



DEFEND AEUW ~ STRIKE NOW

The decision of the National Industrial Relations Court to seize £100,000 from the Engineering Union's assets represents a dramatic new attack on the most basic and hard-won right of the workers' movement—the right to strike.

AUEW members at the Con-Mech factory in Woking are on strike over the question of union recognition and the victimisation of 24 trade unionists by the company. The NIRC has declared this strike illegal because it did not follow the procedures laid down in the Industrial Relations Act, and has ordered the men back to work. It is the refusal of AUEW members to obey this dictate which has led to the seizure of union assets and the threat of a fine in excess of £50,000.

By CHRIS BALFOUR

The pathetic response of Scanlon and the AUEW executive to this revival of the hated Industrial Relations Act is an announcement to the world that the trade union leaders—the 'left' variety included—are unwilling to undertake a serious fight against the Tories. With the very basis of trade unionism under attack, Scanlon could find nothing better to do than try and join the long queue of trade union bureaucrats waiting, cap in hand, for an audience with Heath on the Phase 3 proposals.

The AUEW executive has stepped in to prevent Scanlon going along with the rest of the TUC sell-out artists to Downing Street on Monday, but they have left the door open for his return to the talks at a later date. As far as the NIRC attack is concerned, all they have done is publish a lengthy brief on the Con-Mech dispute and asked their members to give 'tangible evidence' of support 'if called upon'.

As the case of the Pentonville 5 showed, the NIRC can be defeated—but only by massive industrial action. Steps must be taken immediately to

prepare such a reply the moment that a penny of union members' funds are touched by the NIRC.

If this is not done the only alternative will be a squalid retreat that will strengthen the Tories' hand against the trade unions and guarantee that they turn a deaf ear to trade union protests over Phase 3 or anything else. And what about the Engineering Employers' Federation with whom Scanlon & Co are currently negotiating? The spectacle of a full-scale retreat by the AUEW can only inspire them to laugh in the face of the claim for a £10 rise and a shorter work week.

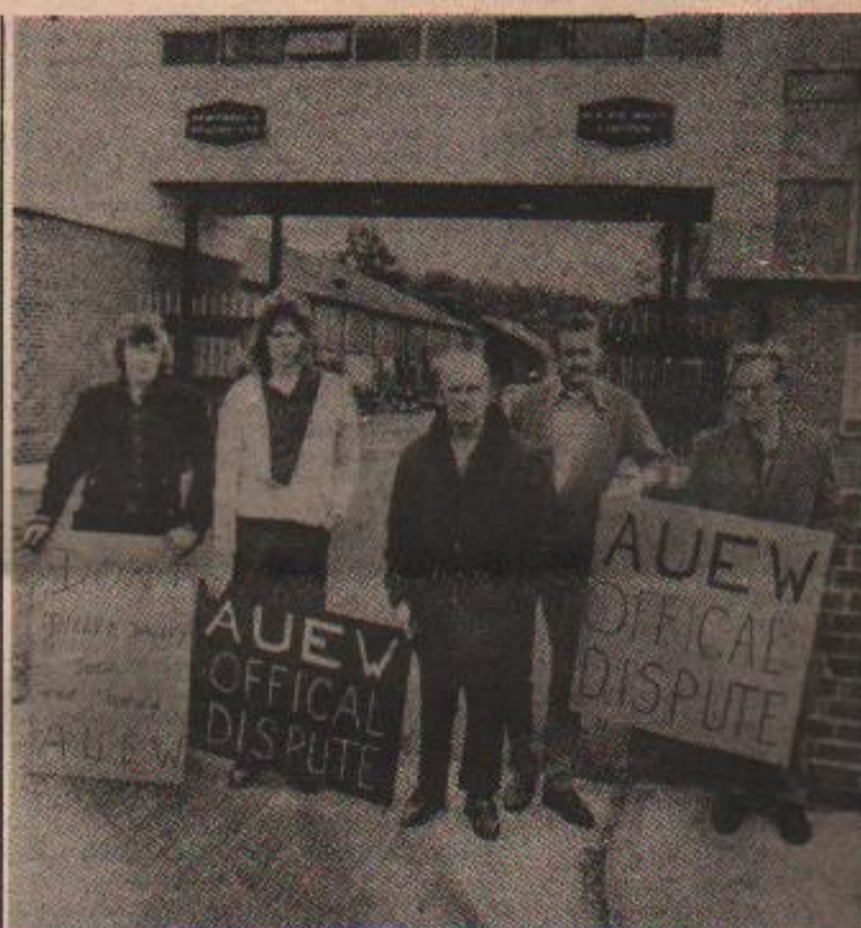
A real mobilisation of the AUEW and the rest of the trade union movement against the NIRC would serve as a very important preliminary battle in preparation for all-out war against Phase 3 and the Tory Government. A victory in this fight would inspire the enthusiasm and spirit of struggle of millions of workers, and sow fear in the ranks of the ruling class and their agents.

This Saturday the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions (LCDTU) will be meeting in London.

Represented there will be some of the most powerful shop stewards' committees in the AUEW and the T&G who are presently before the NIRC in a claim against them for compensation because of trade union activity at Heathrow. A call from this body for national industrial action against the NIRC would mean that any fine would be greeted with a shutdown of the car industry, the docks, much of the transport system, and many important industrial concerns. However, it is likely that the Communist Party, who control the LCDTU, will be unwilling to take such a course, lest it should threaten their already uneasy alliance with 'left' bureaucrats like Scanlon. In that eventuality it will become more urgent than ever that militants in local trade union branches and individual shop stewards committees begin a campaign in favour of industrial action against the NIRC.

Every branch resolution calling for mass industrial action and every shop stewards' committee pledged to stop work, in the event of a NIRC fine against the AUEW, is another nail in the coffin of the NIRC, the Industrial Relations Act, and the Tory Government that created them both. Such steps must be taken immediately, and local conferences organised to coordinate industrial action throughout every area.

A victory for the working class movement against the NIRC at this time will open the road for a victorious offensive on the wages front and against the Government. It would be the first step towards a general strike to force the Tories out.



Con-Mech pickets. Do these men have the right to strike? The NIRC says no.

SUPPORT FIGHTING FUND

In the fight against the fascists IMG militants have been in the front ranks: in Edinburgh where Martin Webster was sent scurrying off in a taxi, and in London where the link between the state and the fascists was revealed in the form of a hefty blue line.

Red Weekly has been in the front rank too: our coverage of the resist march, and the plans of the National Front to penetrate the workers' movement, has been ahead of any other paper on the left.

Help us to keep on supporting the anti-fascist struggle: We are now half-way through the month and the Red Weekly Fighting Fund stands at £114; we still have a long way to go to meet our £300 target. Send your donation right away to: Red Weekly Fighting Fund, 182 Pentonville Road, London, N.1.

The myth of the invincibility of the Israeli army has been shattered by the Arab Forces over the past ten days. Even if Israel should win this war, which is by no means certain, it must know that another war will come again in four or five years. By that time the Arab armies will be even stronger than they are today. In future the Israeli military will not be able to act as the arrogant overlord of the whole Middle East, as it has in recent years. For United States imperialism this turn of events is disastrous. It has always relied on Israel to police the crucial oil-producing Middle East on its behalf. But Israel has been dealt a blow which will end that role forever.

The regimes in the Arab countries are at present at the height of their glory. But their joy will be shortlived. The war has shown that it is possible to successfully challenge the Zionist

MIDDLE EAST ZIONISM IN CRISIS

By ALAN JONES

state. The Arab masses will now demand that this job is carried to its conclusion.

But the cringing regimes of Egypt's President Sadat and his allies will hold back, afraid of the measures necessary to carry this task out: the full mobilisation of the Arab masses and a sharp break with imperialism.

The Sadat regime in particular will shudder at such prospects, having already been shaken in recent years by strikes of workers in the Helwan Steel complex and the textile mills, and by mass student demonstrations.

But the main victim of the present fighting will be Zionism. The Zionist doctrine promised the Jews security on the basis of the colonisation of Palestine in alliance with imperialism and at the expense of the Palestinian people. For decades many Jews have been prepared to accept this reactionary doctrine. Now Zionism stands as the cruelest of illusions.

Not only has the existence of the Zionist state fostered anti-semitic ideas among many oppressed people around the world, but it has done so in vain. For it is now clear that the Zionist state of Israel cannot resist

the just struggle of the Palestinian Arab people to recover their land and end the oppression which they suffer under the Zionist regime.

The words of Leon Trotsky, written over thirty years ago, have never rung truer than they do today: 'The attempt to solve the Jewish question through the migration of the Jews to Palestine can now be seen for what it is, a tragic mockery of the Jewish people ... The future development of military events may well turn Palestine into a bloody trap for hundreds of thousands of Jews.'

In the interests of the world socialist revolution, the Arab masses, and the Jewish people themselves, there is only one way out of the present situation — the defeat and dismantling of the Zionist state. It is only on this basis that the struggles of the Jewish and Arab working classes can be united and go forward.

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CP tiptoes at Footprint

On Friday 12 October about 4000 people, mainly engineering workers, marched through Sheffield to protest at the arrest of eight pickets outside Footprint Tools Ltd on 21 September. A number of factories in the Sheffield area stopped work to take part in this display of solidarity.

The demonstration showed that the police attack on the pickets at Footprint has convinced the Sheffield working class of the need to defend the right to picket.

There is a danger, however, that this issue could be used to divert the struggle away from the strike at Footprint. Only 200 people answered the call for a mass picket outside the factory on the morning of the demonstration. In fact, the Communist Party in Sheffield is deliberately pushing the issue of the 'right to picket' at the expense of the fight to re-instate Pete Wilson, the victimised Footprint Shop Steward.

For some weeks the CP leadership in the Sheffield area has been confronted with a clear choice: either they call a district strike, and thus encourage a level of militancy which



Continued calls for mass pickets at Footprints have now become substitute for serious action

would take the struggle out of their control and damage their relationship with the Union bureaucracy; or they sacrifice Pete Wilson and accept a defeat which would set back preparations for the struggle over the national pay claim. They have clearly chosen the latter course, and are pushing the Footprint strike into the background in order to soften the blow.

The most effective way to defend the right to picket is to mobilise the workers who marched through Sheffield last Friday in order to close down the Footprint works until Pete Wilson is re-instated. The right to picket can only be de-

fended by meeting the challenge of the state head on.

In this situation the constant appeals for mass pickets serve little purpose. Engineering workers find it difficult to take such pickets seriously when Caborn, the AUEW District Secretary, polices the picket lines more effectively than the police themselves, instructing workers to stand on the pavement so that the scabs can go into work without interference. They will not be taken seriously until the full force of the AUEW in Sheffield is used in the struggle—through a district strike.

TERRY CRAWFORD

London NALGO Workers push forward claim

The National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) has submitted a claim for a £400 increase in the London Weighting Allowance. This claim is not only for workers in local government, but also for those in the electricity and gas service industries. They have given the employers until 5 November to reply.

This is a somewhat surprising development, coming as it does on the eve of major struggles against Phase 3. The NALGO leadership, only a few months ago, accepted the £1 plus 4% limit on wage claims with very little reluctance.

Moreover, the claim is being pursued with uncharacteristic vigour. Every member is being given a pamphlet explaining the claim, a mass rally is planned for the Central Hall Westminster in early November, and the Union is 'exploring the possibility' of organising a joint demonstration with other public service unions. However their main tactic has been to rely on local authorities to pressurise the government, on the basis of low recruitment of staff in London.

This relatively energetic campaigning reflects the interests of the upper and middle management grades in London, who dominate the NALGO bureaucracy. Due to local government re-organisation in the provinces these senior officers are, at present, prevented from advancing their careers except through promotion within the London area.

This claim gives militants in NALGO an opportunity to alter the balance of forces between themselves and the bureaucracy. It is not just the management grades, but all union members who suffer from rising rents, mortgages, prices and travel expenses in London. Their strategy must be to fight for the creation of broad based action or campaign committees in every branch, open to all who want to participate. These committees should then form the base for an all-London Action Committee to co-ordinate the struggle. Militants in other public service unions should campaign for their unions to put in similar claims, and should participate in the action committees. Their first task should be to mobilise for the November meeting. It will be the building and extension of such committees which will give the militants the opportunity to undercut the influence of the bureaucracy.

It is also crucial that the struggle is conducted in the context of the fight against the pay laws, and not on the basis of the sectional interests of London workers. Any attempts by the NALGO leadership to present this claim as a 'special case' must be vigorously resisted. A fight for this claim, and against Phase 3, could be the first step in a campaign to make the ruling class pay for the regional differences in pay and prices, which are now hitting London local government workers. Alan Bennet.

simply closed the conference without even taking the last item on the agenda, a 'Declaration of Aims.'

IMG militants delegated to the conference had intended to propose that the 100 delegates should be co-opted on to the Action Committee which had called the conference. With such wide representation an Action Committee could have formed the basis for a Council of Action embracing not only industrial militants, but also representatives of other groups in the locality — tenants, students, housewives, pensioners — facing attacks from the Tory Government. A Council of Action could also have organised the mass of the population in support of the miners and the engineers in the coming months.

The actions of the CP mean that even the opportunity to unite the local labour movement around struggles like that at Footprint Tools in Sheffield, and in preparation for the coming battle against Phase 3, have been sacrificed.

Harry Ferguson

New struggles over student housing

A new front in the struggle over student accommodation has been opened at Leeds Polytechnic, where between four and five hundred students have occupied the administration block to protest at the diminishing living standards of students at the college.

At the meeting which decided on the occupation, it was stressed that the students must seek support from the local labour and tenants movement. It was the support of the Trades Council which helped win an important victory at Sussex University, where the occupation was used to provide temporary accommodation and to launch a campaign within the local labour movement on the question of housing in Brighton.

It is also necessary to link up with other colleges where similar struggles are taking place. Action on the accommodation issue is currently being carried out at Manchester Poly, Cambridge and Tees-side Technical Colleges, and is being discussed at Plymouth, Middlesex, and Huddersfield Polys.

The conference called by Sussex students for 27-28 October to organise solidarity with the struggle against cuts in housing can assist these existing struggles. It will be an important opportunity to raise the problem of student accommodation within the labour movement, in its context as part of the Tory attacks on social expenditure, which affect both workers and students.

For information about the conference contact: Steering Committee for Accommodation Conference, University of Sussex Union, Falmer, Brighton, Sussex.

Action blocked at Rotherham Conference

Many militants felt frustration and anger after last Saturday's Rotherham conference on Phase 3 and the Tory Government failed to develop any concrete initiatives for struggle.

At the very beginning the chairman, Communist Party member Albert Knight, had ruled that no resolutions would be taken from the floor. After platform speeches from Arthur Scargill (NUM), Joan Maynard (Labour Party NEC), and George Caborn (Sheffield AUEW district secretary), a leading figure in the Rotherham tenants' movement raised the question of support for the local tenants, who are withholding rent increases despite threats from the Labour Council to deduct the money from wages.

This resolution was embarrassing for the Labour Councillors present, as well as the Labour MP for Rotherham who was also there. As a result there was a procedural rumpus, at the end of which Knight

CURRENT ACCOUNT

Phase 3 and Profits

Phase 2, the Tory government claims, conquered the domestic causes of inflation. What remained was caused by rising world prices which were beyond their control. This claim is one of the principal frauds of the new Pay and Prices Code which forms the basis of Phase 3.

Of course, it is true that the general capitalist crisis is leading to worldwide inflation. But the effect of this on the prices of imports into Britain has been massively exaggerated by the constant devaluation of the pound in the last two years. And this devaluation has not been beyond the control of the Tories. It has been a conscious part of their policies to produce rapid growth, most of whose benefits goes to profits. The devaluation has allowed British exporters to avoid excessive price rises in foreign markets in foreign currencies and at the same time to take a fatter profit in terms of sterling. But for the working class the devaluation has had the effect of raising the domestic cost of living and cutting real wages.

In Phase 3, the same process will go on. Exporters are not subject to any price control. And it is highly probable that further devaluations of the pound will swell their profit margins. But also in other respects Phase 3 is substantially more generous to profit margins than Phase 2.

The first benefit comes from the new regulations about price cutting if profit margins rise to more than the 'base level' (the average of the best of the last 5 years). Under the old regulations prices should have been cut to bring profits down to this base level. There were scarcely any examples of this in practice because of the rise in raw material prices. Under the new regulations, however, when costs go down so that the base profit margin is exceeded then prices need only be reduced by 10 per cent of the excess. This might well become important in Phase 3, if, as a result of a growing world recession, world commodity prices began to fall.

In addition, there are more generous provisions allowing firms to raise prices in excess of cost increases if they claim to need the money to finance investment. Depreciation has now been made an allowable cost to justify price increases. And capital intensive firms operating at low capacity at the beginning of Phase 1 can calculate their base costs, from which increases are measured, as if they were operating at 75 per cent of capacity.

What for some firms will turn out to be the most generous regulation of all is that there will now be no control of price increases at all for firms with a profit rate on capital of less than 8 per cent or with a profit margin or turnover of less than 1 per cent. The Phase 2 figure was 5 per cent return on capital. Quite a substantial minority of British companies declare profit rates below this figure and so up to this limit they will have complete licence to raise prices.

The regulations governing the nationalised industries work in the same direction. The government is planning continued price increases for them of less than their increase in costs. Their deficit, therefore, will grow. Since they produce important inputs for other industries this price restraint will benefit the profits of private companies. And the growing deficits will be financed from taxpayers, which means from the working class.

During Phase 3 profits will no longer benefit from the recent surge in output and productivity. Knowing this, the government intends to keep profits growing by more generous regulations under the new Price Code. It is clear that these regulations will do nothing to curb the pace of inflation. The 'counter-inflation' policy remains more than ever a policy for faster rises in prices.

Michael Price



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

IRELAND: Troops Out Now!

Abraham Lincoln's adage that 'you can't fool all of the people all of the time' has begun to haunt the British Government. The total failure of its political and military policy in the North of Ireland cannot be papered over much longer, and the grim realities of the war are now being felt in the cities of Britain.

It is against this background that we must note a growing concern about the Irish war within the British labour movement.

The action of South Shields Trades Council in campaigning against Army recruitment in the area was a first indication of this concern. Already Stirling Trades Council, in Scotland, has taken a similar initiative, and a large number of Trades Councils up and down Britain have been sending delegations to the North of Ireland to report back a true picture of the war.

CO-ORDINATION

A growing opposition to the war in Britain, added to the impasse in the North of Ireland, would doom the Tory strategy. It is in order to deliver a blow to the developing opposition that the Government has begun a policy of intimidation and repression against Irish activists and their supporters in Britain.

But where the state has attempted intimidation it has met with vigorous resistance. In London, the rapid establishment of a broad-based defence committee prevented a quiet put-away job being done on the Belfast 10. In Coventry, a defence committee initiated by IMG militants won broad support in the local population and in the labour movement, and when the trial of

the Coventry 7 opened in Birmingham there was a militant demonstration of over 1000 people. In Lancaster, Bolton and Blackburn defence committees have been set up to defend the Blackburn 3. Over 300 people demonstrated in Blackburn against the arrests.

By GUS FAGAN

The 3 come to trial in Lancaster on 20 October and there will be a large demonstration in solidarity with them on 27 October. Already over 10 public meetings have been held in the area.

Anti-working class legislation and repression against trade union militants has enabled a small but growing section of the working class to draw parallels with the situation in Ireland. Such actions as the arrest and detention of 25 trade unionists and left-wing militants in Colchester can only have the effect of broadening this trend.

These manifestations of opposition to the war are as yet fragmented. They have to be co-ordinated into a broader campaign for British withdrawal from Ireland.

SELF-DETERMINATION

South Shields Trades Council's campaign must be taken up by other sections of the Labour movement. Teachers must organise against Army recruitment drives in the schools, local Labour Councils must be pressurised to ban Army recruiting, as Merthyr Tydfil Council has already done, and the issue of Army recruitment should be linked to unemployment in areas where 'economic conscription' is high.

Within the Labour Party the demand for an end to 'bi-partisan' support for Tory policy should be raised.

The connecting up of these strands of opposition, into a broad movement for the withdrawal of the British troops, and based on the principle of self-determination for the Irish people, would be a powerful step forward for the working class in Ireland and in Britain.

WEST LONDON COMMITTEE

In West London, a committee for Troops Out has begun to hold meetings, pickets, distribution of leaflets, etc. This has given a local outlet for the growing demand for the withdrawal of the Troops. They have called for the co-ordination of such activities in other areas.

Towards the end of this month they are holding a public meeting with an impressive list of speakers: Don Cook (AUEW Convenor at London Transport Acton Works, in a personal capacity), a housewife from the Ardoyne in Belfast, Frank MacManus MP, James Well-beloved MP, Jack Dromey (NCCL), Eamonn McCann, and Jim Kemp of the London Joint Sites Committee. The meeting will take place in Fulham Town Hall, Fulham Broadway, at 7.45 p.m. on Wednesday, 24 October.

The West London Committee has also called for the setting up of an ad-hoc committee to organise a national demonstration on the basis of the slogans 'Withdraw British Troops from Ireland Now' and 'Self-determination for the Irish People.' Further information about this can be obtained from Gavin Robinson, c/o Red Weekly.



Shrewsbury 24: lessons so far

It now looks certain that the trial of the first six of the Shrewsbury 24 is to be used by the Government as a showpiece. So far, the prosecution has dredged up a series of alleged quotes and a variety of circumstantial evidence. The fact that pickets had the cheek to hit someone who was threatening them with a shotgun seems to have shocked the learned judge.

Meanwhile, support for the 24 is growing throughout the labour movement. Even in areas such as Brighton and Portsmouth moves are afoot to hold conferences on picketing. Now is the time to take stock of the work that has been done to mobilise solidarity so far and to examine the lessons of Shrewsbury.

BUREAUCRATS MANOEUVRE

The trade union bureaucrats are clearly frightened. They are facing the prospect of a massive working class offensive against the Tory Government and its policies developing around

any struggle launched by the miners and engineers. Heath's Phase 3 has not given them many crumbs with which they can try to sell a deal to the rank-and-file. Their only hope of avoiding a showdown with the Government is to play a waiting game; hold action down to a minimum, manoeuvre, and engage in as lengthy talks as possible.

Above all, they must keep a tight grip on the situation to avoid any initiative by the rank-and-file setting off the whole tinder-box. Central to this is the question of picketing: during the miners strike the trade union bureaucrats watched the conduct of the strike being taken increasingly out of their control as rank-and-file militants mounted flying pickets across the country, brought more and more industries to a halt, and mobilised thousands of other workers in solidarity.

In the struggles to come picketing will be even more important, from the standpoint of both

the bureaucrats and the rank-and-file militants. For militants mass flying pickets will be a central means of winning many struggles and will be a major weapon enabling the rank-and-file to take control of their own struggles. For the bureaucrats such pickets will be a threat to their control and to their attempt to avoid at all costs a major confrontation with the Government.

RANK-AND-FILE ORGANISATION

For these reasons, the interests of the bureaucrats, on the one hand, and the rank-and-file, on the other, are totally opposed on the question of picketing. This makes it urgent that trade union militants build up an apparatus in every area to coordinate and defend the use of pickets in the struggles ahead. Such a move will have to be taken in the face of opposition from both the bureaucrats and (as the case of Footprint Tools shows) those groups, like the Communist Party, who try to balance between the bureaucracy and the rank-and-file.

This is the next step which all militants concerned with the defence of the Shrewsbury 24 must take - practical application of the lessons of that struggle throughout the entire labour movement to prepare for the coming fight. At the same time, the Shrewsbury defence committees around the country must build even bigger solidarity demonstrations, both to show the Tories that we mean business in defending these militants and to popularise the lessons of Shrewsbury. More and more trade union bodies must commit themselves to industrial action if any of the 24 are convicted.

All Defence Committees should take up the question of Footprint Tools in the local labour movement and begin to organise the defence of pickets. This can only be done by preparing for mass action on the part of the local labour movement in the event of any attacks on a picket line in that area. The solidarity given to the miners during their picketing of the Saltley coke depot shows the way to victory. We must repeat this example whenever necessary and ensure that another Shrewsbury can never be imposed on the trade union movement by the ruling class and their agents.

PAUL SMITH

The talks over the future of the Lip watchmaking factory in Besancon in eastern France were broken off by the Government's negotiator, M. Giraud, on Tuesday 9 October.

This followed the refusal by the majority of workers' representatives to accept M. Giraud's plan involving over 150 redundancies and no guarantees over wages and conditions. A vote by the workers' general assembly on the Friday confirmed this stand: 626 voted to continue the struggle and only 174 voted for a counter-proposal by the representatives of the Communist Party-led CGT union federation to accept the Giraud plan.

SLANDER CAMPAIGN

Immediately the negotiations broke down the CGT launched a campaign of invective and slander against the local members of the CFDT union federation who had taken the lead in advocating rejection of the Giraud plan. In a press conference on Wednesday, 10 October, CGT leader Georges Seguy blamed them almost as much as the Government for the continuation of the dispute, saying that they had failed to show the necessary 'spirit of unity, and a loyal and realistic attitude.'

Seguy also denounced elements from outside the factory for fomenting trouble, claiming that 'their only concern is to prolong the conflict, to exploit it for political ends which are contrary to those of the workers.' This statement was welcomed by the right-wing daily, *Le Figaro*, which pointed out that it had been saying the same thing for months. Fortunately, the wor-

Lip Talks break down Struggle goes on



Rank-and-file support committees have played important part in mobilising solidarity

kers were able to decide for themselves through their general assembly as to where their interests lay, and came to rather different conclusions from Seguy.

While the CGT is openly trying to end the struggle, the attitude of the other union leaders has been little better. The CFDT, for instance, urged other groups of workers

to express their solidarity... but its sole suggestion was to 'send telegrams to the prime minister, the minister for economic development, and the minister of labour!'

RANK-AND-FILE

The responsibility for building meaningful solidarity therefore rests on the shoulders of the rank-and-file, and particularly on the revolution-

aries. It is therefore unfortunate that one of the major revolutionary groups, Workers' Struggle (which has links with the International Socialists here), should have chosen this moment to opt out, trying to counterpose Lip, 'a defensive struggle', to the need for a working class offensive. They sent a contingent of less than 100 to the 100,000-strong demonstration in Besancon on 29 September, and have virtually abandoned coverage of the struggle in their paper.

However the struggle goes on despite its abandonment by many of the most important organised forces. The Lip workers calculate that they have already made enough money from their 'illegal' sale of watches to carry on at least until Christmas. The task now must be to develop further ways in which they can build on the continuing support from the mass of the working class while at the same time spreading the lessons of their experience in preparation for the autumn struggles. As their slogan runs: 'Lip for all, all for Lip'.

JOHN MARSTON

'LIP FOR ALL, ALL FOR LIP'
IMG Public Meeting, Saturday 20th Oct.
Speakers: Raymond Burgy (CFDT delegate at Lip)
John Ross (IMG)
7.30 p.m., at Beaver Hall, Garlick Hill (Mansion House tube). All welcome.

HOW TO FIGHT PHASE 3

It is not necessary to convince any reader of *Red Weekly* that no good is intended for the working class in Phase 3 of the Tories' Incomes Policy. The only question for militants is *how* to fight Phase 3 in face of the determined resistance of the employers, the government and the state.

The first fact that has to be grasped is that, despite the outward display of ruling class strength in the law, the police, resistance to wage claims and so on, the overwhelming forces are on the side of the working class.

Determined struggle

Over six million workers have wage claims coming up in the months ahead. The miners have shown what even 200,000 workers can achieve in a really determined struggle. Six million could smash right through Phase 3.

Certainly the employers and the state are beefing up their preparations for resistance to Phase 3—by preparing special police anti-picket and anti-strike squads, by preparing employers' strike funds and so on—but they are still too weak to smash any really determined working class struggles. The speed with which the government moved to release the Pentonville Five last summer shows this conclusively.

In addition, the ruling class is deeply divided within itself, with sections turning from support of the traditional ruling class party, the Tories, to support for the Liberals. Furthermore almost all the groups which in past periods of social crisis, have supported the ruling class—for example students—now have their own grievances against the capitalist system and could be won to the side of the working class.

The possibilities for victory are better than at any time in the past. Provided the struggle is carried through in a determined way there is no unconquerable obstacle which the ruling class can put in the way of the working class. If the working class is defeated it will mainly be due not to anything the Tories or the employers do, but to false policies within the working class movement.

Wasted opportunity

The last few years have seen enormous strides forward within the labour movement. But on the most crucial question of all—how to reap the gains of big working class victories such as the miners strike and the Freeing of the Five—progress has been very small. After the miners strike last year, instead of finishing off the job and hammering the Tories into the ground, the TUC let the government off the hook by starting up negotiations with it on an incomes policy. To make it worse, after the magnificent struggle to Free the Five, the TUC went back to the negotiations again and continued them throughout Phase 1 and Phase 2. The result was the defeat of the gas workers and the hospital workers, and a fall in workers' living standards. The tremendous position of strength built up after the miners strike was wasted. If the struggle against Phase 3 is to be successful an entirely different type of policy has to be put forward to that which has been guiding the working class in the past year.

The coming struggles are going to be met with fierce resistance from the ruling class. The economic situation of British capitalism means that the employers cannot afford, from the point of view of their profits, to make any important concessions on wages and conditions. The tough tactics of the Chrysler management show what is in store.

Throughout the summer, preparations have been made by the employers for the coming battles. Huge strike funds running into millions of pounds, have, for example, been established by the Engineering Employers Federation (who last year paid out £2 million in profits compensation in the Manchester engineering strike alone). The press is all tuned up to attack strikers, as it was in the power workers dispute in 1970 when it encouraged people to beat up strikers. A whole series of tricks will be pulled to get round the strikes, as has happened in the past. During the gas strike ordinary homes were cut off but firms were not. In the electri-

city workers strike power was kept going in the factories but not on council estates, and in the miners strike coal marked for old age pensioners was delivered to coal merchants. Finally, if all these attempts fail, the heavy brigade is being prepared. The formation of special anti-picket and anti-strike squads of the police has been enormously speeded up. We have already seen these in action against the Hull dockers in the last dock strike and against the pickets in the Footprint Tools' dispute in Sheffield.

Organise the struggle

All these attacks by the employers and state can be beaten. But only provided two things are done. First, the struggle must be *organised*. This means the establishment in every area of bodies to organise pickets, to decide who shall and who shall not have supplies cut off, to organise defence of pickets against the police, to arrange food and supplies for occupations, and to gain support from other groups of workers. Second, the widest possible numbers must be drawn into *active* involvement in the struggles.

It was the tens of thousands of people who were drawn into activity in the miners pickets which allowed that decisive strike to be won. To get this type of mass active support, every worker must feel that he has *real* control and a real interest in what is going on: direct involvement in all decisions about how the struggle is to be carried on. This does not exclude using the full time resources of the union—only a fool would suggest that—but it does mean that one of the oldest rules of working class democracy has to be given a new force: *the people who take decisions about the struggles must be those who actually have to fight them*. It is only in this way that the maximum possible solidarity of all those in struggle can be gained. Union officials have a valuable role to play, if they have the right policies, in contacting other groups of workers to gain support, and assisting in negotiations. However, at all times the workers actually engaged in the struggles must have the information to decide what is the best course of action and to judge what their representatives are up to. This can only be done through mass meetings and elected strike committees.

These types of moves have already developed in some recent key struggles. In the building workers strike, action committees of the various unions involved were set up locally. In the miners strike, mass meetings of the pickets were organised in some areas to decide tactics and strategy. In the Manchester engineering strikes, moves were made to set up a city-wide strike committee.

Prepare the struggle

This type of organisation is also necessary in the preparation of the struggle. For example, the AUEW National Committee instructed the union executive to carry out a campaign of publicity to explain the claim and why it was being put forward. So far practically nothing has been done on this. It is only by seizing the initiative locally that real preparation can be made for the claim. In Sheffield some steps have been taken by calling a meeting on the claim, from the shop stewards quarterly. But more permanent bodies to carry out publicity and other preparation are needed. This has been recognised by left wing militants in the NUT who are arguing for 'preparation committees' to publicise their claim, and by local government militants in London who have called for committees to be set up to wage a campaign of publicity for the London weighting allowance claim. Mass meetings should be held in the factories to discuss wage claims. Local and national conferences of shop stewards' representatives should be organised to discuss how to carry forward the struggle—shop stewards' quarterlies, combine committees, or important shop steward committees, could convene these.

In almost all struggles, the tactic of occupation will be vital. Not only is it the best defence against lock outs, scabbing, and police attacks, as dozens of recent struggles have shown, but every occupied plant can become a nerve centre for

communications, and the organisation of every type of activity.

In the coming struggles militants must fight for:

*mass meetings of workers to explain and prepare the coming struggles.

*local, regional and national meetings of shop stewards delegates to plan the struggle.

*Strikes to be occupation strikes whenever possible.

*Conduct of the struggle at all levels to be in the hands of those engaged in the struggle: elected strike committees on the local, regional and national level.

*No secret negotiations: elected representatives of the workers to be present at all negotiations; all negotiations to be regularly reported to mass meetings of workers, who will have the final say on all agreements and major decisions.

Defend pickets

A particularly important role in the coming struggles will be played by the pickets. Last year two of the most important strikes—the miners strike and the building workers strike—were only won because of the massive use of flying pickets. This year, in the first Chrysler dispute, the company would have easily won without the picketing of the Stoke engine factory by Ryton workers. The ruling class is well aware of the power of picketing and, for this reason, has been concentrating its attacks throughout the summer on this form of struggle. In the Footprint dispute in Sheffield police smashed into a mass picket, arresting the district secretary of the AUEW and other pickets. Most seriously of all, the Shrewsbury 24 trial is a systematic attempt to intimidate and prevent all future use of mass picketing. In the coming months the police will attack pickets on a scale never seen before. If they can succeed in defeating the picket lines all hopes of the working class winning the coming battles will be lost.

But if the police are making their preparations, the working class has also shown it is perfectly capable of defending its picket lines. When the police savagely attacked the Hull dockers' picket lines in the last docks strike the dockers called in mass reinforcements and fought back with the same weapons as the police. When the police consistently broke the miners' picket line at Saltley, 50,000 engineering workers struck and 10,000 staged a mass picket which sent the police fleeing in disarray. Although it is at present still small, the mobilisation against the Shrewsbury trials was given a big boost on 3 October with strikes by Liverpool dockers and building workers across the country. This campaign must be stepped up through demonstrations and further strikes if it is to be successful.

*For the formation in every strike of teams of flying pickets under the control of an elected strike committee.

*For the organisation of self-defence of picket lines.

*For demonstrations of solidarity with the Shrewsbury 24 in every area; prepare for mass strike action if the 24 are not acquitted.

Centralise the struggle

The biggest single danger facing the working class in the coming struggles will be that of individual groups of workers having to face the combined strength of the whole ruling class. This was the recipe for disaster that defeated the gas workers, the hospital workers, the Manchester engineers, the post office workers and many others. In the face of a centralised ruling class attack the working class response must be a centralised one.

The best form of this would be a general strike. Ten million workers united together would smash through any wages law and soon put an end to the Tory Government as well. But the TUC has consistently refused to take up this most effective way of dealing with the situation. This does not make it wrong to demand that the TUC call a general strike, indeed the demand



Rally at Shrewsbury on 3 October — defence of the 24 is essential to prepare for coming struggles. Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

for a recall TUC Congress on Phase 3 to call a general strike must be put forward—but it does mean that it has to be understood that the trade union leadership will not carry through an effective struggle against the Government. Militants have to work for other ways of co-ordinating the working class attack. The most effective way of doing this is by working for co-ordination between unions in putting forward claims, and by holding local meetings of militants to discuss how to co-ordinate and centralise the struggle against Phase 3.

Some progress is being made towards the uniting of different struggles. A clear campaign for a

A MILITANT'S GUIDE TO PHASE 3 ON PRICES AND INCOMES

We showed last week that, underneath the brightly coloured wrapping, there is nothing in Heath's Phase 3 package from which the working class stands to gain. However the Tories have been a bit more generous to the capitalist class in their treatment of prices and profits.

The main features of the Tories' 'counter-inflation' policy, brought in with Phase 2, remain the same under Phase 3: the capitalists are allowed to pass on most cost increases in the form of higher prices, thus protecting their profits and placing the full burden of the



whole capitalist system—which are the real reasons for the present attacks on the working class. But the policy of the ruling class is at present being organised by the Tory Government, which is spearheading the assault on the working class. While getting rid of the Tories would not finish the job, it would be a decisive step forward to deal with this mastermind of the capitalist offensive.

The Tory government is like an octopus. No matter what individual policy is defeated it can put a slightly different one in its place to do the same job. For example, the first measure it attempted to use to chain the working class was the Industrial Relations Act. After the railwaymen's strike, the Freeing of the Five, and the AUEW's refusal to appear before the NIRC, it became practically impossible to use the Act. Every time it was used there was a strike. The Government then changed its tactics to using the Incomes Policy and the criminal law. All the guts of the Industrial Relations Act were incorporated into the freeze legislation, and picketing was dealt with through the prosecution of the Shrewsbury 24 and other such cases. If for some reason the incomes policy laws were defeated, then the Tories, after a temporary retreat, would just find some new way of attacking. Their aim is to exhaust the strength of the working class by getting it to fight one policy after another without ever concentrating on the brains behind the whole attack. There is only one way to deal with this. *The Tory government must be ended.*

The massive strikes of the last few years have shaken the Tory government to its foundations. The answer to getting rid of the Tories is obvious—it is necessary to unite the strike struggles into a decisive thrust to get rid of the Tory government. *A general strike to bring down the Tory Government must be the aim of the left.*

We can be absolutely certain that in the coming struggles there will exist the possibility of an upsurge large enough to get rid of the Tories and a lot more. We must prepare the working class for this opportunity. If anyone declares that this aim is 'illegal' we have one very simple answer: the working class has always achieved anything worth having in a struggle against the law—from the Tolpuddle martyrs to the Freeing of the Five, every experience shows this. The ruling class has never hesitated to change the law, or even overthrow it completely as we have seen so recently and so horribly in Chile. The working class must be guided by its interests, which are those of the overwhelming majority of society, not by what the ruling class says is the law. This is the only way the working class has ever gone forward in its history.

Alan Jones

The above article is taken from a forthcoming IMG pamphlet on Phase 3.

miners-engineers alliance is developing in some parts of the country, while other militants are uniting their claims within the factories—in Shardlows in Sheffield, for example, the TASS members have put forward the same basic claim as the engineers and are calling for TASS nationally to do the same. In some areas, moves for local meetings and conferences to discuss how to carry forward the struggle against Phase 3 are also being made.

- *For local conferences and action committees in every area to prepare the struggle against Phase 3.
- *Unite the struggles—unite the claims; for a miners-engineers alliance; for a public sector alliance; for the uniting of every wage claim and struggle at local and national level.
- *For a general strike.

End the talks

The most powerful tool the ruling class has to prepare its offensive is the TUC-Government talks. These talks both imply that the working class has some interest in helping the Tories out of the economic problems that British capitalism has created and at the same time suggest some compromise is possible, even in the present situation. These talks lead completely away from the urgent task of preparing the inevitable struggle. It is obvious even to the blind that it is a massive confrontation not a cosy tea room chat which is on the order of the day. These talks must be ended.

However the talks are only one of the ways in which what independence the trade unions still have under the law is being destroyed. The

Industrial Relations Act and the whole idea of an incomes policy are still around. No incomes policy can ever work in the interest of the working class in a capitalist society. The sole purpose of an incomes policy and that includes one proposed by a Labour government is to undermine the power of the working class. Fortunately awareness of this fact is rising rapidly. Already the AUEW and ASTMS conferences have come out against an incomes policy from any government.

- *A complete end to the Industrial Relations Act and all anti-union laws.
- *No Incomes Policy under capitalism—end the TUC-Government talks.

Tories out

It is the employers and the state—in short the

capitalist crisis onto the shoulders of the working class. The price which the capitalists have to pay for this is a series of restrictions that freeze their profits at the level they have already reached, provided that is above a certain minimum. 'Counter-inflation' acts as an insurance policy for the capitalist class.

TIGHTENING UP

Phase 3 tightens up on a number of the restrictions to which the capitalists are subjected as the price of this insurance. On the prices side, medium sized firms which previously had only to file periodic returns with the Government giving details of their income and expenditure must now advise the Prices Commission whenever they put up their prices (although they do not have to wait for official permission, as do the largest firms). On the profits side, a number of the technical ground rules have been tightened up (those allowing big capitalist companies to treat their sub-units as separate firms for the purpose of calculating profits, and those concerned with how to treat years in which a loss was made in calculating the average 'reference level' at which profits are frozen).

JUICY CONCESSIONS

But all this is really a bargain price to pay for the juicy concessions which Phase 3 offers to

- the capitalists:
1. To the 'allowable costs' which can be taken into account in making price rises is now to be added depreciation. What this means is that the increased cost of replacing existing capital equipment will be paid for by the consumer, and new capital investment programmes can be partly financed by raising prices (this could be done in some cases under Phase 2 by getting special permission, but it now takes place automatically).
 2. Under Phase 2 a firm would be forced to absorb certain costs: those that don't come within the definition of 'allowable costs' (such as wage rises above pay policy guidelines) and 50% of any increase in wage costs due to rises within pay guidelines (to be financed out of rising productivity). Under Phase 3 a firm will only have to absorb such costs without increasing their prices so long as they don't eat into profits by more than 10%.
 3. Under Phase 2 a company that was making a loss, or earning less than 5% profit on its capital, was exempted from certain restrictions, such as the requirement to absorb 50% of rising labour costs out of productivity. Moreover they could take advantage of falling costs (e.g. through rising productivity) to allow their profits to rise to the level of 5%. Under Phase 3 this

minimum profit rate is raised from 5% to 8%, and companies are exempted from virtually all the restrictions of the 'counter-inflation' policy until they reach this level. What this means, most importantly, is that companies are now free to put up their prices in order to raise their profits to this level.

TROUBLE AHEAD

The total effect of these concessions should be to make sure that if the rate of inflation in the international economy eases up over the next year, all of its benefits will flow into the pockets of the capitalist class. On the other hand there is almost no prospect of the pressure of rising prices on working class living standards easing up.

On balance, it would seem that the Tories are gearing up for a period of growing economic difficulty. One of the aspects of Phase 2 was that it put a certain amount of pressure on firms by forcing them to absorb various costs out of productivity or reduced profits. Only a very low rate of profit could win exemption from this. The main change under Phase 3 has been to ease back sharply on such burdens for less efficient firms. The reason is simple: the Tories see a period of economic turbulence ahead and, as usual, they are stacking the cards so that it will be the working class that will have to carry the can.

ROBIN HOOD HEATH?

Without doubt the biggest fraud in the Tories' Phase 3 package is their 'generous' £10 handout to old age pensioners. They have made a big fanfare out of the fact that this miserable sum—which works out to less than 20p a week—is to be paid for out of an increase in employers' National Insurance contributions.

So, there you are: Robin Hood Heath soaking the rich to give to the poor, old age pensioners. Ah, but not quite. If you look at the small print of the 'Counter Inflation' laws you will find out that 100% of employers' National Insurance contributions are 'allowable costs'—ie can be taken into account in raising prices. So this handout for the pensioners will be simply slapped on to prices by the capitalists and paid for by the ordinary consumers—including the pensioners themselves!

Chris Balfour

Communist Party on the factory floor

On the eve of the Liaison Committee for Defence of Trade Unions (LCDTU) Conference, ALAN GIBBS takes a critical look at the industrial strategy of the Communist Party.

It is not only the revolutionary left which is critical of the political activities of many members of the Communist Party of Great Britain inside the trade unions. The doubts and fears of the Party's own strategists concerning their comrades in industry are real and of long standing.

If, for example, we turn back the pages of the Party theoretical magazine *Marxism Today* to December 1958, we find Bert Pearce in anguish: 'The powerful grasp on the (working class) movement of the right wing, both in reformist ideas and in control of the machine, will only be broken to the extent that we build a strong Communist Party and *Daily Worker* and break the barriers which prevent the rest of the Left from working in unity with us. How do our comrades overlook or misunderstand this essence of our programme? Maybe because it is a lot easier to accept in words than to put over and win support for in the workshop or trade union branch. But there is no other way.'

Much more recently the same journal has featured a harvest of similar comments. As one contributor neatly put it in the May 1971 issue: 'There are plenty of CP members who are quite preoccupied with ten bob on the pay and half an hour off the day, to the virtual exclusion of any socialist politics.'

How is it that an organisation with some 50 years' experience of work in the trade unions, with access to the theoretical writings of Marx and Lenin on the workers' movement, with enthusiasm for socialism in its ranks, finds itself in this pessimistic state when considering its own 'industrial wing'?

PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

It is easy, and correct, to point to the reformist programme of the modern Communist

Party and to the fact that their overall strategy places electoral and parliamentary activity at the centre of the 'road to socialism,' rather than the industrial struggles of the workers' movement. This too is grudgingly half-conceded. Bert Pearce wrote about the Party's 'British Road to Socialism' (in *Marxism Today*, January 1971) that: 'All too many comrades still treat it as a sort of electoral programme, even a retreat to a supposedly easy, if unlikely, parliamentary road ...'

What exactly is the role allocated to the Party's trade union detachments under the terms of the 'British Road' programme? 'Using our democratic rights to transform traditional institutions'—the formula engraved in the programme—means in practice that priority is given in trade union work to influencing (and, where possible, capturing) the formal structures of the labour movement, with the assistance of any 'left-wing' (i.e. temporarily sympathetic) individual bureaucrats holding office in them.

HOLLOW INITIATIVES

Hence the more hollow CP initiatives in industry—the fiery resolutions passed by union branch meetings less than ten strong, the official declarations on vital issues trumpeted in the name of 10,000 or even 100,000 workers of whom perhaps a dozen actively favour the policy concerned. Hence, more notoriously, the praise lavished on 'progressive' trade union careerists and power-mongers, and their defence in times of criticism from the rank-and-file. When Jones and Scanlon sold out the 1971 Ford strike, for example, by imposing a hasty, company-organised secret ballot of the workers and a no-strike agreement, a CP leaflet circulated in the Dagenham plant whispered: 'Constructive criticism of trade union leaders is necessary, but it is very wrong to make wholesale destructive attacks which lead to an inability to distinguish between Right and Left, to cynicism and to apathy—attacks which help the right wing and the bosses.'

This concentration on influencing official union structures and winning support from official leaders certainly does not exclude unofficial agitation by the CP as well. But it does give such activity a strictly back-seat role. The CP needs the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions and its unofficial papers and committees which exist in some industries, but this need has very definite limits.

LOYAL MILITANCY

Bert Ramelson reminded us of those limits in his 1970 pamphlet on 'Productivity Bargaining': 'Militant struggle from below, far from creating difficulties for the official leaderships of unions, is positive assistance to those trade union leaders who are actively fighting to advance the interests of their members ... but it must be made clear that such activity is no substitute for official trade union action. Its main function is to stimulate and assist the official movement.'

In short, the industrial shock-troops of the Party, its relatively numerous array of militants in key positions in factories, docks, and depots, are expected to charge into battle when the bugle sounds, only to stop dead when sufficient noise has been made to stir their own generals. One-day strikes, preferably on the date of major official delegate conferences, remain the chosen weapon; and no heavier armour is brought up when, as on May Day this year, the bureaucrats successfully channel the 'pressure' from below into blind alleys of 'acquiescence' in government policy.

As no perspective for independent working class action and organisation genuinely outside bureaucratic control is offered by the Party, so its industrial membership increasingly gains a reputation (not least among some full-time union officials) for militant and energetic trade unionism, always ultimately, if reluctantly, loyal to the bureaucratic machine.

POLITICAL ISSUES

If the industrial weight of the CP is used only to lean on trade union officialdom, rather than to dislodge it, the Party nevertheless distinguishes itself from many social democratic trade unionists by raising, inside the workers' movement, a wide range of highly political issues.

No Stalinist party, tied even remotely to the powerful ruling bureaucracy in the Soviet Union with its distinct interests around the world, could display indifference to dramatic developments taking place in South-East Asia or Latin America. The CPGB will bring into the unwilling arena of the trade unions, at many levels, the burning issues of the fate of the Chilean working class or the war in Indochina, or even the question of British delegates to World Peace Congresses, as circumstances dictate.

However, given the methods of CP industrial work outlined above, this produces campaigns that are effectively bureaucratised. Union branch motions aim to secure national-level union and TUC co-operation, on paper, with the Party's line—not to stir thousands of workers into active solidarity actions or greater political understanding. This neatly provides many union bureaucrats with an easy 'militant' image at little expense. They will sign public petitions on Vietnam or Spain with an air of concern, using the same pens with which they sign vicious productivity deals or pay agreements accepting the 'freeze.'

REVOLUTIONARY LEFT

Many sections of the revolutionary left find it difficult to come to grips with the fact that the Communist Party does raise political issues in the trade union movement. For example, a lengthy analysis of the recent history of the Communist Party in *International Socialism* 62, completely skips over this problem.

The reason is that groups like the International Socialists base themselves upon an economic political strategy which leaves them disarmed in the face of CP political initiatives. Thus, faced with growing intervention of the state into industrial struggles and the unfavourable balance of class forces that creates for separate groups of workers, IS has little to offer but the call for yet more militancy. Yet, over three years ago, CP industrial organiser Bert Ramelson was writing, in criticism of the idea of achieving 'workers control' under capitalism: 'The more one examines the slogan, the less real it becomes ... difficult as it may be, there is no substitute for political action, guided by a revolutionary political party, aimed at securing political power.'

The economism of the International Socialists can offer no effective reply to arguments such as these, which will find growing acceptance among the working class as the need to unite and centralise their struggles to take on the Government becomes an even more burning necessity. Nor can the empty speech-making of the Socialist Labour League, which has got the art of exposing 'Stalinist betrayals' well-perfected, but is unable to offer any other way forward for the working class except the historic slog to 'transform the SLL into the



CP policy means defence of Scanlon against rank & file

revolutionary party' (a feat which threatens to rival the fabled transformation of princes into frogs, and vice-versa).

POLITICAL STRATEGY

The revolutionary left will never be able to undercut the influence of the Communist Party over industrial militants unless it can put forward a *revolutionary political strategy* for the organisation of the struggles of the working class. It is the failure to do this which has left the field open to the Communist Party for so long.

Such a strategy would show that the reformist politics of the Communist Party—the politics of electoralism, of pressurising and collaborating with the existing, treacherous, bureaucratic leaderships of the working class movement—is not the only form of politics possible. There is also a *revolutionary politics*—the politics of the organisation and unifying of the struggles of the mass of the working class, of the development of an alternative leadership from the ranks of the masses themselves. Such politics cast the mass of organised workers (rather than their bureaucratic chiefs) in the centre of the stage, unifying and leading the struggles of all oppressed social groups against the capitalist ruling class.

INITIATIVES

It is such a conception of politics that has continually led the International Marxist Group to call for, support, and launch initiatives designed to strengthen the organisation of the rank-and-file within the trade union movement and at the same time unify the struggles of separate groups of workers: the organising of conferences against the Tory Government and its incomes policy, support for rank-and-file defence committees for the Shrewsbury 24, the call for an organised defence of picketing, the call for shop stewards' quarters and a national meeting of shop stewards' delegates to plan industrial action in support of the engineering claim, etc.

At this present time—when the need for a working class offensive to smash through the Tories wages policy is greater than ever and, given the engineers' and miners' claims, a real possibility—the centrepiece of a revolutionary political strategy must be the call for the preparation of a general strike to unify all those forces suffering from Tory policy to bring the Government down. It is significant that such a perspective is not even seriously discussed by the Communist Party, and that the International Marxist Group is almost alone among organisations on the revolutionary left in consistently putting forward and explaining this central political idea.

A Necessary Rejoinder ...

As one of those responsible for drafting the IPSAG/ISRACA statement published in last week's *Red Weekly*, I would ask you, in view of the attacks made in *Workers Press* both on the statement itself and on the IMG and IS for publishing it in their respective papers, to print this rejoinder.

Workers Press accuses the authors of this statement of taking 'a pacifist position of refusing to take up arms for Zionism'. The statement, of course, said nothing of the sort, but merely declared its solidarity with all those in Israel who have resisted enrolment in the armed forces. The inclusion of such a declaration of support was felt to be necessary because of reports of persecution and harassment of draft resisters. Nowhere did we advocate a pacifist 'refusal to take up arms'.

In addition, *Workers Press* cites IPSAG's postscript opposing the destruction of the Israeli state by Egypt and Syria as proof of the 'real' character of this declaration. Moreover, *Socialist Worker* and *Red Weekly* are accused of a monstrous, unprincipled cover-up involving suppression of the postscript. The reality is rather different, the SLL's paranoid imagination notwithstanding. The postscript referred to was unilaterally added by IPSAG and issued in their name as far as ISRACA is concerned, therefore, the original statement still stands.

The SLL has every right to attack the real positions of its political opponents, but lying distortion and sheer bad faith have no place in such a debate.

Yours fraternally,

Robert Slansky.

We would only add that the version of the statement we received contained no postscript; indeed, we only became aware of its existence through the *Workers Press* article—Eds.

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 X tube).

FIVE SOCIALIST FORUM: N. Brownlee on 'Indochina—lull before the storm.' Wednesday 24 October, at 7.30 p.m. in the Baths Meeting Rooms, Dunfermline.

NEWCASTLE RED FORUM: Wednesday, 24 October—Linda Smith on 'The Current Situation in Ireland', 8.15 pm in the Bridge Hotel.

MIDDLE EAST: Leeds IMG public meeting on the situation there, Wednesday 24 October in the Trades Council Club, Upper Fountains Street.

'IRELAND': IMG meeting with John Ross in Leeds Polytechnic Union at 1.00 pm on Friday, 26 October.

BRITISH TROOPS OUT! Public meeting, Wednesday 24 October, at 7.45 pm in Fulham Town Hall (Fulham Broadway tube). Speakers include Don Cook (AUEW Convenor), Frank McManus MP, James Wellbeloved MP, Jack Dramey (NCCU), Eamonn McCann, Jim Kemp (T&GWU Convenor). Organised by West London Branch of the Troops Out Movement.

MANCHESTER RED CIRCLE: Every Thursday at 'The Ancoats', Great Ancoats Street. Thursday 25 October: Margaret Coulson on 'Women's Oppression'.

'REVOLUTION IN ANGOLA': Glasgow public meeting, speaker Sadye Minges (MPLA). AUEW Hall, West Regent Street, 7.30 pm, Monday 29 October.

BIRMINGHAM IMG PUBLIC MEETING: Phase 3 and the way forward for the engineering pay claim. Monday, 22 October, 8.00 p.m., Digbeth Civic Hall. Speaker: Ron Thompson (Sheffield AUEW).

CEYLON SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN: Public meeting, Friday 19 October, 7.30 pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square—The Chilean experience and its significance for revolutionary movements in all continents.

NOTTINGHAM RED CIRCLES: Wide-ranging series of discussions based on the politics of the Fourth International. Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday in the month. 8.00 p.m. at the Lion Hotel, Clumber Street.

LEAFLETS, PAMPHLETS, COVERS, ETC: Quality electrostencils by return. Only 30p (plus 5p p&p) from 56 Park Road, Lenton, Nottingham. All proceeds to *Red Weekly* fund drive.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE Socialist Action Group (IPSAG) public meeting: 'The Middle East war—a socialist analysis'. Anti-Zionist Jewish and Israeli speakers. Wednesday 24 October, 8.00 pm, Collegiate Building, University College, Gower Street, WC1.

GAY MARXIST: No.3 now out—revolutionary journal from the Marxists within GLF. Price 10p plus p&p, from: Lancaster GLF, 19 Vincent Street, Lancaster.

GAY MARXIST CONFERENCE: 2-4 November. Write for details as soon as possible to Gay Marxist Conference, 14 Hope Street, Lancaster.

CENTRAL LONDON AIL FORUM: 'Israel: An Ulster in the Middle East', Speaker: Alan Adler. Friday, 19 October, at 8.00 pm in the General Picton pub, Caledonian Road (5 mins Kings X tube).

HULL RED FORUM: 'Repression', speaker John Ross. Thursday, 26 October, Ross pub, Beverley Road, Hull.

BLACKBURN THREE DEMO: Postponed from 20 to 27 October—assemble 2.00 pm in Dalton Square, Lancaster, to march to prison and courthouse. Rally with speakers from Sinn Fein, Clann and IMG.

Lift the ban on the Communist League!

Last week Pierre Rousset, a former member of the Political Bureau of the banned Communist League (French section of the Fourth International) spoke at an IMG meeting in London about the banning and the current situation in France. The substance of his speech appears below.

First of all, why did we organise a counter-demonstration against the fascist meeting held by New Order at the Mutualite hall on 21 June?

We did so because the meeting was held to protest against so-called illegal immigration into France. The question of immigration, and the problem of racism, is beginning to become a major issue in France as it is in England. In particular, the Government has launched a big attack on immigrants through new legislation against so-called illegal immigration.

At the same time, the struggles of immigrant workers in France are today entering into a new phase. For years after the Algerian war, immigrant workers were mainly active on such issues as accommodation rather than in the factories. But in the last few months there have been new struggles: first against the Government's 'Fontanet Circular', which was a decree against illegal immigration; and secondly, in the factories themselves. Before the New Order meeting there was the immigrant workers' strike in Renault-Billancourt, which is the largest factory in France. And since then there has been the enormous national strike of immigrant workers against racism last month.

GROWING REPRESSION

So the meeting organised by New Order raised important questions for the French working class, because it geared into one of the main political axes of the French ruling class today: to divide the working class between French and immigrant workers. It was also important because it developed within a framework where the repression in France against the workers' movement is growing.

This repression takes two forms. There is the 'legal' repression — for instance, the increasing occupation of factories by the police as at 'Joint Francais' and at Lip this summer. But there is also the parallel repression by illegal or unofficial bodies, with the activity of the fascist so-called trade union, the CFT, in factories like Citroen; the intervention of fascist commandos against the Peugeot strike in St. Etienne; and the murder by fascist commandos of a number of immigrants this summer in Marseilles and elsewhere.

So, because of the objective importance of this meeting, and the complete passivity of the traditional leaderships of the working class, the extreme left, especially the Communist League, had to take on the responsibility of showing that a struggle against these methods of the French ruling class was both possible and necessary.

However, for much the same reasons, the Government wanted the New Order meeting to go ahead — not simply to defend the policy of dividing the working class through racism, or the policy of legal and parallel repression, but as part of its preparation for the enormous class confrontations which are developing in France.

Since the March elections the political crisis of leadership of the bourgeoisie has been growing. Right after the elections, the movement against the Debre laws on army conscription showed how far the radicalisation had extended even among school students.

Following on from this has been the Lip workers' strike in Besancon — the most important workers' struggle in France since May '68. You can understand what is happening in France when you see workers, who were not revolutionaries before the strike, going round explaining to meetings that the strike is solid because it has imposed its own legality, workers' legality, in place of bourgeois legality.

When the police threw them out of the factory, they took with them thousands and thousands of watches. They have explained to workers all over France how they organised 'the biggest hold-up in French history.' Imagine what such a statement means, publicised all over the press and on radio and TV, explaining that it's normal and correct to do this, because it strengthens the struggle of the working class.

ROLE OF LEFT

Also very significant has been the solidarity which has developed around Lip and the role played by the extreme left in this. None of the traditional leaderships of the working class — neither the CGT and CFDT trade union federations nor the Communist or Socialist parties — organised for the march last weekend. Yet last weekend we were 100,000 in Besancon. Even in Paris it's rare to have 100,000 on a demonstration, but in Besancon, a little provincial town, you can imagine what kind of national mobilisation — by car, bus and train — this meant. And in this 100,000-strong demonstration, the extreme left grouped a third of all the demonstrators; and the contingent behind the Rouge banner was 20,000-strong, the biggest single contingent on the whole demonstration.

This shows to some extent what is happening. Of course, you mustn't think that now we will be able to outflank the leaderships of the CGT and CP, or of the CFDT, anywhere, anyhow, at any time. No. But this does indicate a new deepening of the class struggle in France today, and the role of the extreme left in this upsurge is becoming more and more important.

The Government knows this, which is why it chose to hit the extreme left through its main organisation, the Communist League, thinking it could get away with it.

SOLIDARITY

But although the support for our demonstration on 21 June, before it took place, was weak, the solidarity which developed after we were banned was unprecedented in France. Even the Communist Party was forced to take up the issue and organise a public meeting to defend the Communist League, a Trotskyist organisation. This shows the extent to which their own base in the CP and the CGT supported us and

were demanding action in defence of us. Outside of such a situation the Communist Party would never have supported us against the Government.

Also significant were the divisions which arose in the state apparatus and even in the Government itself. Two days after the 21 June demonstration, for instance, the police trade union — which is not exactly revolutionary — publicly protested that Marcellin (the Minister of the Interior) had arranged things so that the police would suffer at the hands of the demonstrators. Why? To assist the policy of developing a fascist current in the police, and to use this to attack the Communist League after the demonstration.

All this shows how the action which the Communist League decided to take against the New Order meeting was absolutely correct, and corresponded to the needs and aspirations of many workers in France. In this situation, the Government had to retreat on several fronts.

First, it was forced to allow our newspaper, Rouge, to continue publication as a paper 'of communist action.' Then, after jailing myself and Alain Krivine, it was forced to release Krivine after a month (we don't yet know when his trial will take place) and to sentence me to only two months, which I had already served by the time the trial took place.

Just after the banning, Marcellin explained that if necessary he would jail hundreds and thousands of 'little Krivines' as he put it (he is always personalising things). The fact that he has now had to retreat on the content of the banning, and on the first moves he took after the banning, shows just how widespread was the support we received. We were never less isolated than after the 21 June demonstration.



Michel Recanati, seen here at school students' rally.

Ukrainian Socialists - Open letter

The following letter has been sent to British delegates to the World Peace Congress, shortly to be held in Moscow.

Dear Friends,

The Moscow Peace Conference will, doubtless, rightly denounce the bloody repression and imperialist counter-revolution of regimes such as those of Spain,



Ivan Dzyuba

South Africa, and Chile, which are killing, torturing and imprisoning working-class militants struggling for democratic liberties and socialism. As socialists, we give our support to such struggles and recognise that real peace can only be achieved in the world when the working-class follows the example of the Russian revolution and overthrows the capitalist system in all countries.

But it is from this standpoint that it becomes an urgent duty for socialists to oppose the suppression of working-class democracy and national rights in the Soviet Union. One Ukrainian socialist has said: 'I cannot imagine true socialism without democratic freedoms; without the widest political and economic self-government of all cells of the state organised down to and including the smallest; without real guarantee — and not merely a paper one — of the rights of all nations within a multi-national state.'

The man who wrote these words, Vyacheslav Chornovil, is at present in prison. Born in 1938, he became a journalist after being Komsomol Secretary on the construction site of the Kiev Hydro Electric Station. He then served on the editorial staffs of the papers *Young Guard* and *Readers' Friend* and worked for Radio Kiev. In 1966, he refused to testify at the trial of the oppositionists in Lvov. Arrested in 1967, he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, later commuted to 18 months. In 1972, he was re-arrested and is still in jail.

Chornovil compiled the Chornovil Papers — a

collection of documents exposing the illegal methods employed by the authorities in secret trials and the terroristic behaviour of the KGB (secret police) during arrests and interrogations.

In spite of the repression from which he has suffered, Chornovil has always declared his belief in socialism. In his own words: 'I categorically state, contrary to all illogical assertions... that I have always adhered to the principles of socialism and continue to do so.'

We must also take up the case of Ivan Dzyuba, another Ukrainian political prisoner. Born in 1931 into a peasant family, Dzyuba became a writer and literary critic. In 1965, with Chornovil and others, he staged a protest against the mass arrests made that year. For many years a member of the editorial board of *Vitshynza*, official organ of the Ukrainian Writers Union, he was himself arrested, then later released. In 1972, he was re-arrested and expelled from the Writers Union. Earlier this year, he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and a further five years in exile, the maximum sentence for the charges made against him. Dzyuba is dying from tuberculosis, and is expected to live for no more than a year. He has petitioned the authorities with a request to be able to die at liberty. This request has been turned down.

Forbidden to publish anything since 1965, Dzyuba is the author of *Internationalism or Russification?* a Marxist critique of current Soviet nationalities policy. In criticising the government, Dzyuba called for the propagation of the 'ideas of Marxism-Leninism and

world communism which are now concealed, evaded or falsified....'

It is not necessary to support every word that Chornovil and Dzyuba have written in order to support their right to express their views. It is precisely because there is room in the socialist and working-class movement for different opinions that we oppose the repression directed against them.

So, although we have seen that the banning of the League has not prevented the Trotskyist movement in France from continuing to develop its influence, it is important to continue solidarity activity on an international level.

First, because it helps us in our struggle to free Michel Recanati and get the ban on the League lifted. I don't know that we will be able to lift the ban on the League — it is a very serious question for the Government. But if we were able to achieve it, it would be a very important political lesson: it would show that the Government cannot take such a measure without facing not only a very big movement of protest but also having to retreat all the way back. To win this battle we still need support not only in France but also on the international level.

Secondly, such a campaign is necessary because similar problems, similar issues, similar forms of action, similar repression, a similar development of racism, exist in many European countries today, especially in England and in France. It is also because of the objective relationship between the struggles we as revolutionaries are developing in France, England and elsewhere that together we must continue the struggle for the lifting of the ban on the Communist League and the release of Michel Recanati.



Michel Recanati, seen here at school students' rally.

world communism which are now concealed, evaded or falsified....'

It is not necessary to support every word that Chornovil and Dzyuba have written in order to support their right to express their views. It is precisely because there is room in the socialist and working-class movement for different opinions that we oppose the repression directed against them.

We ask you to do the following:

1. Raise the cases of Dzyuba, Chornovil and other political prisoners at the Moscow Peace Congress.
2. Raise the matter in your Trade Union, Shop Stewards Committee or Trades Council.
3. Sign and circulate the petition, part of an international campaign, protesting against the imprisonment of Dzyuba and Chornovil and calling for full democratic liberties in the USSR.
4. Support the Committee to Defend Ivan Dzyuba and Vyacheslav Chornovil. Offers of practical help are urgently needed.

A conference which claims to be dedicated to the struggle for world peace and against the repression of socialists and democrats which would not take up the repression of socialists like Chornovil and Dzyuba would be nothing but an expensive farce.

Fraternalty Yours,

The Committee to Defend Ivan Dzyuba and Vyacheslav Chornovil.

Red Weekly

NO PLATFORM FOR FASCISTS

LONDON

Last Saturday the National Front held its Annual General Meeting in London, complete with a guard of honour provided by the Metropolitan Police.

Blue-uniformed doormen politely checked the credentials of NF members as they entered the Conway Hall, while their colleagues - both mounted and pedestrian - took on the more arduous job of keeping 800 irate anti-fascists from picketing the hall.

DEMO TACTICS

Without doubt last Saturday's anti-fascist demonstration was one of the most disciplined and militant that has taken place for some time. This has inevitably sparked off a debate throughout the left, a number of criticisms being levelled at the IMG's leadership of this action.

The demonstration, called by the International Marxist Group and endorsed by a number of trade union bodies and prominent trade unionists in the London area, marched from Lincoln's Inn Fields where a number of speakers stressed the urgent need to 'root fascism out of the trade union movement and smash it wherever it appears in public.

The demonstrators, bearing the banners of TGWU Region No.1, TGWU International Branch, ASTMS Central Medical Branch, and the Sussex and North London Poly student unions, marched to the Conway Hall

which they found heavily protected by police. In an attempt to insist on their right to mount an effective mass picket of the hall a number of anti-fascists and police were injured. Five demonstrators were arrested, two of whom were obviously fingered for having spoken at Lincoln's Inn Fields.

In general, last Saturday was a success. It can serve as the first step in developing a mass, national campaign which will strike at the fascist disease wherever it raises its ugly head, and draw into its ranks greater numbers of trade unionists, immunising them against the poison of fascist demagoguery and racism.

part played by the police. For a fairly vigorous protest the injuries sustained were few and the number of arrests less than have occurred on many far more 'passive' demonstrations.

We will not be able to enforce our right to crush the fascist organisations until we can involve much larger numbers and create a more favourable balance of forces.

The task of a responsible political leadership is to make sure that this process is carried out in such a way that it communicates a clear political message and the human costs are kept to a minimum. This is a central preoccupation of the International Marxist Group.

But sheer numbers are not enough. We must also learn how to use our forces more effectively - and that is something that can only be learnt from experience.

We cannot fail to comment on the abysmal response of the left - and in particular the revolutionary left - to this crucial demonstration. The Communist Party, the International Socialists, and the Socialist Labour League, were all conspicuously absent. This represents nothing less than an abject capitulation in the face of the fascist threat. These organisations must seriously reconsider their policy on this question if they are to lay any serious claim to being concerned with the main political questions facing the workers' movement.



Anti-fascist demonstrators rally at Edinburgh

EDINBURGH

The slogan 'No Platform for Fascists!' was given a very practical application in Edinburgh last Monday, when an attempt to hold a debate involving Martin Webster of the National Front ended in a complete rout for the racists and the University right-wing.

About 400 left-wing student militants and trade unionists occupied the debating hall, after a charge which broke through the Police and Securicor cordon. A further 300 supporters massed outside the hall chanting.

As soon as the occupation took place, the University Debates Committee called off the meeting, which

was to have featured Webster and Lady Birdwood of the Monday Club speaking in support of the motion: 'That Repatriation is the Solution to Britain's Race Relations Problems.'

The occupation was only one aspect of a broad anti-fascist campaign which won support in the labour movement. Mick McGahey, President of the Scottish NUM, publicly condemned the meeting, a resolution was passed by the Edinburgh Building Trade Joint Shop Stewards Committee, and sites in the area were leafleted on the issue. Gasworkers, building workers and students from Newcastle, Glasgow, Stirling and Aberdeen Universities were involved in the action.



Police horses in action against anti-fascists in London

The following motion was passed by 1/1107 branch of the TGWU on 17 October:

'Recognising the danger of the growth of racist and fascist organisation this 1/1107 (Ford's Central) T & G branch affirms its support for the demonstration against the National Front on Saturday 13 October. This branch further donates £5 to the defence fund for those arrested on that demonstration under the 'supposedly anti-fascist Public Order Act which has always been used against the working class movement.'

CHILE: all out 4 Nov.

The extermination of the opposition in Chile, proceeding street by street, factory by factory, village by village, is now approaching the level which the United Nations defines as genocide, according to the Spanish Secretary-General of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists.

The Santiago papers report an increasing number of cases in which prisoners have been summarily executed for 'attempting to escape.' Three militants of the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR) were shot after the van which was transferring them from one prison to another was unsuccessfully attacked by a commando squad, armed with homemade bombs. Six other militants were executed in San Felipe for reportedly 'attacking a guard' and attempting to escape.

Price rises for essential goods of between 400% and 600% have been announced, wages have been frozen, and the working week has been extended by four hours, without extra pay. In addition, strikes have been made illegal by a government decree. It is by these means that the regime

hopes to demoralise the population and stamp out any form of organised dissidence or resistance.

The General Council of the Scottish TUC is to approach the Government to ask that the two frigates and two submarines of the Chilean Navy now being worked on in British shipyards should not be delivered to the military government. Trade union branches in every part of Britain continue to pass resolutions opposing the junta, and calling for the release of political prisoners. Unfortunately the Chinese government has broken ranks with the international opposition to the junta, and withdrawn recognition from the Popular Unity Ambassador in Peking.

Preparations are going ahead for a national solidarity demonstration in London on 4 November. However the unity of the solidarity forces has been threatened by factional activity inside the Chile Solidarity Campaign Committee inspired by the Communist Party.

The committee was formed on the political basis of solidarity with Pop-

ular Unity and all other forces fighting the military junta. However this has not been reflected in posters produced by the Communist Party for the demonstration, which refer only Popular Unity.

Moreover, the Committee recently sent a telegram to Heath protesting at the threat to the life of Chilean Communist Party leader Luis Corvalan, but - again at the instigation of the CP - scandalously refused to include a call for the release of all political prisoners.

Despite the sectarianism of the CP and its allies, the International Marxist Group will remain in the Chilean Solidarity Campaign Committee and will continue to give its full political and organisational backing to the 4 November demonstration. However the manoeuvres of the Communist Party have left the IMG no choice but to produce its own posters and leaflets, in order to ensure that the point of view of the revolutionary left is not stifled and the elementary principles of united front activity are upheld.

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