



ALL OUT ON NOVEMBER 5TH

After the £75,000 fine on the AUEW by the National Industrial Relations Court, the engineering union is still open to further attacks on its funds. Con-Mech are threatening to claim a further £75,000 in damages, and it is possible that the NIRC will impose more fines for continued contempt of court.

Although the AUEW leadership has stood firm in its policy of refusing to defend itself in the NIRC, the AUEW Executive, led by 'left' winger Hugh Scanlon, has done hardly anything to avert this latest attack on the AUEW and the working class movement.

It failed to call for industrial action when the NIRC sequestered the £100,000 from which the fine was deducted on Monday for the failure on the membership. Unfortunately, there is still no organised political force in the

By ALF JENNINGS

day, and Scanlon's request to the TUC for 'support' (but not to organise any action) was also completely inadequate. Instead, Scanlon called on his members to give 'indications of their desire to defend the union', as if the membership were somehow in doubt about the response that was needed to prevent the fine being imposed! The Communist Party made matters worse by using the LCDTU conference last weekend to give credence to Scanlon's attempt to shift the blame

AUEW which, knowing Scanlon's political limitations, had the strength to step into the breach in time. Yet it has been obvious for a long time that none of the 'left' leaders were prepared to undertake the type of industrial struggle needed to defeat NIRC rulings

Reformist officials will not lead, if it can help it, this type of strike action, which would turn into an open struggle to bring down the Government, for it has no answers to the



Mass picket at Con-Mech — firm threatens to seek up to £75,000 compensation from AUEW for strike

sort of political and economic retaliation which the capitalists would organise in reply to such an upsurge. As a result of this state of affairs, the NIRC feels

free to cripple one union after another, confident in the belief that one-day protest strikes will be the only outcome.

On this occasion, Scanlon has not even been prepared to come out openly and call for industrial protest action after the fine was imposed. Instead the Executive Committee has repeated the kind of 'do your own thing' invitation to the rank and file that we saw during the Goad affair. This means that there is now the danger that the protest strikes now being planned by local bodies will be seen by the rank and file simply as a means of getting financial 'revenge' on the employers, rather than as the opening of a struggle to inflict a defeat on the NIRC.

The London Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has called for a stoppage of its London members on

5 November. This call should be taken up by every shop stewards committee and district committee in the CSEU, and the day should be marked by an all-out stoppage.

But it must not be limited to the engineering industry. The whole working class must respond to this attack. Local conferences, trades council meetings and inter-union shop stewards meetings should be called to mobilise for that day, and flying pickets should be organised in advance to ensure that it is a success.

Only in this way can the working class movement turn back this latest attack — 5 November must be a springboard to the type of general strike that can destroy the Tory Government along with the Industrial Relations Act and its other anti-working class policies, despite the betrayals of the trade union bureaucracy.

New moves to support Chilean resistance

As the Chile solidarity demonstration on 4 November draws near there is increasing activity to mobilise support and organise aid for the Chilean resistance.

One major initiative has been the establishment of a committee in the London School of Economics, which has received wide support within the LSE and from left wing groups and individuals in colleges throughout London.

The Committee for Support of the Chilean People, as it is called, has been recognised by the Students Union, and plans a number of activities, including a teach-in on the eve of

the demonstration on Saturday, 3 November. The speakers lined up for this include Roberto Suarez, a member of the left wing of the Chilean Socialist Party, Robin Blackburn of the International Marxist Group, and Eric Hobsbawm of the Communist Party. Prominent trade union leaders, and Labour MPs have also been invited.

The Committee has also launched a fund to aid the Chilean resistance for which they have set a target of £1,000 by 4 November: £200 has been collected already since the beginning of this week, and it is expected that this initiative will rapidly

begin to gather momentum from elsewhere in Britain.

Roberto Suarez is currently engaged in a speaking tour in London and elsewhere at which he is appealing for collections to swell this fund. These meetings have been mainly organised by the IMG, and Suarez will also be speaking along with Tariq Ali and other speakers at an IMG public meeting in Conway Hall at 7.30pm. on Friday, 2 November.

Donations to the fund set up in LSE should be sent to: Committee for Support of the Chilean People, c/o LSE Students Union, Houghton St., London W.C.1.

Journalists Fight On

In a thick carpeted office in fashionable Hampstead sits Derek H. Clark, ex-paratrooper, freemason and publisher.

Clark's businesses go under a variety of names but in the main he produces children's educational material and *F.A. News* — the official mouthpiece of the Football Association. Or at least he did at one time, because for the past eleven weeks Clark's journalists have been on official strike over their boss's pettiness, paternalism and meanness.

The staff object to receiving £600 less than what is normal for their type of work; they object to no sick pay entitlement; they object to receiving no notice when Clark indulges in his regular pastime of sacking people; and they object to having to supply their own typewriters.

When these complaints were first voiced, Clark's response was to fire the shop steward and to refuse to talk to the union involved — the National Union of Journalists. Thus began the strike, and although Clark eventually agreed to talks his words continue to echo his nineteenth century view of reality, when coffee breaks were banned and women workers were expected to perform out of office activities for the boss's gratification. Indeed Clark's eccentricities are endless: at one point he accused his workers



Photo: Chris Davies (Report)

of 'sabotage', and his most recent innovation is to tape-record all his conversations (no, he hasn't any originality either).

And so the strike goes on, and although Clark's behaviour borders on the absurd the strike does have an importance outside of his puny little outfit. The world of publishing has many aspiring Derek Clarks, who seek to exploit their employees' desire to see their name in print by paying wage rates which few other white collar workers would look at.

If Clark can be forced to give in to the NUJ publishers in general will take note that the NUJ stands for more than the provision of a press card with which holders can gain free access to Hampstead art galleries. But the strikers are very few in number, and they urgently need assistance, especially in picketing Clark's offices next door to the Hampstead tube. Please phone Magazine & Book branch (Gordon Parker) at 837 6188 with any offers of help, or just turn up 9.30 — 5.30.

Ben Jeffries

CURRENT ACCOUNT

The oil crisis

Joe Gornley and King Feisal of Saudi Arabia may not have much in common. But to the Tory Government they are both connected with a major threat not only to British fuel supplies during the winter but also to the implementation of Phase 3 of the wage policy.

In anticipation of a miners' strike, the Electricity Board has in the last few months amassed a stock of 18 million tons of coal (a record for this time of year). If the Arab governments' reduction of oil supplies hits supplies to Britain and forces the Electricity Board to substitute more coal-based electricity for some of the 20 per cent of supplies now produced in oil-fired stations, then any miners' strike will bite much more quickly than had been bargained for. No doubt this was one of the reasons why the Tory government resisted Harold Wilson's clamour for Britain to arm the Zionists, hoping that this would make Britain immune for the oil supply cutback announced by the producing states.

PRICE RAISED

This cutback, however, would probably not outlast a Middle Eastern ceasefire. What is in the long term more threatening to the economic strategy of the governments in Britain and other advanced capitalist countries is the prior decision of the Arab oil producers to raise the price of crude oil by an unprecedented amount.

The Arab oil states' new policy can only be understood against the background of the complex price structure of the world oil market. There are three oil 'prices' in operation. One is the major oil companies' internal transfer price, which they fix themselves on internal transfers of crude in order to minimise overall tax payments. The second is the market price, which is fixed by the producing countries but which relates to the overall world demand and supply situation. Only about 2-3 per cent of the world's oil is traded at this price. The third price is the notional posted price, which up to now has been set in negotiation between the producing states and the companies and is the basis on which the producing countries fix taxation of the companies.

It is the posted price which is the basis of the colossal revenues of the Middle Eastern producers. The production cost of a barrel of oil is between 10 and 15 US cents. Up to last week the posted price in the Gulf, for example, was about \$3.00, which meant the cost to the companies was 10.15 cents a barrel production cost plus 55 per cent of the posted price in tax plus a further 10 per cent royalty, making a total of \$2.05-2.10 a barrel.

UNILATERAL DECISION

Shortages in the last few months have sent the market price way above the posted price. And the first decision the Arab producers took in Kuwait last week was to raise the posted price to 17 per cent above the previous highest registered market price. This meant a rise of about two-thirds in the posted price and an increase in cost per barrel to the companies to about \$3.10. Libya then followed suit with an even steeper rise to about \$5.40 a barrel, a move which may well stimulate another rise from the Gulf producers.

These decisions represented the abandonment by the producers of a five-year agreement with the companies, and a complete rejection of the notion that the posted price is fixed in negotiation with the companies. It is now the unilateral decision of the producer states, a fact which represents their growing power in relation to the oil companies and the major consuming countries of Western Europe, Japan and increasingly the US.

Heath's Phase 3 strategy is based economically and politically on the hope of a fall in the price of world commodities. The Kuwait announcement was a serious blow to this.

Michael Price

New developments in Triumph dispute

The fight against redundancy by 1750 workers at Triumph Motor Cycles is hotting up. Fifteen hundred production workers have been laid off after refusing to give up the 2,500 completed bikes locked in the factory. They have also refused to allow senior Norton Villiers Triumph (NVT) management into the plant.

The day after the lay-offs were announced, delegations were sent from the occupied factory to every large work-place in Coventry. A 4,000 strong demonstration in solidarity with Triumph had previously been widely supported by the Coventry labour movement.

The Triumph Shop Stewards Committee is now circulating a letter to all the men addressed to their wives. The 'letter from the wife of a Triumph worker' calls for the setting up of a 'wives committee', to involve the wives in the struggle, organise Social Security, and help in picketing.

The plan to set up a 'workers co-operative' to take over the factory now seems to be in question. On his return from America, where he investigated the possibility of setting up a marketing network for selling bikes produced in the factory, Leslie Huckfield, MP for Nuneaton, refused to comment on the viability of the scheme.

Huckfield was reporting back to the Shop Stewards Committee on Wednesday, and discussions were taking place all day. It is possible that the scheme will collapse, and that some alternative proposal more able to defend the struggle and take it forward will be put to the workers.

CHRIS BANNER

Hospital workers fight rising prices

Hospital workers throughout the Kings College Hospital Group held meetings last week to discuss the problem of rising prices in the canteens. In Dulwich Hospital, for instance, there has been an overall increase in prices of 20-25% since the pay award at the beginning of April.

The unions have now set up a committee including porters, domestics, nurses, engineers and

medical students to plan co-ordinated action on this issue. The main demand raised at the meetings has been that food prices should be reduced again to their level on 1 April.

The scale of the price rises has resulted from the Government's policy of cutting back on public sector expenditure. It was stressed at the Dulwich meeting that the only way to fight these attacks is to campaign for joint action in all hospitals, combined with winning trade union support from outside. The attacks on the health service, by keeping hospital workers badly paid and super-exploiting their genuine desire to help the sick, and by withdrawing all but the most minimum resources, affect the entire working class.

As a first step towards fighting these increases and consolidating organisation within the hospitals, a canteen boycott has been suggested. Steps are also being taken to contact trade union organisations outside the hospitals, and already Southwark Trades Council has pledged its support.

In the spring, the hospital workers put up a heroic fight against Phase 2 but were defeated through the failure of the rest of the working class to join in a united struggle. This lesson must be learnt for the fight against Phase 3. Organisation around the question of prices and Government erosion of health standards would be an excellent way of preparing such unity in action.

Messages of solidarity and support are desperately needed to convince these workers that they do not struggle alone — send to: Claire Ramsey, NUPE Branch Secretary, Dulwich Hospital, East Dulwich Grove, London SE22.

Jane Sutherland

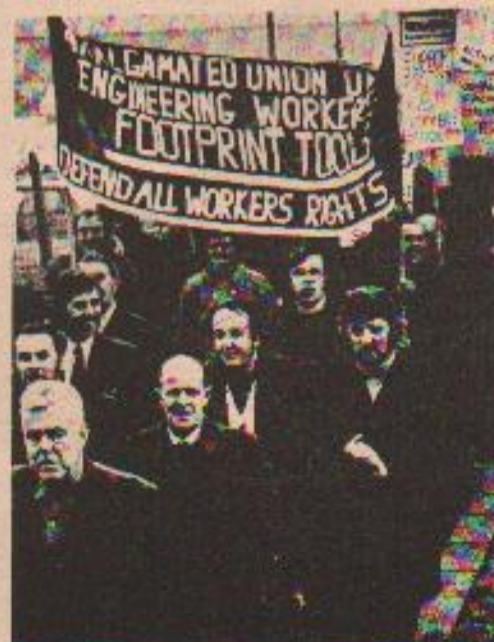
PROTEST ONLY AT FOOTPRINT

The 4000-strong demonstration a fortnight ago in defence of those arrested on a mass picket outside Footprint Tools in Sheffield was a major turning point in the strike to reinstate Pete Wilson, the sacked shop steward.


While this was the strongest demonstration to have occurred as a result of the strike, it at the same time transformed the mobilisation from one of practical support for the strike to one of protest action 'in defence of the right to picket'.

The AUEW District Committee had already agreed to lift the picket on the factory before the demonstration, as an 'olive branch' to persuade the scab G&MWU stewards to discuss job demarcation, and to open up the way to an 'independent' inquiry. The G&MWU stewards refused to respond, however, even though the District Committee was prepared to go even further by reversing the decision of the shop stewards' quarterly to hold a mass picket on the morning of the demonstration.

It is clear that the line of the District Committee is designed to push into the background the need for mass action and effective picketing to win the strike. The struggle has reached the point where a really effective mobilisation would take the strike right out of the hands of the Communist Party. They are therefore quite prepared to accept a compromise at Footprints in the shape of an 'independent' inquiry now being set up.



This will no doubt be presented as necessary in order to lead up to the engineering pay claim in an 'orderly way', without 'diversions'. But if such tactics are pursued—allowing the 'softening up' of pickets at Footprint at the same time as the NIRC is busy seizing AUEW funds—the working class is more likely to find itself in retreat, no matter how 'orderly'.



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

At a time of watershed in the class struggle, when the Government has announced Phase 3, the AUEW has been fined £75,000, and the Shrewsbury trial has got under way, the Liaison Committee for Defence of Trade Unions held its most unimpressive conference for over two years last Saturday.

At the last LCDTU Conference over 1,000 delegates swore that the defeats over Phase 2 would not be repeated, and that the campaign against Phase 3 would be planned in such a way as to overcome the deficiencies. But only half that number met in the Beaver Hall last Saturday.

Militants have not found in the LCDTU a viable alternative to the political leadership which they once thought that Scanlon and Jones could provide. The LCDTU has not anticipated the inactivity of the TU bureaucracy, or led the rank and file in taking the necessary initiatives when the bureaucrats inevitably defaulted.

SHREWSBURY

At the recent Liverpool Conference on the Shrewsbury 24, over 800 delegates expressed unanimous enthusiasm for a struggle to smash the trials. Kevin Halpin, speaking for the LCDTU, said that Shrewsbury would be the main item on the agenda of last week's meeting. Yet it attracted fewer delegates than the Liverpool Conference, despite the other strategically important items which were to be discussed.

What was needed at Liverpool was a plan of campaign: definite dates for strike action, local meetings, a panel of speakers, a powerful co-ordinating committee, etc. to bring the struggle to a climax similar to the victory over the Pentonville Five. No such plan emerged at Liverpool, yet Halpin didn't promise that the LCDTU would fill the gap. Militants could only conclude that the LCDTU would do nothing more than pass another resolution of support (as duly happened).

Of course on Saturday Halpin did speak about the need to strike in sympathy with the 24; but who is going to call such action? The trade union bureaucrats, 'left' and right, are not even pretending to plan any action. Yet Halpin failed to pose the possibility of the LCDTU itself calling unofficial strikes over Shrewsbury.

NO INDEPENDENCE

The lack of leadership from the LCDTU results from the failure of the Communist Party to develop it into an active and democratic body able to take initiatives in its own name, within a long term independent strategy, pulling the mass of the trade union movement behind it. Only in the early days of the fight

against the Industrial Relations Act did it call strikes, and once the 'left' trade union leaders started to take token action the LCDTU disappeared as an independent force.

When the NIRC sequestered £100,000 last week, Scanlon said that engineering workers 'might be called upon' to give 'tangible evidence' of their 'desire to defend the Union.' This ambiguous formula could be interpreted as a promise to call industrial action later on, or as an encouragement to those who wanted to pass resolutions demanding action from the EC. Either way, if any action came, this move ensured that it would be late in the day.

Leading CP speakers, at the LCDTU meeting, far from criticising this manoeuvre, tried to claim that Scanlon had failed to make a call for fear of issuing a blank shot. As Bernard Panter from Manchester said: 'You cannot expect the leadership to make a call unless they are reasonably certain that they are going to get the support of the rank and file.' For the CP the main task was to lobby the NIRC on Monday, and the EC on Tuesday; but what was really required was immediate national strike action.

FOSTERING ILLUSIONS

Actually Scanlon was not looking for 'indications of support.' He was looking for assistance in fostering the illusion that he was failing to lead only because his troops were on leave. This was the task which the CP took upon itself at the LCDTU.

Yet many speakers at the LCDTU itself inadvertently proved that there was support. Several groups of building workers announced that they had already decided to strike on Monday, and Tony McClelland of the Liverpool Trades Council seemed certain of enough support when he boasted that with 'one word from the Executive we will shut Merseyside down.'

NO CONCRETE ACTION

The discussion on Phase 3 proceeded on similar lines. There were calls for unity between the engineering workers and the miners. The need to mobilise the Labour movement against the anti-union laws was stressed over and over again. But rather than sketching out an independent series of actions, the only concrete suggestion was for a day of action and a mass lobby of the TUC, apparently all-important, which has yet to be recalled.

The paralysis of the LCDTU reflects the fact that although the CP wants to fight Phase 3, the 'left' bureaucracy to whom it concedes political leadership of the working class, has no intention of fighting. Even Lawrence Daly's call for an emergency TUC Congress was not supported by Scanlon, and Jack Jones has

LCDTU TOES THE LINE



Meeting after NIRC picket on Monday — a substitute for strike action

fought a long battle to stay at No. 10.

Furthermore, with the partial exception of the miners, the bureaucracy is not even preparing the struggle over the crucial wage claims. The AUEW Executive Committee, for example, has not implemented the National Committee's instruction to carry out a campaign of publicity and preparation for the struggle over the wage claim.

LOCAL MEETINGS

What is needed in this situation is for the rank and file in the localities to call conferences and shop stewards meetings and to set up committees to prepare for the struggle. The CP will not

take action independently of the bureaucracy in the AUEW, nor will it develop the LCDTU into a body with the prestige necessary to call independent action on all the tasks of the day.

The LCDTU has no democratic foundation in the working class movement, nor has it any local bodies which can act as an arena for discussion or propose resolutions to the national conferences. The LCDTU only leads militants to rely instead on the trade union bureaucracy, whose reformist politics consistently hamstring the working class in the struggle against the ruling class.

Dave Bailey

Bob Purdie reports on the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis

Next year decisive for Provisionals



Special Branch car overturned

demands of the Provisionals: for a British commitment to a phased withdrawal from Ireland, for the release of all internees, and for an amnesty for all those who have been imprisoned. It also slated the Free State and SDLP politicians for 'prostrating their bodies across the path of inevitable (British) withdrawal', and told the Republicans that victory was within their grasp.

LABOUR BETRAYAL

Similar enthusiasm greeted the address by the re-elected President of Sinn Fein, Ruairi O Bradaigh, who emphasised that the British government wanted to settle the Irish question before the next general election. This, he said, gave the possibility of a victory, if the Republicans carried on with the struggle, but it also faced Sinn Fein with some very urgent problems and tasks.

In particular, O Bradaigh attacked the Irish Labour Party for betraying the social and economic aspirations of its supporters. Despite the claims of the coalition government, he said, there was no evidence that they would alter a situation in which 5% of the population in the 26 Counties owned 71% of the wealth.

Both O Conaill and O Bradaigh blamed



Maire Drumm and Ruairi O Bradaigh at Ard Fheis

British government for the Dublin bombings, but neither made any reference to the bombings in Britain, although a statement read out by O Conaill repeated the warning given in September that: 'Our forces will strike when and wherever it is deemed necessary, opportune and advantageous.'

DEEP PROBLEMS

The Ard Fheis pledged support to the leadership of the Republican Movement, and to the struggle in the North. But the resolutions on education, organisation and finance brought out most clearly the deep problems facing Sinn Fein. An ambitious educational programme has recently been introduced and the need for this was evident in the extremely low political level of most of the speeches. Moreover, in discussing the problem of the inactivity of many of the Cumainn (branches) in the South, there was much moral exhortation for Republicans to 'get on with the work', but no perspective offered which could actually help to solve the problem.

It is a principle of modern psychiatry that you do not tell a depressed person to 'Pull yourself together'; it is necessary to find out the causes of the condition. Similarly it is in the political line being pursued that a movement will find

the roots of its organisational problems.

NO BALANCE SHEET

The Ard Fheis was not given a balance sheet of the three main projects launched by Sinn Fein in the last year: the committees set up to campaign for regional government in the four provinces of Ireland; the Irish Civil Rights Association; and the Political Hostages Release Committee in the North. Nor was there any discussion of the most burning problem in the South—the moves to extradite Republicans to the North. The implicit threats of military action are unlikely to blackmail the Government into retreat on this question, especially when there has been no development of mass opposition. In this context military action could be disastrous, and would open the door for confusion amongst the Southern population, and swinging Governmental repression.

In order to meet the challenge of Free State repression the Provisionals will have to make a deep-going political turn, involving a re-assessment of their entire programme and strategy. The 1973 Ard Fheis did not give an indication that the leadership at all understands this, but before the next one they will have either met the challenge or be on the road to defeat.

There was a dramatic confrontation outside Dublin's Mansion House last Sunday when the 800 delegates and visitors to the Provisional Sinn Fein Ard Fheis (conference) poured into the street to cover the getaway of Daithi O Conaill.

In a spontaneous expression of resentment at Free State collaboration with British imperialism, they overturned a Special Branch car, and encircled a force of Gardai (police) who stood helpless as they chanted, 'Gardai—RUC', and sang, 'Take it Down From the Mast, Irish Traitors'.

MAIN DEMANDS

O Conaill, currently at the top of the British and Free State wanted list, was greeted with wild enthusiasm at the Conference as he read out a statement from the leadership of the Republican Movement. The statement warned that: 'We wish to state explicitly to the Dublin politicians that the Republican policy of non-military action in the South does not guarantee them immunity from the logical consequences of handing over any Irish Republicans to the forces of the British Crown'.

The statement went on to reiterate the main

THE MIDDLE EAST WAR: AIM

Ceasefire: prelude to Pax Americana

As we go to press, the fourth Arab-Israeli war seems to be hanging in the balance, after a joint Russian-American proposal for an 'in place' ceasefire.

There is no doubt that both Washington and Moscow viewed with apprehension the development of the military situation in the last week: an outright Israeli victory, which began to seem a distinct possibility, would have disastrous consequences in the Arab world from the point of view of both US and Soviet policy, leading to sabotage of oil installations and 'generalised instability'.

What is at stake - interview with Lebanese Trotskyist

This interview with a comrade of the Revolutionary Communist Group in Lebanon was conducted several days after the outbreak of war in the Middle East. The RCG, a sympathising group of the Fourth International, publishes a monthly journal, *Al Mutadel (The Militant)*

What is the significance of the present conflict?

I should say first of all that the scope of the confrontation took the revolutionary left in general by surprise. This has led to the adoption of two kinds of positions: the opportunists, who dress up their petit-bourgeois nationalism with a Marxist (or rather, Maoist) phraseology, have made a new turn and are now glorifying the Arab armies, even though they were criticising them only yesterday; while some revolutionaries are embarrassed by the whole affair, and regard the confrontation as pure theatre, a comedy worked out in advance by the two sides, etc. . .

As far as we are concerned, we obviously reject the naivety of the opportunists, but we also think that it is wrong to pose the question at the level of a 'comedy'. The war which is unfolding is serious from a military point of view, there's no doubt about that. But every Marxist—even anyone who thinks at all critically—knows that war is only the continuation of politics by other means. It therefore boils down to knowing *what kind of politics are being continued*. That's the essence of the problem.

The alternatives are clear. Is the aim of the present war to liberate Palestine, or at least to move forward in this direction? Or is it, instead, to create the most favourable conditions for the application of the solution laid down by the United Nations. We are in no doubt that the aim of the present war is to achieve this latter objective. And we categorically reject the UN resolution, which ties an Israeli retreat to the pre-1967 frontiers to conditions which would mean the end of the Palestinian cause (recognition of Israel, 'guaranteed' borders, etc.).

Can you outline for us the political situation which led up to this latest war?

The present war is the culmination of a clear political evolution which has taken place in the Middle East as a whole. The prime mover behind this evolution has without doubt been Saudi Arabia. The latter is playing an ever more important role in the Arab region, and she has the 'means' to carry out this policy. To hold the largest oil reserves in the world, at a time when there is more and more talk of an energy crisis, is to wield considerable power which even US imperialism would think twice about before taking on. The results of the Saudi political offensive are the following:

1. The modification of US policy to the advantage of the Arab regimes. The Nixon government has abandoned its schema for a 'partial solution' (to be negotiated between Egypt and Israel, with the reopening of the Suez canal), which was unacceptable to Egypt inasmuch as it would have meant too blatant a betrayal of the 'Arab cause'. Nixon seems to have decided to grant concessions to Syria as far as Golan is concerned—which up till now has been one of the major stumbling blocks in the way of a

Any ceasefire will probably be followed by intensive negotiations, culminating in a settlement along the lines of Security Council Resolution 242, which stipulates recognition of Israel by the Arab states in exchange for Israeli withdrawal from the territories conquered in the war of 1967. But such a diplomatic settlement, which will be presented as a triumph for the spirit of détente, will solve none of the problems at the root of the conflict between Zionism and the Arab world.

First we must be clear that the official war aims of Egypt and Syria—the liberation of the occupied territories—are entirely legitimate. The responsibility for the appalling blood-letting in the Middle East must be placed squarely where it belongs: at the door of the Zionist regime. The right of the Egyptian and Syrian armies to reverse the outcome of Israel's aggressive, colonialist 1967 campaign, which resulted in the eviction of tens of thousands of Palestinians and the wholesale destruction of entire towns and villages, is in no way negated by the petit-bourgeois and even openly reactionary character of the Arab regimes.

Now, one thing is evident: the failure of the Israeli army to dislodge the Egyptian forces from the East Bank of the Suez Canal, and the new-found fighting ability of the Arab armies, have severely punctured the parallel myths of Israeli military invincibility and Arab cowardice and stupidity. 'The rules of

the game', arrogantly invoked by the Israeli Chief of Staff, who predicted another massive Arab defeat ('we will break their bones'), have decisively changed since the days of the lightning Israeli blitzkrieg. Israel's reliance on the deterrent of overwhelming military terror has been shown to be both costly and ultimately illusory—for who can guarantee that the Arabs will not do even better in the future?

Whatever the immediate repercussions of the war in Israel—and a strengthening of the extreme 'not-an-inch' faction of Zionism is not excluded—the long-term effect may well be to stimulate a reappraisal of traditional Israeli thinking in relation to the Arab world. Now, more than ever, Zionism can be seen to offer neither peace nor security to the Israeli masses.

At the same time, however, the peace settlement now in the pipeline will leave intact the colonial structures of the Israeli State, the racist and discriminatory legislation on which it is based, and the structural ties with imperialism without which it could not survive; Israel will continue to function as a local caretaker of American interests in the Middle East; and, not least important, the Palestinian people, the direct victims of Zionist colonisation, will not recover their national rights.

The rights of the Palestinians are certainly of no concern to Sadat and Assad, but whether they will be able to sell the diplomatic settlement to the Arab masses is another question. There are already signs that the Arab regimes will seek to

'peaceful solution'. The US seems, in a word, to have adopted after six years the Soviet-Arab interpretation of UN resolution 242.

2. The opening up of Egypt to US interests. One should not think that US imperialism has changed its position without coming up against any rivals. Since 1971 Egypt has been the forum for a struggle between two sections of the bourgeoisie: one representing US interests, the other preferring a partnership with European imperialism. Until recently the Sadat government had opted for Europe, trying to secure aid from Britain, France, and West Germany. But having been misled about the possibility of this, and encouraged by guarantees from Feisal of Saudi Arabia, he finally turned towards the US.

3. The return to good relations with Hussein. This was the joint result of the Saudi efforts and the US turn. The Jordanian regime abandoned its openly liquidationist plans (United Arab Kingdom of Jordanians and Palestinians) and agreed to be more co-operative towards the leaders of the Palestinian resistance. These were the two conditions for the well-publicised reconciliation with Egypt and Syria. This reconciliation took place with the summit meeting in Cairo and what followed it: the freeing of the prisoners in the Jordanian jails and the planned return of the 'Palestinian forces' to Jordan.

How do you see the situation developing?

There are still problems which have to be cleared out of the way before the final application of the 'peaceful solution' which, one might add in passing, deserves its name in spite of the present war, for it is intended to establish 'peace' with the Zionist State.

There is on one side the Israeli factor: a struggle is unfolding in Israel between a moderate faction represented by Golda Meir and the 'hawks' led by the notorious Dayan. While the 'hawks' are unyielding in their expansionism, the Meir faction is ready to agree on some concessions to the Arab regimes and to embark on a not insignificant withdrawal. Several months ago, Meir declared that Israel was prepared to withdraw from the Golan plateau and Sinai while holding onto the Golan Heights and Sharm-el-Sheikh—two strategic positions which control respectively the Syrian frontier and the Gulf of Aqaba.

There is also the Palestinian factor: the leadership of Al Fatah (which is the most important of the guerrilla movements—the popular Front and the Democratic Front simply tail-end it, while Saika is simply an instrument of the Syrian regime) has shown itself reluctant to collaborate with Hussein, and with reason! It knows what it would cost it to openly betray the Palestinian cause: the thousands of martyrs in September 1970 are not easily forgotten. But carefully-timed pressure on the part of the Syrians will be able to bring about a change in

this leadership's position. One must add that the latest war has considerably enhanced—so far, at least—the prestige of the Egyptian and Syrian regimes, and by the same token, the possibility that they will support the application of a 'peaceful solution'.

It seems that we are moving towards a solution which will bring about a withdrawal by the Israelis more or less to the borders of 4 June, 1967 (that will depend on the relationship of forces resulting from the present war), with probably the 'internationalisation' of Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and Sharm-el-Sheikh. At the same time the Palestinian resistance would be transformed into a tame 'Palestinian Army of Liberation', and we could expect some years of semi-peaceful co-existence as custom has dictated since 1948. But of course this is a personal estimation, and I don't claim to have a crystal ball at my disposal.

What is the position of the Revolutionary Communist Group?

In the present conflict, no Marxist can be neutral on the pretence that it is a clash between two bourgeoisies. This kind of childish and sectarian argument is all right for the ultra-left dogmatists who are only concerned about purity and ignore the 99% impurity which makes up reality, as Lenin put it.

Between the Zionist State, military base for US imperialism and national oppressor of the Arab peoples, and the oppressed Arab States—whether bourgeois or even feudal—we are on the side of the latter, without a doubt; we are, furthermore, the most dedicated in pursuit of the war against Israel. And it is from this standpoint that we express our criticisms.

Our support for the Arab States in their opposition to the Zionist State, while it is unconditional in its anti-Zionism, is by no means so uncritical towards the Arab regimes. This was true in 1967; it is much more so today, with the blatant collusion of these regimes with Saudi Arabia and US imperialism.

We are not therefore content to express our solidarity with the Arab armies confronting Israel—as do the opportunists today on all sides—but we further advance a body of demands which can fuel our struggle against the regimes in the Arab countries, for the Arab socialist revolution:

No to the 'peaceful solution'! No recognition of the Zionist State!

No ceasefire! No to intervention by the big powers in the settlement of the conflict!

For a prolonged war until victory! For the arming and training of the masses! Complete boycott of imperialism!

Full democratic rights for the Arab masses!

Freedom of action for the Palestinian resistance in and operating out of all the Arab countries!



Israeli forces under heavy fire on the Golan Heights

Israel: the core of apartheid

'The regime which has been set up with the publication of these decrees has no equivalent in the democratic countries. Even in Nazi Germany there were no such laws.'

His name is Yakov Shapiro, and today he is Minister of Justice in Israel. He spoke with such finality in 1946 about the emergency powers in force under the British protectorate before the establishment of Israel. But these famous laws, worthy of 'Nazi Germany,' have since been incorporated into Israeli legislation.

This brief example shows clearly that the Zionist State has nothing in common with the myth of a blissful democratic paradise flowering in the Middle East.

Although a man is traditionally considered innocent until he is proved guilty, in Israel the opposite is true: under the law on State security a man is guilty until he can prove his innocence.

THE HAIFA TRIAL

Emergency powers, the law on State security: this parody of justice has struck down Israeli militants of the extreme left, both Jews and Arabs, in the last few months. Falsely accused of spying, one of them, Rami Livneh, was sentenced to ten years in a closed prison. He is the son of a Communist MP in the Knesset (Israeli parliament). Torture was used to extract from him all kinds of confessions.

Livneh and the other defendants in the trial at Haifa were in fact tried for belonging to an

S AND OBJECTIVES

Palestinians, but they are our own ruling classes and the Zionist State.

We know already what this war will cost the workers of Israel.

Above all in human lives: there is no doubt that in this war hundreds have fallen and will yet fall. Once again the security which Zionism gives to the Jews will prove to be only an illusion. Instead of security, Zionism has prepared for the Jews a trap of continuous war, a war of 1,000 years as General Dayan puts it.

Then there is the standard of living: already today we are hearing calls for production and for a special effort to meet the demands of the war. The Histadrut (central trade union) has pompously declared that now is not the time for the workers to struggle in defence of their standard of living. It is in this way that the Israeli workers will learn that their real interests, their class interests, are in contradiction with and opposed to the so-called national interest, which is in fact the interest of the Israeli bourgeoisie and of imperialism.

And finally there is the loss of freedoms: 'in a time of crisis, the people must be united', say all the Zionists, both left-wing and right-wing. Such a unity allows the authorities to strike new blows against the freedoms which still exist for the Jewish population in Israel: new anti-strike laws, new restrictions on the freedom of the press, on organisation, etc. In this way the Jewish working class will learn through its own experience that, 'a people which oppresses another can never itself be free'.

This is what our comrades are explaining and will continue to explain to the Israeli workers, even during the war, especially during the war.

We leave it to our comrades in the Arab countries to settle accounts with their own ruling classes, and expose their inadequacy in the struggle against Zionism before the eyes of the Arab masses. We do not doubt that they will do so.

And to our revolutionary comrades throughout the world we say: do not fall victim to the propaganda of the allies of Zionism in your country, do not allow them to support the Israeli war effort: not a penny, not a man, not a gun for Israel!

This war is not ours. . . . But we pledge ourselves before the working class of the entire world to use this war to expose before the Jewish masses the deadly trap which Zionism represents for them, and the permanent war which it represents. It is in this way that we can break Jewish workers from Zionism and enable them to link up with the revolutionary war of the Arab masses against imperialism, Zionism, and Arab reaction.

- Down with Zionism, imperialism and Arab reaction!
- Long live the socialist revolution in the Arab East!
- Long live proletarian internationalism!

Jerusalem, 7 October 1973

Political Bureau of the Israeli Socialist Organisation (Matzpen-Marxist)

STATEMENT BY OUR ISRAELI COMRADES

Once more a war has broken out between Israel and the Arab countries. It matters little who fired the first shot, which army was the first to cross the ceasefire lines. For us the responsibility for this war, as for the others which preceded it, rests first and foremost with Israel:

— it is Israel which has conquered territories and has no intention of returning them;

— it is Israel which has plundered, evicted and oppressed the Palestinian Arab people, and which must expect the Arab masses to do everything possible to restore the rights of the Palestinians;

— it is Israel which has undertaken the role of imperialist policeman in the area, and whose swashbuckling policies have succeeded in provoking the Arab ruling classes.

Those who have plundered the Palestinians and thrown them off their lands, those who have used napalm bombs on Abou-Zabel, Hatsabie and dozens of other areas, those who have carried out massacres at Dir-Yassin and Kfar-Kassem, those who every day have launched incursions into Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt, those whose criminal provocations even stretch overseas, those who have killed in cold blood Gassan Kanafani, Abou Youssef, Hamchari and dozens of other Palestinian leaders; those who recently killed more than 100 people in the shot-down Libyan airliner—they have no right to talk about aggression, for they themselves are the aggressors.

For as long as the rights of the Palestinians are not restored, for as long as the Zionist State exists, Israel must know that the Arab masses will not give up but will go on fighting: for as long as Israel serves the interests of imperialism in the area and does everything to block the revolutionary Arab movement, she must know that war is inevitable and that it is of her own making. . . .

Our forces are very limited, and we cannot influence the course of the war. But it is at least within our means to say clearly to the working class in Israel and in the Arab East that this war is not ours, that we hold Zionism responsible for every drop of blood, Jewish or Arab, shed in this area, and that our enemies are not the Arab masses who wish to recover the lands conquered by Israel and restore the rights of the

seduce the Palestinians to the conference table with promises of an 'independent state' on the West Bank of the Jordan river. But although the petit-bourgeois leaderships of the Palestinian movement may be willing to accept such a 'Bantustan' arrangement, there is no guarantee that it will be tolerated by the refugee camp populations.

Meanwhile, Sadat's position at home is now more secure than ever before; in the eyes of the masses, the credit for the relative success of the Arab armies is due above all to their rulers. Sadat, in particular, now enjoys a prestige greater even than that of Nasser at the height of his glory.

The task of the revolutionary forces in the Arab world must therefore be to combat relentlessly the illusions generated by the Arab offensive, pointing out the real objectives of the Arab ruling class—to come to terms with Zionism and imperialism—and the necessity for the arming of the masses and the overthrow of the military-bureaucratic Arab regimes in preparation for a long drawn-out revolutionary war.

NO TO THE CEASEFIRE!

AGAINST SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY OFFENSIVE AGAINST ZIONISM AND IMPERIALISM!

ALAN ADLER



They were no push-over this time

Consolidation

anti-Zionist Israeli revolutionary group. By their verdict, the judges asserted that to take part in this struggle in Israel is a crime, in the same way as is possession of any text put out by the Palestinians or published in any hostile Arab country (ten years in prison under the law!)

Moreover, the court stated quite clearly at the time of the trial that any struggle for a democratic Jewish-Arab State and against national discrimination between Jews and Arabs challenges the sovereignty of the State. The racist judges in the Southern States in the 19th Century, the courts in South Africa would have been proud of such a statement! For only a racist court, for whom discrimination is enshrined in the law, could declare: 'In overthrowing the regime, and in setting up a Jewish-Arab regime, in the very words of the accused, this Jewish State in Palestine, Israel, would cease to exist. That is why we reject the arguments of the defence solicitor.' The defendant in question, Hassan Abjarrieh, condemned for his opinions without any concrete evidence, lies rotting in prison today.

RACIST STATE

The Arab minority has no rights in Israel. Yet it makes up one third of the population of the territories under Israeli control. The expansionist tendencies of Zionism, highlighted by the present war which poses the question of the occupied territories, can only reinforce this facet of Israeli capitalism. In Israel the displacement of Arabs continues. The growth of the Palestinian population (400,000 within the 1948 borders, including Arab Jerusalem; 1.4 million with the annexation of Jordan's West Bank) is a problem for the Zionist leaders. Either they can annex the maximum amount of land with the minimum number of inhabi-

tants; or they can take the lot, which politically would mean a kind of apartheid.

This is the position defended by Dayan. This is what seemed to be developing before the outbreak of hostilities, since this summer the different currents in the Labour Party (which is in power, the sister organisation of our own Labour Party!) adopted a platform tending in this direction. It would mean ratifying the occupation of the occupied territories, of promoting investment in them, and of intensifying the exploitation of the Palestinian workers while not allowing them even a semblance of political rights. Such a plan can only be described as apartheid.

In *Le Monde Diplomatique*, V. Cygielman writes: 'The process of Arabisation of all heavy and unskilled labour proceeded apace between 1968 and 1973, with nearly 70,000 Palestinian workers from the occupied territories coming gradually on to the labour market. Arab labour, more obedient, more disciplined, above all because it does not have the same facilities to fight for its rights, is little by little ousting the mass of unskilled Jewish workers in the factories, in the restaurants, and even in the fields. A small number of the supplanted Jewish workers have succeeded in becoming supervisors, foremen, and sometimes even contractors of Arab labour. The majority have become a lumpen proletariat, potential or real loafers, most of whom do not even want to get back their old jobs, which they now consider 'degrading' because they are done by Arabs.'

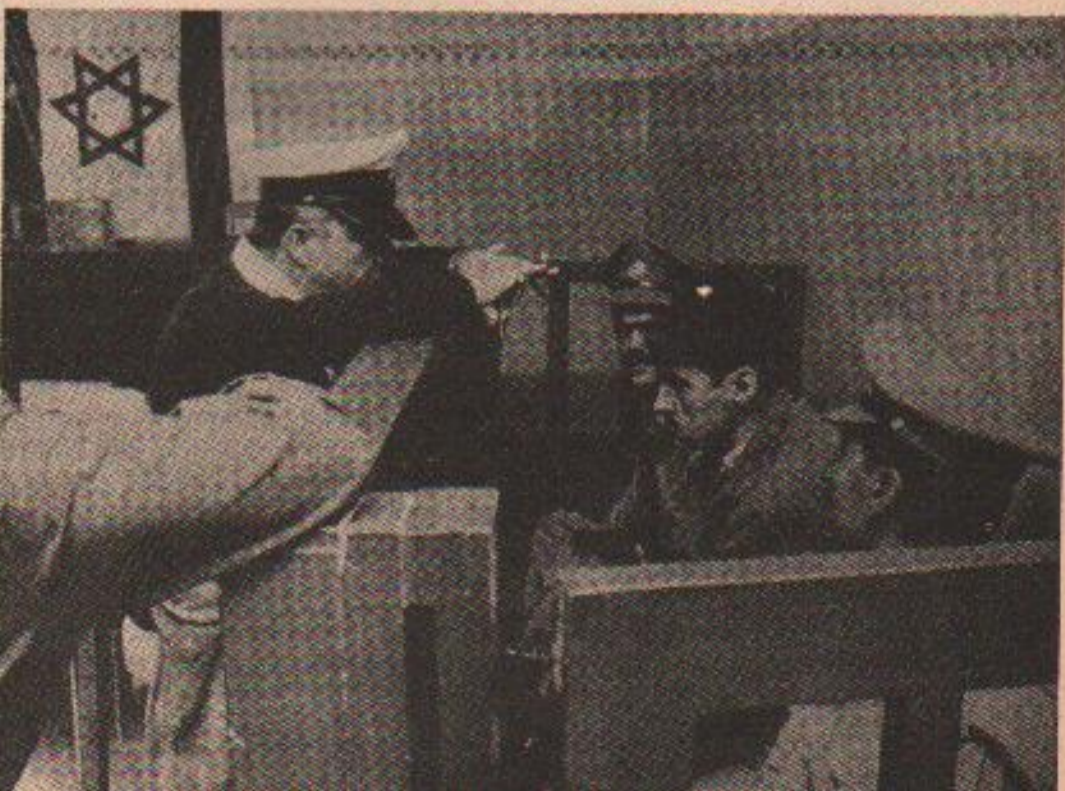
VICTIMS OF ZIONISM

This development lies at the heart of the Zionist project. The Jewish population of Israel is the victim of the Zionist undertaking, the instrument of imperialism. No Israeli military victory can provide a way out of this dead-end situation. The racist and expansionist character of the Israeli State is the product of its very creation.

The crisis exists in the very midst of the Jewish population of Israel. The divisions are opening up: 15% of Israelis see their taxes endlessly rising and emigrate every year; 20% struggle in vain against rising prices; between 1970 and 1972 the share of labour in the national income fell from 80.5% to 74%, while that of capital grew from 19.5% to 26%; some are becoming richer and richer while others are growing poorer and poorer. The renewed strikes by workers, as well as the birth of the 'Black Panther' movement among the least privileged community of Oriental Jews, are a further illustration of this internal crisis in Israeli society.

This, in all its cynical reality, is the true face of Zionism. Not the emancipation of the Jewish people, nor the achievement of self-determination for the Israeli masses, but the institutionalisation of Israeli domination over the Arabs with a capitalist process of exploitation which is specifically colonialist in content. Are the Israelis free, in their super-ghetto style Fort Chabrol? Are the Oriental Jews free, oppressed by discrimination? Are the Israeli workers free, under the whip of a greedy capitalist class, assisted by a 'workers' bureaucracy which serves up anti-working class measures? No!

Joseph Krasny



The South African Connection, by Ruth First, Jonathan Steele and Christabel Gurney (Penguin, 60p)
Jeremy Lockspeiser

This is a valuable book which, however, should hold no surprises for socialists. That the only way to achieve the emancipation of the African people is through the organised revolution of the African masses is a foregone conclusion.

This is also the position of the authors. But they do not arrive at this through a critical marxist analysis which considers the 'original combination' of elements in South Africa in terms of the total world process as conceived by Lenin and Trotsky.

Instead, they seek to defeat the capitalists on their own ground. This is done by a well documented illustration of the extent, importance, and nature of western capitalist involvement in South Africa. The contention of men such as Harry Oppenheimer of Anglo-American and Sir Val Duncan of Rio Tinto Zinc is that the practices of apartheid are in contradiction to the 'needs' of the South African economy, and that 'economic development in South Africa is naturally and by its own momentum eroding apartheid'.

'REFORM-THROUGH-PROGRESS'

From this (incorrect) assumption it follows that the faster the economy grows the faster the racist doctrine of apartheid will be eroded. Hence the rhetoric of western capitalists that through investment they are speeding up this process by introducing a liberalising influence. They can therefore continue their exploitation of the Africans while hiding behind the mask of 'reform-through-economic-progress' and 'mutual benefit for all.'

The authors take hold of this argument and systematically destroy it. The importance of the West in South African capitalism's development stems from the discovery of the gold and diamond mines, which provided the necessary capital for the expansion of other sectors of the economy (started by the Smuts government of 1924 through the formation of state-backed companies).

TECHNICAL SKILLS

No less important than the actual capital investment was the import of technical knowledge from the West. The adoption of a racially based socio-political system was a direct result (and pre-requisite) of the development of South African capitalism. By creating and maintaining

'Reform-through-progress'?



Keeping the Africans under control — papers are constantly checked

a vast unskilled work force, by ensuring starvation level wages, and by making Africans politically impotent, capitalism was able to develop at a phenomenal rate.

Nevertheless in achieving this basis for economic domination a contradiction was created. Not only has African poverty restricted the size of the internal demand for basic consumer goods, but the attempt to demarcate class differences on a racial basis does not allow the advancement of Africans into the bourgeoisie and thus increases the need for the import of technical skills.

The practices that are used to maintain the status quo are well depicted. These are based on the 'floating colour bar' and include job fragmentation, job reclassification and job dilution. What happens is that a job formerly

reserved for whites is diluted or fragmented into component parts and given to Africans at a vastly lower wage than was paid to the white man. Alternatively, a job is given a different name and given to an African at a much lower wage. These practices are usually accompanied by a corresponding move up the occupational scale for the white man. Thus the status and wage differentials are maintained and the rate of profit increased.

FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT

The authors go on to deal systematically with the importance of foreign involvement in different sectors of the economy—mining, banking, engineering, chemicals, oil, etc—and to provide nine case studies of foreign companies operating in South Africa. Again this serves as a useful source for statistics, trends,

practices, etc.

Unfortunately, however, the lack of concrete analysis begins to make the book read like a shopping list at this stage. There is a partial attempt at analysis through a consideration of the 'Oppenheimer Phenomenon', the experiments (and their failure) by Polaroid and Barclays, and the role played by the United Kingdom South Africa Trade Association, the British National Export Council, and the Monday Club. This serves to indicate that capitalism cannot possibly liberate the African masses and that the ruling class internationally connives at the practices of entrenched capitalist interests. But these important points are not really adequately dealt with.

EXPANSIONIST POLICY

There is, however, an interesting section on the expansionist policy of the South African government and the relationship between the need for this policy and the internal situation in South Africa. The aim of the government, ably supported by obliging multi-national corporations, is to gain economic (and therefore political) control northwards in Africa. Vorster is cited as saying that he envisages South Africa playing a role in Africa similar to that of the U.S.A. in Latin America.

That South Africa has embarked on this policy is seen by the established economic control of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, and the political and economic exploitation of the Namibian people. The policy is largely an attempt to entrench the basis of South African capitalism by overcoming the contradictions peculiar to South African capitalism that are created by apartheid, while maintaining those facets that are of assistance to capitalist development and therefore to increasing exploitation. The creation of dependencies as a source of labour and as a market for goods is an example of this.

The conclusion reached is that economic 'progress' has in fact worsened rather than improved the Africans' situation, and that they will only achieve liberation through their own activity. As a refutation of the 'reform-through-progress' argument, as an example of the international character of capitalism, and as a source of information, this book is highly recommended. The lack of concrete marxist analysis, and the failure to work the evidence into a framework which could provide a more overall understanding of South Africa today, is a definite gap. It remains, however, a very useful piece of work which can be utilised by militants campaigning on South Africa.

Gay liberation fights Berlin harassment

Moves are afoot to force the resignation of three leading members of the Executive of the National Union of Students, following harassment of the official representative of the Gay Liberation Front at the 10th World Youth Festival held in East Berlin this summer.

In a lengthy report on his visit, GLF member Peter Tatchell amply documents a situation of antipathy and hostility which developed to a point where 'violence flared, people were punched, kicked, clothes were ripped, etc, and threats were made upon my life.'

The harassment began immediately upon Peter's arrival in East Berlin. Hostile remarks greeted his attempts to contact gay liberationists in other delegations, and at the British delegation headquarters gay lib announcements were immediately and repeatedly removed from the noticeboard.

At a conference which Peter addressed, 'a technical fault' developed in all the language translations as soon as he mentioned gay liberation, and it was only as a result of his determination to be heard that they were eventually 'repaired' and he went on speaking. Even so, the German translation cut out all references to Young Communist League, NUS and Young Liberal resolutions in support of gay liberation, and immediately he finished speaking one of the organisers (a French delegate) made an unscheduled speech, 'denouncing me as a bourgeois, creating diversions from the class struggle, trying to split the working class, and create trouble at the Festival, etc.'

But worse was to come at the final rally on 5 August. Every group was allowed to carry its own banner or placard, so Peter made one up saying in German on one side: 'Homosexual Liberation, Revolutionary Homosexuals Support Socialism,' and on the other side: 'Gay Liberation Front London, Civil Rights for Homosexuals.'

German officials at first tried to prevent him from carrying this placard, but changed their minds when it seemed that it might bring unfavourable publicity. However, when he got to the march he was besieged by a group of British delegates and there were

cries of, 'you are ruining the spirit of the whole Festival ... you have disgraced the good name of the British delegation,' etc.

Several people then attempted to rip his placard down, but when others came to his aid his opponents decided to call for a 'democratic' vote. After the circulation of false rumours that the placard said 'German Democratic Republic persecutes homosexuals,' a small majority indicated that Peter should not march with his placard.

When he correctly refused to recognise this 'democratic' denial of the right automatically accorded to every other group, he was set upon. It was after this, and a short spontaneous demonstration with other gay liberation supporters, that 'the violence was so frightening that some people feared for my safety,' and he was forced to leave the scene.

Among those members of the British delegation who harassed and obstructed Peter were three members of the NUS Executive: Judy Cotter, Digby Jacks, and Steve Parry (all, incidentally, also members of the Communist Party). Judy Cotter attacked him for leafletting the US delegation, while Digby Jacks and Steve Parry both voted against his right to carry his placard on the march. Parry is also reported to have attempted to assault him.

As a circular from the University of London Gaysoe points out, NUS conference earlier this year voted overwhelmingly to instruct its Executive: 'To make public the support of the NUS for the homosexual cause ... whenever appropriate,' and 'To support other groups active in the gay cause, notably the Gay Liberation Front.' In view of the blatant contempt of these members of the Executive for NUS policy, supporters of gay liberation in the student field are mobilising support for a motion at NUS conference in Margate condemning this behaviour and calling for the resignation of those concerned. *Red Weekly* urges its readers wholeheartedly to support this move.

Copies of Peter Tatchell's full report and the resolution which is being put forward for NUS conference are available from: Gaysoe, University of London Union, Malet Street, London, WC1.

Eric Caplan

Death of Japanese comrade

We have just heard with sadness of the death of one of the leading members of the Fourth International in Japan, Yoshio Seki, from a sudden apoplexy on 21 July, 1973. A member of the political bureau of the Japanese Revolutionary Communist League, and secretary of its Kanto (Tokyo and neighbouring areas) committee, his death at the age of 30 is a big blow to the Japanese section and the Fourth International as a whole.

Yoshio Seki joined the Revolutionary Communist League in 1963 while he was a student at Yamagata University. In 1966 the Japanese section split, and shortly afterwards Yoshio Seki moved to Tokyo, where as a newly elected member of the political bureau he played a key role in rebuilding a new centralised organisation at the time of the huge explosion of the youth radicalisation in Japan. In particular, he made an important contribution to

the development of the concept of the combined and permanent Asian revolution around which the organisation was rebuilt.

In April 1970, Yoshio Seki moved to Okinawa, where from scratch he fought to build a Trotskyist base among the Okinawan masses. As a result the Japanese section now has a thriving group there, the Okinawan committee of the Revolutionary Communist League. In February of this year he returned to Tokyo to strengthen the work of the Kanto organisation, and it was at a call meeting that he collapsed on 19 July, dying two days later.

Just before he died, comrade Yoshio Seki had started to learn English in order better to participate in the life of the Fourth International and contribute to the building of its sections in Asia. And it is as an internationalist Asian, an Asian permanent revolutionist, that he will be remembered.

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, Caterlan Road (5 mins, Kings X tube).

STUDENT HOUSING CONFERENCE: Sussex University, 27-28 October. Registration 12 noon Saturday in Falmer House followed by opening of conference 2.00 p.m. Conference ends 4.00 p.m. Sunday. Any queries, phone Brighton 680380

SOLIDARITY WITH CHILE: Public meeting organised by Merseyside Committee, Friday 26 October, 7.30 p.m. at YMCA, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool.

COVENTRY IMG: Discussion meeting on 'The fight against Phase 3', speaker Brian Heron, Tuesday 30 October, 7.30 p.m. in Hertford Tavern (off Queens Road).

MANCHESTER RED CIRCLE: Every Thursday at 'The Ancients', Great Ancoats Street. Thursday 1 November: Robin Blackburn on 'Social Democracy'.

LEEDS IMG PUBLIC MEETING: Bob Pennington speaks on 'The Politics of the IMG' at 8.00 p.m. in the Trades Council Club, Upper Fountains Street.

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

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What is the importance of the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) in the present situation?

To my knowledge no other organisation of the new vanguard in the world plays a role comparable to that of the MIR in Chile. This understanding provides the framework for tackling the question of the MIR.

The MIR was born from two currents: first Castroism; and secondly Trotskyism, through the intervention of some of our comrades who were among its founders. Furthermore, the MIR is obviously what it is today as the result of three years' exceptionally rich experience of the class struggle. Even if the MIR has still not broken with its Castroist origins, it has, unlike other organisations with the same origins been confronted through its daily mass work with the central problems posed in the building of a revolutionary party based on the worker and peasant masses.

However, the response of the MIR, and of the leaders of its mass front organisations, has never risen above the merely empirical. For instance, they have no clear understanding of Stalinism as a phenomenon with historical roots, with the particular consequences that has in the Chilean context (specific characteristics of the reformist road projected by the Communist Party, nature of the bureaucracy in the working class movement and its relationship to the class). This empiricism has been particularly noticeable in the MIR's positions on international questions—its failure to understand the role and nature of the bureaucratic regimes in the various workers' states, for instance, has led to a confused and crippling eclecticism.

Having said this, one must add that in its work in mobilising and winning a base among the worker and peasant masses the MIR has taken a series of initiatives over the last three years which have gone well beyond the reformist limits laid down by Popular Unity, and which have very often been correct. There must be a detailed discussion of these, not in this interview but in the course of a public debate with the MIR.

That is why, in spite of the enormous limitation imposed on its militants by the lack of a proper democratic centralist practice and the absence of any real debate on strategy, the experience of the MIR represents an important gain for the Chilean vanguard.

What conclusions would you draw about the activity of revolutionary marxists in Chile today?

First of all, the gain which the experience of the MIR represents is all the more important because the MIR has so far come through the

CHILEAN TROTSKYIST OUTLINES PERSPECTIVES

The following interview took place in Santiago on Tuesday, 16 October



repression relatively well; and that's a pretty important test. The MIR and its leadership are thus faced with considerable responsibilities.

As in every other country, the building of a revolutionary party which can assume the leadership of the working class will be a long drawn-out process marked by crises and regroupments, in direct relation to the development of the class struggle. The MIR may well play a determining role as far as the rhythms and forms of this process are concerned—but whether as a driving force or as a brake it is impossible to tell precisely in advance.

But because of the position it has gained, the policies and activity of the MIR will in the immediate future have considerable repercussions, not only among the extreme left but on the whole of Chilean political life. It is therefore an important element in determining the attitude which should be adopted by revolutionary marxists.

The other element is our own situation, politically and organisationally. The Chilean Trotskyist militants are few in number. We are a 'Trotskyist nucleus' rather than an organisation. In the last two years we have made significant gains, both political and organisational. But our forces are still very weak in comparison with the importance of the extreme left in Chile. Moreover, the repression has hit us very hard: more than twenty, 22 to be exact, of our militants are being held, and there are others of whom we have no news. Up till now the MIR has had an attitude not of

hostility but of indifference towards the other revolutionary groups. The political debate which is taking place in its ranks and with other groups is mainly focussed around practical questions based on an exchange of experiences. That is one positive aspect of its empiricism. It is therefore on the basis of our own activity that we hope to establish the conditions for a serious debate, a necessary confrontation with the MIR.

Going on from your relations with the MIR, what is your own position and what are your perspectives in the present situation?

From what I said before, we obviously start with a considerable handicap. But at the risk of appearing over-optimistic, I would say that despite the tragedy of the present situation it does open up a new development: one where whole sections of militant workers, students and peasants are trying to break out of the present confusion in search of a consistent, overall explanation of what has taken place.

In Santiago, in Valparaiso—where some of our comrades have a real base, particularly in the working class—members of the left wing of the Socialist Party, of MAPU (Movement for United Popular Action), sometimes even of the CP have been asking us questions and having discussions with us. The traumatic experience which they have gone through in the last few weeks has made them very cynical and suspicious, most of all as far as their former leaderships are concerned. It will be up to us to win them over in the next period through our

analyses, our proposals, and—above all through bold and serious initiatives.

On the central questions involved, I would like to add one more thing before finishing. The Chilean vanguard, of which the most important component is the MIR, is distinguished from others by its limited and superficial understanding of the importance of proletarian internationalism. In the situation where we now find ourselves, this will be felt by the most serious militants. The world-wide movement in solidarity with the struggle of the Chilean people is an important factor, but it will lose some of its effectiveness and usefulness if the material solidarity is not supplemented by a common, worked-out political orientation. As we know to our cost, the international solidarity of the bourgeoisie is only too real. In the same way, that of the Communist Party and those sections which support it is real and will be an important factor in the situation.

The Fourth International must therefore be at the forefront in all the tasks of revolutionary solidarity, without falling into either of the twin evils of opportunism or sectarianism.

We will be judged and listened to on the basis of our concrete activity, both in Chile and elsewhere—we cannot repeat this enough. The organisation of solidarity with the Chilean workers is just such a concrete activity, on the basis of which we will be judged. Going beyond immediate results this could make an invaluable contribution, decisive in the long term, to bringing about a clarification in the ranks of the Chilean vanguard and achieving the socialist revolution in Chile, towards which, in spite of the recent defeat, we are steadily advancing.

Luis Vitale held

According to the most recent information, 22 Trotskyist militants are being held by the Chilean junta while a further seven have disappeared (and are presumed dead). Among those held is Luis Vitale, well-known revolutionary militant and Marxist writer, who is currently in the National Stadium in Santiago.

Vitale, who came originally from Argentina, was a leader of the Chilean POR (Revolutionary Workers Party) in the early 1960s, and took part in setting up the MIR in 1965. He was one of its leaders until 1969, when he left to set up the Revolutionary Front. Following the electoral victory of Popular Unity, he was the first of the militants of the revolutionary left to recognise that a pre-revolutionary situation was opening up, in a public speech on 9 September 1970 to the students and teachers of the University of Concepcion.

At the end of 1972, Vitale took part with a section of the Revolutionary Front in a regroupment of the Chilean revolutionary marxists, which led to the creation of the Revolutionary Socialist Party in collaboration with the comrades of the Revolutionary October Tendency.

Lip Government steps up attack

The French Government seems to be moving in for the kill at Lip, the watch factory in Besancon where the workers are now in their seventh month of struggle against redundancies.

This development comes after a period of a few weeks during which forces inside the workers movement have done more to weaken and isolate the Lip struggle than the ruling class had achieved in the previous five months.

SCANDALOUS ROLE

The most scandalous role has been played by the national leaderships of the main trade union federations, the Communist Party-led CGT and the Socialist Party-inclined CFDT, who since the 100,000 strong solidarity demonstration on 29 September have retreated from even their previous token activity. CGT leader Georges Seguy has gone so far as to denounce local CFDT militants for 'prolonging the struggle unnecessarily'. Now even sections of the revolutionary left, which has played an increasingly important role in maintaining solidarity, are moving on to greener pastures.

Behind this behaviour lies the refusal of the Lip workers to accept the Government's plan for ending the struggle, which would have

involved 160 redundancies and no guarantees on wages and conditions. This led a fortnight ago to the breakdown of the negotiations, thus destroying the bureaucrats' plans for a peaceful, tidy end to a struggle which had embarrassed them by its militancy and willingness to challenge capitalist 'legality'. A motion to accept the Government's plan and return to work, put by the local CGT leaders, was overwhelmingly rejected by the democratic assembly of all the workers.

GOVERNMENT OFFENSIVE

But the isolation in which the Lip workers now find themselves has begun to move them towards seeking a compromise. The local CFDT leaders have now accepted the principle of 160 redundancies, while still standing out for their re-employment elsewhere on identical terms. However the Government, taking this as a sign of weakness, has now moved onto the offensive.

This became very clear at the beginning of this week. On Monday, the Minister of Labour told a CGT delegation that there was no question of re-opening negotiations, even on the basis of agreement on 160 redundancies; all that remained to be discussed was how the Lip workers could find new jobs elsewhere. And on Tuesday, the police launched a full-



'Illegal' sale of Lip watches at Renault factory in Billancourt — proceeds go to finance struggle

scale raid on the strike headquarters, allegedly searching for the 'treasure chest' of watches taken by the workers to finance their struggle. The building was turned over from top to bottom, while the strike leaders were held and interrogated for an hour in a crude attempt at intimidation.

SPATE OF PHONE CALLS

In using such tactics, the Government is gambling that it can now impose its own solution without interference from the rest of the workers movement. However, the very spate of phone calls to Besancon from factories all over France as soon as news of the police raid came through, shows that large sections of the French working class still regard the Lip struggle as their own.

The task must be to mobilise this support, to seize back the initiative from the Government. Already the Lip workers, by-passing the official leaderships, have launched a new campaign to popularise the struggle—with regular information bulletins, advertisements in the newspapers, 'six hours with Lip' meetings with film shows and discussions in ten major cities, and a major conference on the struggle against unemployment with speakers from the French and international labour movement.

But meetings alone will not force the Government to yield. All this must be but the essential preparation for centralised action, taking the form of demonstrations and industrial action if necessary.

JOHN MARSTON

Vauxhall's, Leyland's, Ford's

Red Weekly

BIG STRUGGLES ON LAY-OFF PAY

The question of lay-off pay in the car industry has become an important focus for action in recent months. Never before has this source of disunity on the shop floor been tackled in such a determined manner.

This is a spontaneous response to the decline in real wages caused by the defeats of Phase 2, and the subsequent rise in prices and mortgage rates. The loss of earnings resulting from unpaid lay-offs has thus bitten more deeply than ever before, and workers are seeking every means available to increase their earnings without directly confronting the pay laws.

VAUXHALL'S

Workers at Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port plant in Cheshire, are in the lead; 9,000 men are either on strike or laid off at this factory.

The dispute started when 70 men in the new seat-frame section of the assembly plant went on strike demanding negotiating rights. As on previous occasions, work throughout the plant ground rapidly to a halt as supplies of the component they produced ran out. But the Vauxhall workers are covered by an agreement which guarantees lay-off pay *only* if the stoppage is caused by some external factor. The entire plant struck, demanding that once a worker has clocked on, he should be paid for the rest of the shift.

So determined are the men that they turned down a management offer under which lay-off pay would be awarded for a trial period of two months. In return for this they would have to accept an inter-union committee to 'examine the plant's labour problems.' Not only have the men voted to continue the strike, but they have demanded the abolition of the present rule under which lay-off pay, for any cause, will only be paid for a period of 25 consecutive days.

BRITISH LEYLAND

In British Leyland, Cowley, a similar struggle only just failed to get off the ground. Two weeks ago the Tyre Bay Small Section, which is vital to production, stopped work after a series of foot injuries. The dispute was settled after three days when the company got a boot company to 'donate' safety boots as a publicity gimmick, thus enabling them to avoid conceding the principle. But Cowley workers as a whole have lost an average of seven weeks pay through unpaid lay-offs in the last year, and this time the night shift voted to sit-in until full payment was promised.

As the day shift came into work the IMG distributed a special issue of its factory bulletin, *The Organiser*. This explained the Tyre Bay settlement and urged support for the night shift's initiative. It called for a mass meeting to decide on action. There was a strong response from the workers — work did not start, and the



Ford workers await report on negotiations during last dispute.

Assembly Shop gathered for a meeting.

STRUGGLE HEADED OFF

Mindful of the flare-ups at Ford and Vauxhall, management responded by threatening a lock-out if the men did not return to work immediately. The senior stewards were not willing to lead an action over lay-off pay, and read out a statement, approved by high level management, blaming the stoppages on minority action, ruling out payment for anyone, and threatening indefinite closure of the South Works unless work was resumed by mid-day.

But sections of the work force, angry at missing an opportunity to achieve a unity unknown for years, refused to return to work. Management quickly locked-out the entire work-force, and in addition local management tried to make the sacking of several militants a condition for re-opening the works.

However national management were unprepared at this stage to risk the loss of production which this move might entail, and over-ruled local management on this point. But although this threat was held in reserve, the conditions for re-opening the plant were severe: they included a

reversal of existing agreements on discipline and procedure for shut-downs. Although the stewards recommended a return to work, they rejected these conditions, which would seriously undermine the shop stewards movement in the factory; and they will be a focus of new struggles if the management try to impose them. British Leyland thus headed off the struggle over lay-off pay, but only by the fiercest intimidation.

CONFUSION AT FORDS

Some weeks ago a night shift at Fords occupied management offices, and won the concession of one day's lay-off pay for the first time ever. Following this, stewards agreed that on the next occasion workers would sit-in and demand work.

But when, a couple of weeks later, there was a dispute over the victimisation of a Body Plant worker and lay-offs began to occur, there was immense confusion. Although one section of workers did strike and demand lay-off pay, they were isolated by the lack of co-ordinated leadership on the part of the Communist Party stewards in Fords.

Although this struggle was nipped in the bud, workers at Ford are still

operating an overtime ban. This will be used as a reminder to the company by union leaders pressing for lay-off pay during the annual negotiations next year.

ONCE AND FOR ALL GAIN

Losses in pay caused by lay-offs has been a major cause of disunity amongst car workers for many years. The usefulness of this disunity for the employers can be seen in the Ford management's statement, that to concede lay-off pay would be to surrender the management's only sanction against 'irresponsible strikers,' and in the red-baiting outbursts of industrial relations chiefs Gilbert Hunt of Chrysler and Pat Lowry of Leyland.

Although guaranteed lay-off pay will not produce an automatic solution to the problem of uniting workers in the car industry, it would eliminate a major cause of division and would be a once and for all gain for the workers. Management threats and the action of trade union leaders at various levels have for the time being headed off the offensive at Ford's and Leyland's, but it is precisely such a struggle, across the industry, which could generate the unity and spirit needed for the coming struggles against Phase 3.

Police embarrassed in Coventry 7 trial

The trial of the Coventry 7 at Birmingham Crown Court has opened on a low political key.

The main thrust of the prosecution has been around certain documents, which they allege belong to Father Fell. The documents, they claim, relate to IRA activities in this country and include maps, instructions on how to make fire bombs and other incriminating material. On the basis of these documents they hope to pin guilt on Fell, and if they can do this, they will then implicate the other six, simply through their association with Fell, to convict them on conspiracy charges.

However all has not gone well for the prosecution. The leading police witnesses have been forced to make a number of damaging admissions; for example they have admitted search-

ing Frank Kelly's house without a warrant and subsequently tampering with the evidence against him. The defence has also brought into the open a number of instances of ill treatment when the men were being questioned at the police station — refusal of food and drink, refusal of a solicitor, physical and mental intimidation and brutality, etc.

A picket was maintained outside the court throughout the first week, and preparations are going ahead to hold a mass picket toward the end of the trial on Friday, 2 November. Whatever the outcome the level of support achieved in the case of the Coventry 7 has shown that it is possible to defend victims of repression, and this will make it much easier to fight on future cases.

William Thompson

Challenge to fascist by-election campaign

The National Front is standing a candidate in the forthcoming Hove by-election, which will take place on 8 November. As part of their campaign,

they plan to stage a number of public meetings as well as a demonstration through the town.

That the NF regard this as an important event is shown by the fact that a campaign headquarters is being set up and managed by Martin Webster, and a number of canvassers will be moving into the area. In particular, the campaign is intended to reinforce the Front's 'respectable' image and help it in its drive to win acceptance as part of the British political scene.

This campaign must be combated as part of a general struggle against fascist and racist organisations like the National Front. In particular, its links with the bourgeois state must be exposed, as was so vividly the case when several hundred policemen defended the NF national conference a fortnight ago.

Already the fascists are beginning to play a certain role on questions where the Government fears to step in directly — for instance, the attack on

black picket lines during the Mansfield Hosiery strike in Loughborough, and the drive to root out illegal immigrants. In this respect the fascists become an unofficial arm of the State in furthering official or unofficial policies of the ruling class.

A local campaign against the Front's intervention in Hove is beginning to get under way, and the Trades Council will decide whether or not to participate in this after assessing the outcome of a meeting of trade unionists and the Brighton LPYS on Wednesday, 24 October. At the University there has already been a move to establish an ad hoc anti-fascist committee which will link up with any plans initiated by the labour movement.

At the very least there should be a call for a massive counter-demonstration by anti-fascists in London and the South-East to oppose the one being organised by the National Front. The labour movement cannot afford to let this or any other initiative by the fascists go unchallenged.



Webster and friend

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