisation Commission. This has sent delegations all over France to explain and build support for the aims and forms of struggle adopted by the Lip workers.

At the level of solidarity actions, the response has been willing but unorganised. Token gestures but no central initiatives have come from the trade union leaders, who are still waiting eagerly on the results of the negotiations between the Government's representative, M. Giraud, and the Lip workers. The fourth session of these on Tuesday ended in deadlock, but a fifth session is expected to take place on Saturday.

However, it is precisely the relationship of forces established in the *broad class struggle* which will determine the outcome of any negotiations. In this respect, the national 'march on Besancon', provisionally planned by the Lip workers to take place in three weeks' time, could provide the centralising focus which is so urgently needed. Its effectiveness, though, will depend on the ability of local militants to

organise for it beforehand through broad-based preparatory committees which can unite all those forces prepared to take action on this question.

EXEMPLARY METHODS

But at the same time, the Government's ability to keep the situation under control is increasingly being threatened from another angle. In the last four months the Lip workers have developed or rediscovered many exemplary forms of struggle. Now these are being taken up by other sections of the French workers' movement for use in their own struggles.

First to follow the example of the Lip workers were workers at the two shoe-making firms in the town of Romans, who briefly occupied their factories last month. But now instances are rapidly multiplying: strikers at a clothing manufacturer's in Cerizay have decided to restart production of certain lines in order to finance their struggle; hatmakers at Saint-Dié have taken over their factory after it was declared bankrupt; workers at a chocolate factory in Grenoble threatened with closure have set up their own committee to keep a daily check on management's actions.

So far only small firms have been affected. But it can only be a matter of time before such methods are adopted in a struggle involving thousands of workers. The Government cannot afford any more than the working class to sit this one out. John Marston

Canadian Government breaks rail strike

amendment increasing the wage rise imposed on the railway workers from 16% to 18%, over two years, was carried despite Liberal opposition.

MILITANCY

With the rate of inflation running at about 8% this miserable rise will do little to make up for the decline in railway workers living standards. That is the reason this strike has been accompanied by such vigorous rank-and-file militancy. It was only this militancy which forced the trade union bureaucrats to lodge a claim for a 15% a year increase in the first place although they later reduced this to 11%. Under pressure, some of the trade union leaders even talked of disobeying the back-to-work order, but they appear to have got cold feet at the last minute.

This serious set-back for the Canadian trade union movement shows the urgent need for united trade union action against state attacks on the union movement. This is something which has been sorely lacking in recent Canadian trade union history — union leaders have been sent to jail for as long as 18 months for disobeying a court order against picketing — but is now needed more clearly than ever before.

The New Democratic Party has, up until now, been backing the Liberal Party and keeping it in power. But this latest move will put it under



great pressure to withdraw that support. In the following weeks Parliament will be debating the crisis situation with regard to inflation and food prices. The Government could very well be defeated. That will spark off a serious political crisis at a time when the class struggle is reaching a new level of intensity, and could result in important new working class mobilisations.

Railmen on the march in Toronto

The Canadian experience should serve as an object lesson to British trade unionists as to what can happen if state intervention against the trade union movement is not fought. If the TUC has its way the same sort of thing could be happening here in the not too distant future. Brian Slocock

China - 10th Party Congress

In international affairs Lin advocated the famous strategy of surrounding the 'cities' of the world (the imperialist countries) by the 'countryside' of the world (the countries

exploited by imperialism). In his political report to the Congress, Party vice-Chairman Chou En-lai repeated the charge that Lin Piao tried to defect to the Soviet Union. This may well be true, as may the claim that Lin did not support Chairman Mao's 'revolutionary foreign policy' — i.e. increasing collaboration with US imperialism at the expense of the struggle in Indochina. It is significant that all the currents that have emerged within the Chinese bureaucracy in opposition to Mao's

leadership have leaned in some way towards the Soviet Union. This reflects both a certain feeling of solidarity with the Russian bureaucrats, but also an awareness that Mao's anti-Soviet obsession actually weakens the workers states in the face of imperialism.

DANGEROUS LINE

The Congress reaffirmed the politically dangerous line that Soviet 'imperialism' represents an equal — or even greater — threat to China than US imperialism. In domestic affairs, wide scope has been given to the use of material incentives and market mechanisms to regulate the economy. Local military commanders and the forces grouped around them have been allowed to

maintain considerable autonomy. (These commanders have always been closely linked to the local State administration and represent a conservative wing of the bureaucracy.)

The party leadership would no doubt like to strengthen central authority, and deliberately stresses the threat of Soviet 'social imperialism' in order to achieve this end. The danger is that this anti-Soviet hysteria can lead to a real and perilous isolation, which will not be offset by the 'friends' Peking thinks it has in the imperialist camp. The fact remains that imperialism will eagerly seize any opportunity it can to strike a blow against the Chinese workers state.

James Wilcox

STC—BACK TO WORK

The workers who had struck at Standard Telephone and Cables in North London for eight weeks are returning to work on Monday.

The strike started when white members of the ETU refused to continue the training of Roderick Adams, a black worker, as a skilled machine setter. The management stepped in, not to enforce the agreement they had with the workers to train Adams, but to condone the racist attitude of the ETU. Adams was sent home on

full pay, and later suspended altogether.

Now the management have agreed to give Adams full pay while the AUEW and ETU settle the matter between themselves.

STC management, who have had a racist alliance with a group of white skilled workers at STC for some years, made this offer following discussions between the AUEW and the ETU last week. The ETU told the

black workers that Adams had a choice. Either he could go on day shift with no guarantee of training, or return to training on the night shift on condition that he 'apologised' for a remark alleged to have been made many months ago!

At a meeting of the strikers on Tuesday night, a decision was taken to return to work, having failed to get more than 200 of the 3,000 workers at STC out at any time during the strike. But the black

workers are not going back without any future perspectives.

At a discussion meeting held on Wednesday morning, the workers decided to set up a special caucus to take forward the fight against racism among white workers at STC.

The strikers must now insist that they be party to any inter-union negotiations. Given the 'turn a blind eye' attitude of the unions towards racism, the officials will inevitably come along and argue that an

'apology' is not a principled question. But for the black workers to concede this point would be to concede their whole case and hand a decisive victory to the racists.

The workers should also insist that none of these negotiations be secret, so that they can expose the attitudes of the ETU to the rest of the white workers at STC, as well as generalise awareness of the problem of racism throughout the trade unions by using the example of STC.

The importance of the STC strike cannot be underestimated. It teaches much about racism in the unions and the attitudes to it of the various political currents on the left. Next week's issue will contain a full analysis of the strike. Dave Bailey

Pierre Rousset free!

The French Government suffered another setback last week with the release of Pierre Rousset, a leading militant of the former Communist League (French section of the Fourth International).

Rousset was arrested in the Paris headquarters of the League at 6.00 a.m. on the morning after the 21 June demonstration against the fascist 'New Order' grouping, which led to the banning of both groups a week later. Charged with 'possession of arms and ammunition,' he had been held in jail until his court appearance last Friday.

Rousset used his appearance as a means of counter-attack. He exposed the way in which the police had operated, pointing out that the raid on the headquarters had been conducted without a search warrant, that he had not been allowed to accompany the police during their searches, and that the bookshop had been totally wrecked. He explained that the cans of petrol, iron bars, helmets, etc. found were needed for self-defence, giving examples of at-

tacks by the fascists on members and local headquarters of the League.

As for the fact that two ancient rifles were discovered during the police search of the building, Rousset denied all knowledge of these. But he called as a witness Pierre Frank, another leading member of the former League, who told the court that they had been left several days before the demonstration by an unidentified young man. A full enquiry into all the circumstances was being carried out. Another witness, Michel Rocard of the Unified Socialist Party, testified that a young-man had tried to leave similar weapons at the headquarters of his organisation at about the same time and that it was obviously a 'provocation.'

Rousset was facing a possible sentence of from three to ten years, as well as the implementation of an eight months suspended sentence incurred last year. But in the event he was given a mere two months, and as this was less than the period for which he had already been detained he was released immediately. This was undoubtedly a slap in the face for the Government and revealed yet

again the increasing divisions within the ranks of the ruling class.

RACIST OUTBURST

Meanwhile, recent events in and around the city of Marseilles have once again shown the correctness of the stand taken by the League against New Order in June. Since the murder of a bus-driver by a deranged Algerian a fortnight ago, there has been an outburst of racist attacks against North African workers. Half-a-dozen have been shot dead or wounded. In one case a car drew up at a bus-stop and a 16 year-old Arab youth was gunned down; in another, a block of flats inhabited by immigrant workers was sprayed with machine-gun bullets. In Toulouse last week, men of the 9th Parachute Regiment went out 'Arab bashing' and beat up several immigrant workers.

As for the forces behind these developments, *Sunday Times* reporter Antony Terry had absolutely no doubts. Writing in his paper last Sunday, he had this to say: 'The situation is being exploited by the right wing New Order group whose premises, just off Marseilles' main street, La Canebière, now houses a



newly-formed 'Marseilles Citizens' Defence Committee' aiming to work up public feeling against the North Africans.' So much for the effectiveness of the Government's 'ban' on this group along with the Communist League.

As the Communist League demonstrated on 21 June, there is only one way to deal with fascist groups and that is to confront them wherever they appear, rather than to rely on 'legal' methods.

That this lesson is being learnt by sections of the workers' movement was shown in Marseilles last week, after the Communist Party-led CGT union federation called off a march in solidarity with the Lip workers

because of the 'racist atmosphere.' Militants of the CFTD federation, along with members of the 'Revolution' group and readers and supporters of the paper *Rouge* (formerly published by the Communist League), responded by holding their own demonstration down the main street calling for French workers to solidarise with the immigrants under attack.

It is through such offensive actions, and in particular now by supporting the mass strikes launched by the immigrant workers themselves, that fascism will be smashed - not by retreating before it as the CGT has done in Marseilles.

John Marston

BELFAST 10 demo

Statement by the Belfast Ten Defence Committee

The trial of ten people charged with causing bomb explosions in London last March opens in Winchester on 10 September.

It is inconceivable that it will be a fair trial. The present hysterical atmosphere

in the wake of the new spate of bombings rules that out. That the trial is taking place in the garrison town of Winchester, before a jury which has been subjected to a vast anti-Irish propaganda campaign to reinforce the normal prejudices of the citizens of such a place, also makes it impossible.

Proof of what the ten can expect in the present atmosphere is provided by the recent verdict of the Coroner's jury in London which brought in a verdict of 'wilful murder' on the unfortunate middle-aged man who died of a weak heart after the March explosions - a verdict which flew in the face of the medical evidence.

A fair trial is ruled out for another reason, too: a great deal of circumstantial evidence exists that the ten are the victims of a frame-up by the police. They were arrested at London airport on the morning of the day that the major explosions occurred. Either the ten are not responsible for the explosions - or else the police, who

apparently knew enough about the bombings to arrest the 'culprits' in advance, knew also in advance about the bombs but deliberately let them explode. There is no third explanation. It is an admitted fact that the police could have cleared the areas before the actual explosions but didn't, excusing themselves by blaming a 'human error' by a policeman.

The Littlejohn affair has since provided evidence that the British Government used gangsters to organise provocations - including setting off bombs in Dublin last December to help the Lynch Government push repressive legislation through the Dail. Evidence exists that the British army has organised plain clothes assassination squads in the North of Ireland. There is no reason why the same sort of tactics shouldn't have been used to manipulate public opinion in Britain itself.

The Belfast Ten Defence Committee remains convinced that those on trial in Winchester are victims of a frame-up. Un-

less the British labour movement, and all those concerned at Tory Government attacks on civil rights and civil liberties here in Britain itself, intervene and expose the frame-up attempt, then these ten young people will be railroaded to jail for long terms of imprisonment.

We appeal for support for our demo on Sunday, 16 September. We will not allow the press-fomented hysteria now gripping Britain to drive us off the streets, abandoning the ten to the mercy of the legal system that - in Winchester - recently condemned Noel Jenkinson to thirty years' jail on the evidence of a professional police informer.

We will not remain silent while members of the same judiciary which whitewashed the British army after the Bloody Sunday massacre of 13 civilians prepare to sit in judgement on these ten people. Join us on Sunday, 16 September.

The demonstration starts at Charing Cross Embankment at 3.00 p.m., and will march

to Speakers Corner. Prominent Republicans and members of the labour and socialist movement will speak at the end of the demonstration. Further details from: 88 Roslyn Road, London, N.15.

JOINT FORUM

Central London AIL and Belfast Ten Defence Committee

'The Trial of the Belfast Ten and the British Conspiracy Laws'

Speakers invited include: Eamonn McCann and Brian Rose-Smith.

Friday, 14 September, at 8.00 p.m. in the General Picton, Caledonian Road, N.1.

SUBSCRIBE!

RATES: £4 per year, £2 for six months

FOREIGN: £6 per year, £9 airmail

SPECIAL OFFER!

12 issues for 50p.

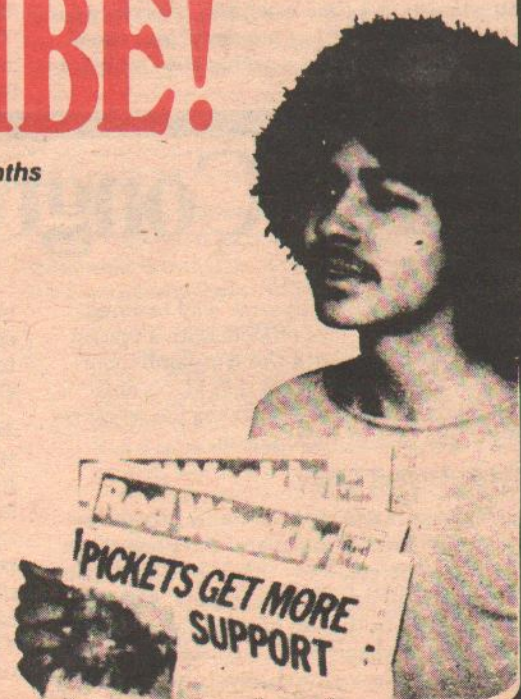
I enclose P.O./Cheque (made out to 'Red Weekly')

182, Pentonville Road, London N.1.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

OCCUPATION _____



International Marxist Group

(British Section of the Fourth International)

182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

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

NAME

ADDRESS

WHAT'S ON

IMG RED FORUM: Series of introductory discussions for those in the London area on the politics of the Fourth International. Every Tuesday at 8.00 p.m. in the General Picton pub, Caledonian Road (5 mins Kings Cross tube).

BIRMINGHAM IMG STUDY CLASSES: Introductory series of lectures on the politics of the IMG. Every Wednesday, 7.30 p.m. at the Wellington pub, Bristol Road.

WEST LONDON IRISHMEN'S ASSOCIATION: Grand dance at the Spotted Dog, 38 High Road, Wilesden, N.W.10. Saturday, 8 September. Dancing from 8.30. Licensed bar with extension. Admission 50p.

PHOENIX CLUB: First series of meetings on: The two nations theory (13 September); Ireland and the EEC (27 September); Orangeism (11 October); Ireland and the Permanent Revolution (25 October); Ireland and the British left (8 November); Revolutionary perspectives for Ireland (22 November). Thursdays at the General Picton, Caledonian Road, at 8.00 p.m. Further information from Workers Fight, 98 Gifford Street, London N.1.