

## BUREAUCRATS THREATEN WORKING CLASS UNITY

# ALL-OUT STRUGGLE

# ONLY WAY

# TO WIN

# TORIES SHUFFLE THE PACK

The refusal of the official trade union leadership to organise the struggle against Phase 3 has become a serious threat to the unity of the working class movement against the Tory Government.

The Government is making its preparations for the struggle quite openly: a state of emergency has been imposed, steps taken to beef up the anti-strike forces of the police, and the cabinet geared-up to lead a hard struggle.

There is no comparable state of preparation in the camp of the working class. Miners are entering the fifth week of their overtime ban without even the date for a strike ballot having been set. Two months after the presentation of the engineers' claim, no preparations have been made by the AUEW leadership for national industrial action. The Labour Party leadership is even divided over *what side it is on* in the coming fight.

Under these circumstances some sections of the trade union movement are having second thoughts about an all-out fight against the Government. There is talk in the NUM of merely continuing the overtime ban, rather than launching an all-out strike. Sheffield engineering shop stewards have called for a national overtime ban as the way to fight for their claim.

But the Tories are prepared to fight the miners and engineers with everything they've got, because a victory by either of these groups would leave the Government's economic policy in chaos. The working class can only defeat the Tories if the whole movement unites and takes up the most determined forms of struggle.

Unity is the key to victory. But partial forms of struggle, like an overtime ban, are *divisive*. In the pits the present ban may be useful as a preparation for a national strike, but its dangerous side is already evident in the local confrontations that the NCB has provoked in recent weeks.

A continuing ban would create a situation in which some pits were working, others on strike, and still others had ground to a halt.

The situation in engineering would be worse. It is doubtful whether all districts could be united around an overtime ban, and serious division would be created by the implementation of such a ban, with low paid workers, who depend on overtime to make ends meet, carrying the heaviest burden of the struggle.

More seriously, a lead cannot be given to the whole working class through such partial forms of struggle. Other groups will be drawn into battle only if they see a determined, all-out fight being launched. Those actions which hit the ruling class the hardest and are most effective in spreading and unifying the struggle—flying pickets, factory occupations—can only be undertaken in the midst of a total stoppage.

The reluctance of some workers to launch an all-out fight in the face of Tory preparations is understandable. These doubts can only be overcome by the coordination of struggles on a national level and the organisation of mass, national action against the Tory Government.

The trade union leadership is refusing to do this. The convening of national meetings of rank-and-file delegates to coordinate the struggle is urgently needed, if the present struggles are to be set on course for victory against the Tory Government.

Next Saturday, 14 December, engineering convenors from across the country will be meeting in Manchester to discuss the way forward in the fight for the engineers' claim. There is only one way to go forward—by beginning to organise the working class for an all-out fight.

The Manchester meeting must recognise this and take a clear stand in favour of a national engineering strike. It should elect a national strike co-ordinating committee to strengthen the organisation of an official strike if one is called, or to call a national strike if the executive refuses to move. It should call on the AUEW executive to forge a national miners-engineers alliance with the NUM, and urge district committees and shop stewards bodies to build a similar alliance on the local level.

This meeting could be an unparalleled opportunity to begin the coordination of a working class offensive against Phase 3. Practical plans for such coordination should be placed high on the agenda of the meeting, and representatives from all other groups of workers going into struggle against Phase 3 invited to attend and participate in the making of such plans.

Measures such as these are the only way to fight effectively against Phase 3, and, at the same time, the first steps towards a *general strike to bring down the Tory Government*—the most effective means of forging a fighting unity of the whole working class.

Heath's decision to reshuffle the Tory cabinet is just one more sign of the Government's preparation for a hard fight with the trade unions over Phase 3.

The transfer of Whitelaw from 'Northern Ireland' Secretary to Employment Secretary is symbolic of the shift of the Tories storm-centre from the Six Counties to the Home Counties.

Whitelaw's appointment reveals three interesting decisions: 1. to make the Prices and Incomes policy the special responsibility of a single minister; 2. to give that responsibility to the Employment Secretary; 3. to give that job to Whitelaw. The first decision reflects the serious difficulties which the Government's economic policies have run into and the need for a coordinated effort to bail them out, the second shows the Government's awareness that the key to their economic policy is the containment of the trade union movement, and the third that this is the central, and most difficult task which the Tories expect to face in the months ahead.

The image cultivated by Whitelaw for his Irish mission is exactly the one needed to deal with the trade unions: a man who is both 'tough' and 'fair.' Translated this means someone who will twist your arm and kneel you in the groin to force you to give in, but lets you wear a dress suit to the surrender ceremony.

The transfer of responsibility for 'Government information activities' from Robert

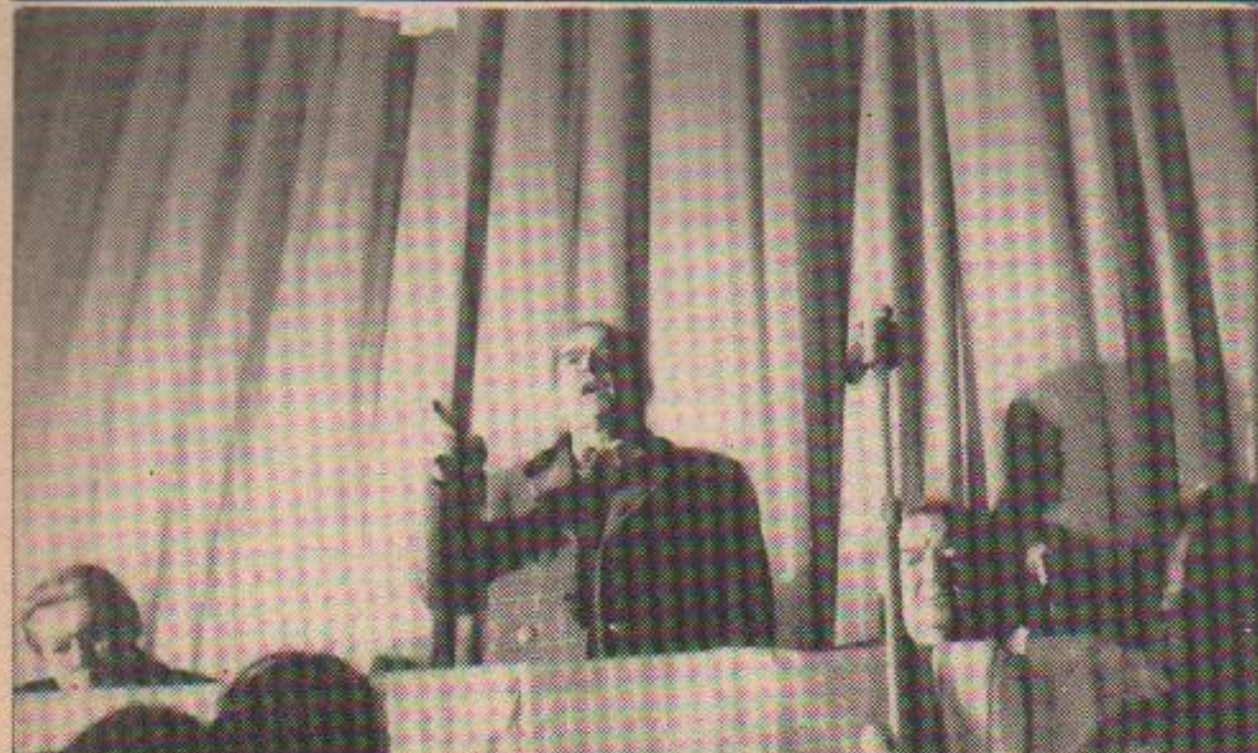
Carr to Lord Windesham reflects two related aims: to allow Carr to concentrate on his most important job—shaping up the boys in blue for a blitz on trade unionists; and to give a big boost to the Tories propaganda war against the trade unions (a job for which Windesham, a former TV executive, is well suited).

The price of replacing Whitelaw in Ireland by the relatively inexperienced Francis Pym could be a high one, and shows how the crisis in Britain and Ireland interlinks. Whitelaw's success in setting up the executive was a considerable coup, but vast and complex problems remain, not the least of which is the coming talks, which Pym must now take charge of.

As a rule of thumb any Tory will automatically bend to the pressure of the Unionists. Faulkner, anxious to relieve the pressure from his own party, will try to shift British policy and limit the reforms which the SDLP is pledged to obtain. Pym will be under enormous pressure to give in to Faulkner and eliminate the basis on which a section of the Catholics could be reintegrated. The invitation to Paisley and Craig to participate in the tri-partite talks indicates the effects of this pressure.

The upshot of all this could be the rapid collapse of the one project where Tory policy can claim any success, thus preventing a consolidation of the barriers to mass struggle in Ireland.

Brian Slacook and Bob Purdie



Emlyn Williams, President-elect of the South Wales miners, addressing last Saturday's 5000-strong rally in Cardiff. (See p.3 for report)

Our paper's coverage of the growing political and economic crisis of capitalism in Britain and internationally has won it an increasing and loyal readership. 'IMG Supporter' in Greenock writes: 'The sooner you're able to bring out a 12 page or 16 page paper the better ... Don't jettison your very good international coverage ... here is a small contribution towards that goal, I'll try to make it regular in future ... Victory to world socialist revolution!'

Thanks for the £1 coinage, and thanks to our other contributors, including Sheffield IMG who sent £15. We are now £31 nearer to our £300 target for December. Keep the money coming in, and help us to give 'IMG Supporter' that bigger paper soon.

# Engineers: Overtime ban leads away from national strike

The deafening silence of Scanlon and his Executive over the national engineering claim has paralysed the Communist Party, which organises the rank-and-file in the AUEW.

The *Morning Star* has been noteworthy for its lack of campaigning on the claim, and the latest developments from the Sheffield Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, together with the projected national convenors' meeting, have received only minor reports.

Nevertheless, the meeting in Sheffield last Sunday of shop stewards from all unions in the CSEU was significant because the CP's line for activity around the claim came out loud and clear. It was a small meeting of some 250 stewards (a previous meeting of only AUEW stewards over the NIRC fine was supported by 350 stewards), and all the national speakers (Hugh Scanlon, Moss Evans, etc.) without explanation failed to turn up. It was also the most bureaucratised of all such meetings held recently in Sheffield—only those who moved resolutions adopted by shop stewards committees were allocated to speak. The rest could only vote.

## OVERTIME BAN

Seven of the leading factories put in virtually identical resolutions calling for a national overtime ban to begin on 1 January, and

general support for all other workers in struggle. But when one steward called for miners' delegates to be invited to the next such stewards' meeting it was rejected from the platform without discussion. Two further important points—the setting up of a wages campaign committee, and the banning of piecework and incentive bonus schemes as a second stage—were excluded by the full-time CSEU officials who were responsible for the final composite motion, and this was plainly accepted by the movers of the original motion.

This 'initiative' by the Sheffield CSEU sets the scene for a national convenors' meeting in Manchester on 14 December, which is clearly designed to give a national rank-and-file stamp to the overtime ban, which will then be endorsed by a recall National Committee. What must be said first of all about the overtime ban is that it is not projected by the CP as a first step towards a national strike. It is massive pressure from the rank-and-file which has forced them to fill the gap left by the silence of the Executive, and with Scanlon clearly desperate to avoid a showdown, the CP is simply marking time.

As a first step tactic, an overtime ban for the engineering industry is dubious, but as a means of struggle it is a disaster. The engineering industry is sharply divided, even at the level of a single factory, between highly paid and low paid workers. It is the latter, the less well

organised, who will feel the full effects of the ban, and such a tactic cannot fail to produce severe divisions. But even if this tactic could be successfully operated, to organise for it outside the framework of a national strike is to underestimate the strength of the Engineering Employers Federation plus Phase 3. This tactic will only sow illusions about what sort of struggle is needed to win the claim, which in turn will lead to rapid demoralisation.

## DISASTROUS LINE

However, despite the intentions of the CP, the dynamic of the campaign will be in the direction of a major escalation of the struggle round the claim. It will be clear to engineering workers that the pattern is that of the miners. If a miners' ballot comes out for strike action, the way forward is clear, and the pressure on Scanlon and the Executive to call a full strike will be virtually irresistible.

In the meantime, militants must present the overtime ban firmly in the perspective of a national strike (resolutions from the shop floor to the Executive, etc.), and should lessen its divisive effects by involving highly paid workers in strike levies. Every effort must be made to make direct, practical links with other workers in struggle, particularly the miners—so that the pressure for joint action overflows the barriers being erected by the bureaucracy. In this way the disastrous line of the CP can be resisted, and the ground prepared for a successful escalation of the struggle for the claim and against Phase 3 and the Tory Government.

JIM WILSON

# Squatters versus speculators

The squatters movement in London is growing and changing fast.

The last discussion meeting of the All London Squatters Federation was attended by about 100 representatives of various groups, many of which include working class families.

The old anarchist 'squatting-as-a-way-of-life', 'no-rent-on-principle' current no longer dominates the squatters movement in London. The most politically advanced squatting groups see the squats as a tactic designed to draw attention to the link between homelessness and property speculation, to force local Councils to take over luxury properties, and as part of a wider campaign for 'housing for all'.

Christ may have thought that 'the meek shall inherit the earth', but some of London's homeless are getting fed-up with following this line. Years of humbly waiting at the bottom of housing lists, quietly squatting in derelict council properties until the bulldozer or the eviction squad arrive to put them back on the streets, passively entreating Councils to take over luxury properties kept empty by rich speculators—all these policies have failed to provide homes for London's homeless.

A new spirit is emerging amongst some of London's homeless. Several groups of squatters have decided recently that the time has come to start seizing the properties of the rich.

Squatters recently took over 84 Bartholomew Road, Kentish Town—empty luxury flats newly converted by property speculators, Stickle & Kent. The squatters immediately launched a huge publicity campaign over press and radio, explaining the connection between homelessness and property speculation. They are demanding that the Camden Council take over all such properties and use them to house the homeless, and that the Council end the scandal of 'improvement grants' to speculators.

Another squat in 93 Parliament Hill Mansions, a property which was also moving into the hands of Stickle & Kent, forced the Council into buying up the property under a compulsory purchase order. But the Council does not want this to go any further, for it would be forced into a confrontation with big business. So the Council has accused the successful squatters of 'jumping the queue' in the housing list, hoping thereby to turn other homeless people against the squatters.

The squatters reply is that if the Council won't solve the homeless problem by taking over all such properties, the squatters will help everybody on the housing list to squat in empty luxury properties throughout the Borough until the Council finds a solution at the expense of capital.

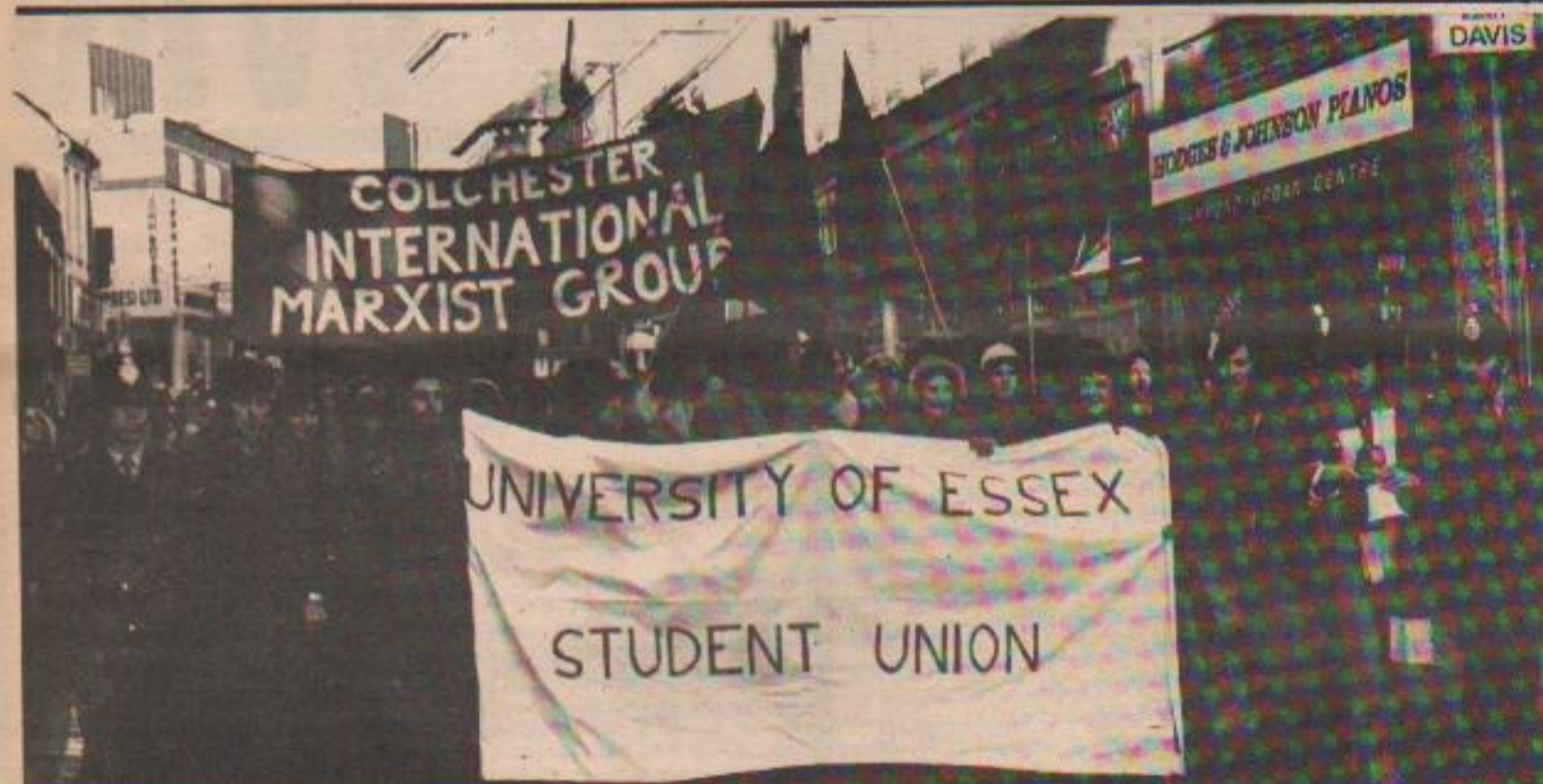
The group of capitalist taking up the counter-offensive most vigorously at the moment are the Church Commissioners. The Maida Hill Squatters and Tenants Association adopted a tactic of defending one squat against the Commissioners' attempts at eviction, by occupying other good Church property. But the Commissioners decided that the day had still not come for the meek to inherit any of their £200 million property assets in Maida Vale. It wasn't long before the squatters found themselves evicted by 30 anglican bailiffs, while some 40 cherubs in blue watched on with glee as the interiors of the properties were smashed to pieces by the bailiffs.

These new squatting tactics are gaining widespread support. Already social workers who are members of Camden Case Con have set up, in conjunction with the squatters, a centre through which families on housing lists or in poor houses can be squatted in good property (public or private), rather than go into the hostels in which the Council dumps the homeless. (One of these, the Burleigh Road Hostel recently had an outbreak of dysentery.)

The squatters are placing the home for homelessness squarely where it belongs; they are refusing to let the Councils set the homeless at each others' throats; and they believe that their tactics can open up the road to a broad London campaign to achieve housing for all.

Piers Corbyn

The next All London Squatters Federation meeting will be on Sunday 9 December, Roebuck Pub, 7pm.



In 1972, students at Essex University occupied campus buildings in order to provide the miners with a base from which to operate their flying pickets. This week, miners in South Wales sent messages of solidarity and support to the Essex students who are occupying the administration block in an effort to resist the erosion of student living standards. The local labour movement is also giving its support.

Essex students have shown what worker-student solidarity means in practice. Now Essex is pointing the way forward once again in the fight to reverse the defeats suffered in last year's national rents and grants campaigns.

The weakness of the national campaigns led by the NUS Executive has been that they attempted to project an alliance between students and college authorities against the Government. This meant that local struggles, involving occupations of campuses and demands on all aspects of students' standard of living, were never developed as part of the campaigns.

The Essex occupation provides an opportunity to start to change all that. The students are demanding 15% off food prices with no staff redundancies; parity of accommodation rates on and off campus; firm guarantees that expansion of catering and accommodation will match the expansion of student numbers; full discussion of University finances; and no victimisation of the students involved in the struggle, either by the courts or by college authorities. Repeating the sort of struggle seen at Essex elsewhere will create the best conditions in which to fight effectively for the national demands of students this winter.

This week, the Occupation General Meeting mandated a committee to contact student bodies at all polytechnics, universities, and teacher training colleges in the country, with a view to organising a national conference to be held at Essex in January. The conference would examine, and seek to generalise, the lessons of direct action, and discuss how to conduct the grants

campaign. It is hoped that this proposal will be ratified by a general meeting of the student union, and that student-worker solidarity in the struggle against Phase 3 would also be on the agenda of the conference.

Essex needs support. The Administration again made it clear this week that it still intends to go ahead with victimisation. As the best means of defence, the students are trying to encourage other universities to follow their example. Already East Anglia has occupied in solidarity with Essex and in support of the NUS Grants Campaign.

**CORRECTION:** We wrongly reported last week that students at Manchester University had occupied in solidarity with the struggle at Essex. In fact the call for an occupation was made, but the student general meeting was not quorate. However, the Student Council is writing to the Essex Vice-Chancellor calling on him to withdraw the writs which have been issued against students there.

# Anti-Fascist roundup

## CANTERBURY

A picket of about 80 people blocked the entrance to a National Front meeting being held at the Westgate Hall Canterbury last Friday evening, (30 November).

The picket prevented people entering the hall, until a squad of about thirty policemen broke through the line and ushered in NF supporters, amongst them former boy Nazi, Martin Webster. The police then doubled as National Front stewards by preventing picketers from entering the meeting.

The picket was organised by an Ad-Hoc Anti-Fascist Committee which involved IMG, CP and unaligned socialists, and was initiated by the IMG through the University of Kent Socialist Society.

## BIRMINGHAM

On Wednesday, 28 November a General Meeting of Birmingham University Students Guild passed the following resolution by 180 votes to 96:

1. That this General Meeting reaffirms the decision of the Guild Council that Enoch Powell should not speak on the campus.
2. That this Guild has a policy of no platform for fascists and racists in this University.
3. That this Guild demands that the University throw Powell off the Court of Governors, and that if the University fails to do so the General Meeting should decide what action should be taken to put this policy into effect.

**ERRATUM:** The photo of firemen in this week's supplement should be credited to: John Sturrock (Report)

# No to 'Third Force'

Reading University Socialist Society has decided to demonstrate against a hush-hush seminar, restricted to academic staff and post-graduates, to be held on the campus on Thursday, 6 December. The lecture, to be given by Major-General (and Doctor) Clutterbuck of Exeter University, is entitled 'Does Britain Need a Third Force like the French CRS?' (the notorious para-military police force).

Reading Soc Soc has a good record of opposing military propaganda on the campus. Two years ago they stopped the Reserve Officers Training Corps from recruiting at a freshers fair, and shortly after the Derry massacre they prevented an Army recruitment campaign on the campus.

# MINERS IN STRUGGLE

## Preparing for strike action

### East Kent

During the last strike, Kent miners picketed cement works in Gravesend and power stations in London and the South East. Battles broke out between police and pickets at Gravesend and Dover.

In the pit villages there was no problem organising women in support of the claim. They serviced picket lines, and also organised a mass demonstration to the Social Security Office under the banner of the local Claimants Union - they got all they demanded, including money for single strikers.

Perhaps the incident of the last strike best remembered in this area was the famous 'miners navy'. Launches, manned by East Kent miners patrolled the Thames river approaches to Battersea Power Station every day.

The East Kent Pits are moving into action again: at Snowdown Pit they are calling for another mass meeting in the near future. Already miners talk about contacts in the power stations and organising a miners wives' meeting. The *Red Weekly* local bulletin is taken into the canteen at Snowdown, and discussions are taking place around the idea of a local conference, perhaps addressed by an engineering worker.

Most of the militants think that the 13 December meeting of the Executive will call for a strike ballot. The date being given for the start of a national strike is 1 February.

### Canterbury

Jack Collins, Kent Delegate to the NUM Executive, spoke at the University of Kent students' Annual General Meeting on 6 December on 'The Miners Struggle'. Students

at the University hope to set up a support committee, and to prepare to turn the University facilities over to the miners if need be.

### South Wales

Emlyn Williams, President-elect of the South Wales Miners, addressed a 5,000 strong rally in Cardiff last Saturday (1 December). Proposing a resolution that: 'We will stand fast on the full claim, and will continue the overtime ban until the decisions of the conference have been obtained by our negotiators', Williams said that there ought to be a permanent overtime ban. He warned the negotiators: no dividing tactics, no bridge-the-gap offer. The subsidiary claims - holidays etc. could wait. 'Without the basic wage - everything else is secondary'... 'If it is a Tory Government or a Labour Government in power it doesn't matter. We only have loyalty to our members', he said, to enthusiastic applause.

Calling for unity in the struggle he said: 'What we want to see is a concerted effort by all the trade union movement to get rid of capitalism from this country'. He called for an emergency TUC Congress to prepare the fight to break Phase 3: 'if we will struggle together, we will break it together, and we will all win together'.

### Birmingham

Two miners from South Wales spoke to 150 students at Birmingham University on Friday 30 November. They explained their case and their struggle against Phase 3, and also condemned the manoeuvres of Joe Gormley who, they said, was doing all he could to avoid the development of a struggle. The students were asked by the miners to set up a support committee to aid with picketing in the event of a national strike.

### Interviews with East Kent miners

**MICHAEL TURNBULL**, Snowdown Colliery, apprentice mechanical fitter.

**What do you think is the general feeling in the pits?**

Very militant, the men are willing to fight to the end, they think the overtime ban is sufficient for the moment, but if it goes on too long there will have to be strike action.

Naturally the Union is not militant enough. The first day of the overtime ban we wanted pickets on the gates, but the local union referred it to area level, who referred it to national level, and they refused to allow the militants to picket. The men were very angry.

Most people see this as a fight against the Government, if other unions would back us up it would be much better. We will win against the Government. At the moment we need more area meetings, strike funds, and distribution of pickets ready for the strike. The men are willing to take on the Government and Phase 3.

**PHILIP SUTCLIFFE**, Union official in Aylesham village.

**What is the situation in the local mining industry?**

Coal production at the three East Kent pits, which is normally 22,000 tons per week, fell after the overtime ban, when five days were being worked, to 10,000 tons. Now they are on three days, and producing only six to seven thousand tons.

Last Tuesday (4 December) Snowdown colliery didn't produce a single ounce of coal. The pit, which is the second deepest in the country and highly mechanised, was flooded to a depth of three feet. Under these conditions the miners refused to

work. The management, which is getting very jumpy, told them that if they did not work they would be sent home.

This was part of a week-long game of move and counter-move; they are attempting to shut the pit and pay no wages. But with the overtime ban biting deeply, the mood of the miners is extremely militant, even more so than during the last struggle.

Over Christmas the DACM members will begin to put pressure on the Coal Board when they have to work nine days on the trot, and with only a 2 day gap, without NUM members there, if they work out the pits will flood. We have probably lost one face already through flooding.

**Do the miners see it as a struggle against the Government?**

The papers and TV have been hammering the miners. The NUM is seen as the major union the Government has to beat, and if it succeeds, all the other unions will cave in. But it has backfired on them, the 'moderate' miners have got absorbed in the fight and they won't give in.

The men realise that it will take a strike to get the claim.

In a ballot we would get a 70% majority for a strike. Since the ballot includes office staff and members of other unions, this would mean a 75% majority of the men actually working underground.

All other unions should come out with us, the miners will take a lead, but it has got to be shown that other unions are with us. If our struggle led to a general strike we could bring down the Government. If a Labour Government got in, and only gave us another ten shillings, we still wouldn't go back, unless they gave us the full claim.

The Official Sinn Fein Ard Fheis (conference) took place in Dublin over the weekend of 24/25 November. This gathering confirmed that the profound changes within Irish Republicanism, set in train by the tumultuous events of the last five years, which led to the split between the Officials and the Provisionals in 1970 have by no means run their course.

An opposition emerged which gathered between 30 and 40% of the delegates to challenge the leadership on a number of key issues. The central differences were over precise form which the national struggle takes, and the relationship between the Officials and the armed struggle.

### AIMS AND POLITICS

The potentially most explosive issue before the Ard Fheis, the relationship between the armed and political wings of the movement, was postponed to a special conference in the new year. The leadership is proposing the subordination of the military to the political wing of the movement.

The opposition sees a military campaign against the British Army in the North an essential part of a revolutionary strategy. Without it the movement will fail to mobilise broad social and economic struggles, or relate such issues correctly to the national struggle, the key aspect of which they identify as partition.

They propose a return to a military campaign, allied to that of the Provisionals in the North, and an alliance with other revolutionary forces such as the Peoples Democracy in organising social and economic struggles.

However they tend to fall back on traditional Republican ideas in defending their positions, and have not been able to propose forms of military struggle which would break from traditional Republican military elitism. Therefore the leadership has successfully counterposed a hollow 'Leninist', alternative, clouding the issues for militants who genuinely want to move towards a more consistently revolutionary organisation. But in practice the 'integration' of military and political struggles could only be carried out by a clandestine organisation. The Official Sinn Fein is incapable of operating clandestinely, therefore what is posed is the abolition of the military function - for good.

## Officials discuss vital questions

military sector of the movement than in the political sector, this would be a blow at their influence.

Because of its inadequacies the opposition has been hampered in its fight against the increasing drift of the movement to reformism. This is

by BOB PURDIE

illustrated by the presidential address of Tomas Mac Giolla. Polemicising against the opposition he said: '... a dangerous tendency has developed ... to equate the national question with the border and British troops and to assume that if they were gone the national question was solved. We must therefore continuously re-emphasise what is the "national question" and what is the "national struggle." It

is all about the ownership of the wealth of this country'.

By rendering the question less precise, Mac Giolla retreats from identifying those key aspects of the national struggle in Ireland today which must be tackled if there is to be any genuine integration of the national and working class struggles. If no distinction is made between different political tasks, it is then a simple matter to counterpose economic issues to the real problems confronting the socialist revolution.

The border split the Irish working class North and South and consolidated the material basis of the split between catholic and protestant workers in the North. The intervention of the British Army in August 1969 cut short the process by which the resurgence of the

catholic minority threatened the existence of the Northern state and this disunity. The Army is now defending a new settlement, designed to establish a new method of British domination of Ireland. If this is unsuccessful there will be explosive struggles which will renew the threat to partition.

### REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY

Thus the border, and the British Army remain the dominant questions before Irish revolutionaries. No amount of economic struggle North or South can displace these questions and no economic struggle can be properly related to a revolutionary strategy unless this is understood.

For example, the rising level of industrial struggle in the South will not go far before it confronts the developing regressive apparatus of the Free State. This repression will best be combated by allying with the forces who oppose repression against the Republicans, for whom it has been constructed. A defeat for the repression will undermine the ability of the Free State government to do a deal with the Faulkner Unionists, who demand stronger measures against Republicans.

Unless these ABC matters are understood the Officials will have no perspective from which to judge political events. An example of their disorientation was their interpretation of an event which occurred just before the Ard Fheis.

A Republican Clubs candidate in a local council by-election in Magherafelt, County Derry, was elected on the strength of transferred second preference votes from loyalist voters. The leadership greeted this as a breach of the sectarian barriers.

It was nothing of the kind. Although there was a positive response from catholics, who voted Republican, against the SDLP sell-out, the loyalists had used proportional representation to keep out the SDLP, whom they see as an immediate danger because of power-sharing and the Council of Ireland. They will learn that they have nothing to fear from these green Lundy's (traitors) but their use of the Officials for this manoeuvre indicates that they do not see the Officials as a serious force. More than anything else in recent months, this delusion shows the inability of the main leaders of the Officials to come to terms with the real struggle which surges around their ivory tower in



A view of the platform at the Official Ard Fheis. Seamus Costello, chairman of Bray Urban.

# SOLIDARITY WITH THE

This Sunday, forces from all over Europe will gather in Paris to demonstrate in solidarity with the Chilean resistance. Below, we print an interview with two comrades of the Fourth International who have just returned from



The day after the coup d'état, the Chilean junta announced that they would rapidly set the economy to rights again. By freezing wages at their April 1973 level and removing the limits on price increases once the working class resistance had been crushed, they created a very favourable situation for the Chilean capitalists—profits should have shot up, and their investments should have flourished along with those placed by the big imperialist powers.

Have the 'miracles' foreseen actually taken place?

On the contrary, the economic crisis is wreaking unparalleled havoc. Along with the continuing repression, it is the main concern of the junta. For their clear inability to resolve the economic crisis marks the junta's first setback—a considerable setback, which could have important political consequences.

The reason for this is very simple: the junta tried to do too much. They have crushed the workers' move-

ment and torn the working class apart, throwing into compulsory unemployment a considerable percentage of its ranks; and as a result, they have greatly reduced the purchasing power of those who have been allowed to remain at work.

In limiting purchasing power and therefore the consumption of the workers and peasants to such an extent, literally starving them, they created the conditions for the present stagnation, which has simply come on top of the previous total chaos. Thus those who should have benefited the most from these new policies, the industrialists and business-

men, have in a certain sense become the victims of the over-enthusiasm of their servants. And the euphoria of the first few weeks has now been replaced by a certain disillusion and moodiness.

Before coming back to the problems of the industrialists and businessmen, can you give us a brief outline of the present situation of the Chilean workers?

I spent several days in a Santiago *población*. I could tell you of numerous conversations I had with housewives, workers and their wives.

Here's one for example: the case of a husband who still has his job. He works six days a week in a mechanical engineering factory. He works the new hours laid down by the junta—53 hours a week, plus two or two and a half hours daily spent travelling to and from work in dreadful conditions. They have two children. They have not had any meat to eat since the coup. And they are not likely to, either. When the husband brings home his wages on Saturday night, they go into ecstasies—but not for long, because by Tuesday night the money has all gone. On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday they have to get by on bread dipped in a thin soup. From time to time they cannot manage even that by Friday, and for 24 or 36 hours they are left with empty stomachs until the wages arrive again on Saturday night.

That is just one example... but the same thing is happening in hundreds and thousands of cases throughout Chile. And these are families who were able to feed and clothe themselves without any real difficulty under the Popular Unity government. Today there is obviously no question of buying clothes or shoes... But what everyone fears most is that the rents will be put up, for that would mean tens of thousands of people out in the street, without any accommodation—or else they would have to make do with still less food, even greater hardship.

And the workers who have been sacked?

In relation to these, the family I have just described to you lives a 'privileged' life.

Tens of thousands of workers have been sacked in Santiago alone. They are mainly militants, known for their trade union activity and their support for Popular Unity. Robbed of work in a situation like this, they are literally reduced to begging if they are not to die of hunger. Along with the classical methods of repression, the junta have discovered that this is the best way to further demoralise the workers: to starve them after their defeat.

Rarely can any regime have pursued such policies to such an extent and with such cynicism.

## CLAY CROSS AGAINST THE TORIES

Dave Bailey

Once again the Labour Party is in the throes of an internal crisis. But both the left and the right wing are agreed on one thing—the authority of Parliament must be upheld at all costs and at all times.

The struggles of the working class, however, continually tend to break out of the framework laid down by the laws passed by Parliament, and even threaten to destroy them. For the right-wing, believing that the electoral prospects of the Party lie in reassuring the capitalists, the answer is to roundly condemn these struggles. But for the left, seeing the need to consolidate electoral support from the working class, the problem is how to appear to support these struggles without actually doing so.

Reg Prentice has now emerged as the spokesman of the right. He believes that the working class

must on no occasion put its own interests above parliamentary law and order. For him, the Freeing of the Five, the miners' struggle, and the defiance of the Housing Finance Act by Clay Cross Council all threaten to open the door to 'anarchy and bloody revolution.'

### Systematic defiance

For sheer systematic defiance of Parliament, the Labour councillors of Clay Cross have probably gone further than anybody else. In this small Derbyshire mining village, the Council had spent several years pulling down the slums and building modern council houses at a rent the miners could afford. But then in 1972 along came the Housing Finance Act, which on top of the closure of most of the local pits, threatened to destroy completely the modest gains which had been made,

The Council's response was to refuse to collect the increases due under the Act. They defied the Tories by continuing to provide free school milk, and recently they went on to break the pay laws by awarding large wage increases to their manual workers.

But the Clay Cross councillors wouldn't agree with Mr. Prentice that their actions constitute a fundamental threat to Parliamentary rule. For them, there are laws made by the Tories, and laws made by Labour. If Labour was returned, the Housing Finance Act and the pay laws would, they hope, be repealed, and life in Clay Cross could return to normal. But is Prentice right? Can the seeds of socialist revolution be found at Clay Cross in spite of this?

### Commissioner

Undeterred by fines of up to £100,000 for their refusal to implement the rent rises, the Clay Cross councillors are now confronted with a Housing Commissioner, Mr. Patrick Skillington. Under the Housing Finance Act the Commissioner is empowered to take over the job of collecting rent increases.

Skillington has so far met with a hostile response. On his arrival, the Council banned all council officers from collaborating with him. When he set himself up in the Council Offices, facilities mysteriously broke down. When he held a press conference, it was sabotaged by heckling from the councillors. Finally he was forced to leave Clay Cross altogether and set up office five miles away in Chesterfield.

It was this appearance of two diametrically opposed authorities in Clay Cross, one elected by the people, the other sent in by the Government, which created a dilemma for the officers (members of NALGO) employed by the Council. The councillors are their *de facto* employers, but legally they are obliged to take orders from the Commissioner as far as implementing the Housing Finance Act is

concerned. Whom should they obey?

### Bourgeois state

Unfortunately, the two opposing authorities are hardly of equal weight. Skillington has all the might of the bourgeois state on his side, which concretely means the power to penalise the officers in the courts. Clay Cross merely has the moral authority of its councillors, together with the unorganised indignation of its 10,000 inhabitants and the power to sack its officers (who would, however, then be re-employed by Skillington).

In September, the Council agreed to demands by NUPE for a £5 increase for manual workers, bringing them into line with other council workers in the area. The Pay Board eventually vetoed the rise, but the councillors continued to order payment of the increase regardless. Under the Counter-Inflation Act, the council officers, especially the Chief Clerk who signs the cheques, faced possible prosecution. After a few days, the Chief Clerk resigned, and 30 other NALGO members struck in support of him.

The strike was rapidly made official by the NALGO district office, and the Clay Cross council services dried up. At first the Council considered recruiting unemployed men to step into the officers' shoes. But the NALGO Executive was moving towards support for the strike, and there were practical difficulties in bringing people in off the dole. The Council found itself forced into an agreement not to demand in future that its officers undertake any task which would put them in jeopardy under the law. This is clearly a major setback—a coup for Skillington which threatens to strangle the Council in the next phase of the struggle against the Housing Finance Act.

### New plans

The councillors are, however, now making plans to shore up their defences and avoid the

# CHILEAN RESISTANCE!

against the meeting which is due to take place there between representatives of the junta and its international creditors. Chile and who explain the importance of international actions in backing up the resistance to the junta.

The Minister of the Economy, Fernando Ceniz, declared on television the other day that: 'The housewives have a lot to learn about buying. If prices are too high, it is better to stop being a consumer for the time being (sic). At the moment, prices are high, therefore it is more advisable to concentrate on production in order to level out the situation.'

## In what way is the economic situation the main concern of the Chilean junta today?

They are not worried about the hardships of the workers and peasants, that's for sure. At the present moment, after the defeat they have suffered, the workers are in no state to put up any resistance which could have the slightest effect.

What worries the junta, on the other hand, is the state of mind of the reactionary petty bourgeoisie, the shopkeepers, the craftsmen, the small landed proprietors. They are the real 'mass base' of the regime. They gave it enthusiastic support in the first hours after the coup d'etat. Their defection would considerably weaken the junta.

However, and it is not the least of the contradictions of the present policy, the complete freedom of action given to these sectors in gratitude for services rendered before and after the coup is the major reason for the incredible rise in prices. The extent of this inflation has paralysed some sections of the economy... affecting those who should have benefited from it.

To take one example: in the *poblacion* I referred to earlier, I talked to one of the local small shopkeepers. Before the coup he sold an average of 6,000 chickens a month. Last month he sold less than a hundred—and his problem was not with the supplier. It is the same with everything. You only have to read the papers: the sale of theatre tickets has fallen by 70% since mid-October, while cafe and restaurant owners have complained to the press about a 50% drop in the number of their customers. Sales of consumer goods have dropped right off, although there is a plentiful supply. A worker now has to hand over the equivalent of 16 months' wages in order to purchase the cheapest and most basic kind of washing machine.

The butchers are probably the most discontented of all. During the Popular Unity government they accumulated fortunes behind locked doors. They sold their meat on the black market to those who could afford it. A pound of steak on the black market cost a worker the equivalent of two or three days' wages.

Only on four days of the month were they obliged by the government to open up shop and sell meat at a very low price, so that everyone could have the chance to eat meat regularly.

Today the 'four day' rule has been outlawed. The shops are open seven days a week. The slabs are overflowing with good quality meat. But the prices are three or four times as high as they were on the black market under Popular Unity. It now takes at least a week's wages to buy a pound of steak. Many of those who bought meat on the black market three months ago cannot even afford to buy it legally now. So there has been a considerable drop in sales...

The disillusion and discontent of the small shopkeepers and craftsmen is a big problem for the regime. So far it has not had any important political consequences. These sectors still support those who 'warded off the Marxist peril', as they say in Santiago. But gone is the hysterical enthusiasm of the first few days.

These contradictions which the junta tried to shut away have burst out into broad daylight again, and are rapidly gaining momentum.

Aware of this situation, Pinochet and his cronies have come up with the feeble and hardly original excuse that it is all the fault of the previous regime. So there has been a renewed campaign of 'revelations', of denunciations of Popular Unity policies, of the corruption of its leaders, and so on.

## And the repression?

It continues at the same rate as before. More selective, and therefore more effective, without any doubt. But the effects of censorship together with the government's rantings make it very difficult to assess exactly what impact it has had on the parties of the left. There has probably been no great change since earlier reports, although there are signs that the selective nature of the repression has posed increasing problems for the Communist Party. A large part of its leadership is now being sheltered in various embassies. Rather the same goes for its mass organisations, particularly the Youth. A sign of its disorganisation is the political material it is producing—typed with several carbon copies, and further reproduced in the same way.

At this level, the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) has demonstrated its organisational cohesion and the survival of its political and administrative structures. It has already put out printed leaflets on several occasions, not only in Santiago. And this week the first issue of its underground newspaper appeared. This is an important factor. For many people in Chile today, the mere sight of a leaflet provides a small gleam of hope, an encouragement to struggle against demoralisation and despair. It is difficult to understand this from here, but it is extremely important.

Still on the repression. You mentioned briefly a few minutes ago the importance and the

## function of the political sackings in the junta's policy of breaking the workers' movement. Is this still going on?

I'll reply by giving you a concrete example. In DINAC, the national body for the distribution of food products, 1987 out of about 3,000 employees have been sacked during the last few weeks. In this way the government has killed two birds with one stone: it has effectively dismantled an aspect of the nationalised sector of the economy, while punishing—and in what a way—all those thought to support Popular Unity.

But once again, such a policy, pursued on such a scale, can only open up new contradictions for a regime which has not hesitated to disrupt the economy in order to destroy the left—even if, in some cases, political sackings have made firms more profitable.

One last question. Have the ripples of the enormous movement in solidarity with the Chilean people reached Chile itself, in spite of the censorship, the wall of silence imposed by the junta? What concrete role can such a movement play in relation to the situation inside Chile?

Knowledge of the international solidarity movement is beginning to spread in Chile in spite of the rigid censorship which prevails. This is important. The demoralisation of certain sectors, particularly in the working class, is very real and deep-going.

Knowledge of the solidarity movement can help to combat this as well as encouraging those who are already fighting back.

For in the ranks of the workers' movement there are sectors which have reorganised themselves very quickly. Certain trade union structures, completely underground, have already been established. This is very, very important—the more so, as the MIR is playing an important and in some cases decisive role in this process. Its militants, its clandestine structures, its national contacts have in many cases made this restructuring possible. This is important politically, and this attitude of the MIR, combined with the lessons of three years of a reformist government, could be key in the evolution of the political relation of forces inside the workers' movement in the coming period.

But this task undertaken by the MIR, as well as by other currents on the left and extreme left here and there where they have managed to escape the repression, cannot continue and bear fruit, escalating into

real, armed resistance, without massive support. That is clear—there must be massive support for the militants and the revolutionary organisations which are pushing forward and giving a real lead in the struggle. Political support, of course, but also material support. Massive support in the context of the struggle against the repression as well. Today, caught in the contradictions of its own policies, completely dependent on international aid, the junta is more vulnerable than in the first weeks of the regime to actions and campaigns launched abroad.

More than ever, this is the time for the various solidarity movements to mobilise and throw the full weight of the forces of the left, on an international scale, into the balance of international public opinion.

Otherwise, isolated, faced with no let up in the repression, the Chilean militants will be unable to pursue their struggle. And it is also our struggle—as the Greek generals and the would-be Nazis who are springing up here and there all over Europe show only too well.

[Rouge]

## DEMO DETAILS

The international demonstration in Paris, which is sponsored by solidarity committees in every major European country, starts at 2 p.m. on Sunday 9 December in the Place de la Nation. Because of the problems caused by the petrol shortage, comrades are advised to travel by train. A suitable train leaves at 9 p.m. on Saturday night from Victoria, arriving in Paris at 8.40 a.m. the next morning. For the return, a train leaves Paris on Sunday night at 10 p.m. and arrives at Victoria at 9.10 a.m. the next morning. The return fare is £10.50 per head.

There will be a briefing meeting for those going at 7 p.m. on Saturday at the London School of Economics, Houghton Street—Room S 100, St. Clements Building.

effects of further internal betrayals. They hope to get a new formula for paying the NUPE workers past the Pay Board, but if this does not succeed they will consider alternative methods of payment if staff threaten to strike again. As far as rent collection is concerned, their plans are more definite. The Council are to redeploy their rent collectors to other jobs as soon as the new round of rent increases becomes due on 1 January. This means that no council officers will be available to collect rent. Therefore Skillington will be unable to turn the courts on them, and will have to employ his own officers instead, so the Council hopes.

Under the Act, the Commissioner is entitled to employ his own officers and take over the function of rent collection from the Council. This would mean a new escalation of the struggle, for now the tenants of Clay Cross will be actively refusing to pay the increases, rather than the councillors failing to apply for them from the tenants. The Council intends to continue to collect rents (less any increases), but street committees will be set up to elect a *lay* rent collector for each street. This will minimise intimidation, either by magistrates or by any thugs which Skillington might employ to collect rent or to evict tenants. It will also create an elementary system of community warning and defence. Councillor David Skinner says that, 'there will be no invasions of privacy. There would be civil strife. Feelings run high in Clay Cross.'

## Campaign

The Clay Cross councillors are also continuing to campaign for other Labour Authorities to take up the struggle against the Housing Finance Act, and they speak openly of the need for a general strike to get rid of the Tory Government. In the event of a miners' strike the councillors, themselves ex-miners, will willingly turn over their facilities to the NUM as they did in 1972. They are campaigning for other Labour Councils to support the industrial offensive in this way, as well as

through paying their employees more than is allowed under the pay laws.

But despite all this, Clay Cross is far from being any kind of 'mini-soviet.' Essentially, the councillors regard this period of activity as something out of the ordinary. Once the Tory Government is out of the way, the class struggle will hopefully get back to normal. The councillors say that they were elected 'to do a job.' Hence, although Council meetings are more open than those elsewhere, and they may co-opt 'people we can trust' on to the Council as the struggle requires, they see no need to transform it into a body which is directly revocable by assembly or by representatives of local working class organisations. In most respects the Council continues to function like any other Labour Council, and representatives of workers' organisations have no control over it on a day to day basis.

## Clear choice

Nevertheless, the experience of Clay Cross shows more vividly than any other that a consistent struggle for the interests of the working class, irrespective of parliamentary laws, leads to a situation in which the working class has a clear choice: either to retreat back into the framework dictated by bourgeois law, or to set about creating and organising a state power of its own.

It is this choice which will be posed more and more sharply as the struggle develops in the months ahead. The upheaval of a general strike would provide a real opportunity to create governmental bodies accountable not to Westminster but to the working class, subject not to the compulsion of the capitalist courts but rather creating adequate machinery of their own with which to suppress the capitalists. This certainly would undermine parliamentary democracy. And we should not mourn its passing.

Clay Cross tenants lobbying delegates outside the Labour Party conference earlier this year.



# STRATEGIES FOR STRUGGLE

## 4. MILITANT

ALAN JONES and DAVE FOX

# MAY DAY Militant

4p

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH ISSUE 153 27 APRIL 1973

One of the distinctive features of the present preparation of struggles over Phase 3 is the way in which the Labour Party is being increasingly dragged into the middle of the situation. This is very different, for example, from the struggle against the Industrial Relations Act, when the Labour Party was marginalised.

Now, on the contrary, discussions among the militants are full of arguments about the role of the Labour leaders such as Benn, the evasions of Wilson, the open scabbing of Prentice, and so on. In fact, the crisis now facing the labour movement over how to respond to Phase 3 is clearly a combined crisis—affecting both the trade union leadership and the mass political party of the working class, the Labour Party.

### TWO VIEWS

Nowhere is this twin crisis more evident than in the continual threats made by the press about a general election which would supposedly lead to a crushing Tory victory on the issue of 'Who governs Britain?' In fact, a general election would be a very dangerous manoeuvre for the ruling class in the present situation, but this question is acting as something of a touchstone for the different currents in the working class movement.

There are only two consistent positions. The first is that of the International Marxist Group. We argue for a general strike to bring down the Tory Government and open up the way for socialism. We say that even if a general strike movement is prevented by the treachery of the trade union and Labour leadership from taking definite socialist measures, it will still leave the working class in the strongest possible position to deal with whatever government, Tory or Labour, replaces the present one. Of course we are not against a general election. But we insist that the election of a Labour Government is strictly secondary to the mobilisation of the working class and the organisation of the present struggle.

The other consistent position is the opposite of the IMG's view: it sees the decisive thing as the return of a Labour Government, and thus looks on a general election as the logical means of achieving this aim. This is the view of NUM President Joe Gornley, who would welcome a general election as a way of avoiding mass action and preparation for struggle by his members and by the working class as a whole. It is also the line of Wilson, who makes it clear he will not support any 'illegal' action—that is, a miners' strike—and who says that all would be well if only the Tories had 'sensible' policies.

Between these two consistent positions, lie all sorts of confusions. Some 'left' sections of the Labour Party, and even a small section of the trade union bureaucracy, are calling for industrial action as a way of forcing a general election. They say that a campaign of industrial action is the best way to ensure that Labour wins the election and goes on to carry out 'left' policies. The Communist Party and the Workers Revolutionary Party (which now constitutes the extreme right-wing of the revolutionary left) adopt this view when they make their main political policy the call for a campaign of industrial action to bring about a general election.

### 'MILITANT' IN CRISIS

The crisis of perspective which is revealed in all these debates is nowhere more clearly reflected than in the main current within the Labour Party which claims to be Marxist—the Militant current. Throughout 1973 this tendency has been grappling with the dilemma of how to remove the Tories and has been swinging about between the two logical lines of

# Labour - TUC - Co-op NOW CAMPAIGN FOR POWER

By Pat Craven (Norwood Labour Party)

May Day 1973 will be recorded in red in the history of the British Labour Movement. Apart from the General Strike of 1926, it will have been the mightiest display of the power of the organised working class this century!

Engineers, dockers, train drivers, shipbuilders, hospital workers, busmen, miners, building workers and countless others will be out on strike in response to the TUC's call. Workers whose only

he a body blow to the Tories... But to win this bitter fight, the whole movement must be mobilised and the campaign extended onto a political plane for the defeat of the Tory government! But now here does he say how.

We can only assume that he thinks the slogan 'Labour to power on a socialist programme' takes things on to a political plane. But whose politics? That slogan merely reinforces the claims of the Labour 'left' that the road to socialism lies through electing a Labour government with the correct policies. In fact, what revolutionaries in the Labour Party and in the workers' struggle which takes place outside of it should be hammering away at is the need to develop the mass struggle of the working class.

This is why the task of the hour is the active preparation of a general strike. An alliance must be forged between the miners and engineers. All other groups fighting Phase 3 must be drawn in. The entire movement must be involved through local conferences and Councils of Action. By all means let us make demands on the Labour leaders at the same time as preparing for the mass struggle. But these demands must not concentrate only on what Labour should do after the next election.

What should they do now? The Labour leaders must call on local Labour parties to place all their resources at the disposal of local strike committees. The Labour Parties must play a part in the unification and centralisation of the mass struggle against the Tory government. In addition, Labour councils should place all the resources of the Council at the disposal of workers in struggle. Why not public accommodation for flying pickets? Why not organise public meetings explaining the need to overthrow the Tories in struggle, using for this the resources of the council? Why not use council funds and resources to establish picketing pools? This is the sort of work comrade Doyle could do on the NEC and this is the sort of work his comrades around Militant should do, as well as playing an active part in the mass struggle, if they really want to take the campaign onto a political plane.

calling for a general strike to bring down the Tory government and the line of calling for a general election to return a Labour Government. Despite some truly amazing contortions, their failure to understand that the development of the actual living struggle is not governed by developments in their corner of the class struggle (the Labour Party) but by the direct struggle of the masses, has meant that they have been unable to answer the crucial questions facing the working class or to work out any consistent line.

Their 'theoretical' material on this subject has not exactly helped them. It was only in January of this year that Ted Grant, writing in *Militant International Review*, declared that the possibility of concessions at this stage had led to '... a turn away from confrontation', that pressure from the CBI had '... sounded the retreat politically and industrially', and concluded that because confrontation was too dangerous for the ruling class '... the possibility of an all-out showdown with the workers in the immediate period ahead, has receded. The possibility of a General Strike has been postponed to the indefinite future.'

That was in January. On 9 March, a curious thing happened. The TUC had already called a 'national day of protest and stoppage'. *Militant* now had to explain that what had been postponed indefinitely in January was only one month later, on the order of the day. Not only should there be a one-day General Strike, but every organisation of the labour movement should convene delegate conferences from all the local factories. Marches and meetings should be arranged having as their theme '... the call for the working class to take power'. These archaeologists of the future who uncover copies of 'The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth' will certainly be amazed at the speed of events in Britain in 1973, where, in well under two months we moved from a situation where confrontation had been postponed to the 'indefinite future' to one where workers' power was posed as an immediate issue. Not only that, but in answer to the question 'what next?' after a one-day general strike, we read: 'The only answer is to prepare for an indefinite

general strike to bring the working class to power'.

The dizzy, zig-zag course of British working class life did not end here. The lead article in the very next issue of *Militant* proclaimed: 'TUC—organise 24-hour protest action. Labour and TUC—CAMPAIGN FOR GENERAL ELECTION'. The theme of the demonstrations this week was not to be for workers' power but for 'Labour to power on a socialist programme'. Action committees had been projected the previous week to organise the struggle whether the bureaucrats like it or not. This week their role was to organise for a one-day strike and, interestingly, '... to prepare a campaign for the resignation of the government and the election of a Labour government with socialist policies'.

### POLITICAL PLANE

The contradictions, the twisting and turning in all this, is embarrassingly clear. Even now, there is no current in the Labour Party, including *Militant*, that has any idea how the working class should remove the Tories and advance the struggle towards socialism in practice. *Militant* of 30 November under the headline 'Victory to Miners. Defeat the Tories!' offered not one single, serious proposal for working class action to achieve these objectives. The whole article is posed solely in terms of what is happening in the Labour Party, and the debates that are taking place among the leaders.

*Militant* are, of course, correct when they say the working class is concerned about the programme of the Labour Party. What they completely overlook is that this concern is not primarily about resolutions on nationalisation and the like, but about Phase 3 and the Tory government. What the working class is interested in is when, how, and whether the leaders of the movement are going to fight, how to make them fight, or how to fight despite them. These are key questions which only Marxists in the movement can answer.

Peter Doyle, supporter of *Militant* on the NEC of the Labour Party, does not answer one of these questions in his article of 30 November 'The fight begins now'. He says 'A victory for the miners will

## WHAT'S ON

**FOUNDATION OF LEFT OPPOSITION:** 50th anniversary commemoration meeting, Friday 7 December at 7.30 pm in Holborn Assembly Rooms, John's Mews, Northampton Street, WC1 (behind Holborn Library). Speakers from the Fourth International include Pierre Frank, also film of interview with Trotsky in Copenhagen in 1934. Organised by IMG.

**NOTTINGHAM RED CIRCLES:** Wide-ranging series of discussions based on the politics of the Fourth International. Every second and fourth Tuesday in the month, 8 pm at the Lion Hotel, Clumber Street.

**'VICTORY FOR THE BIRMINGHAM 5':** Birmingham IMG public meeting on Wednesday 12 December at 8 pm in the Wellington pub, corner of Bromsgrove Street and Bristol Road. Speakers: Bob Pennington (ex-full time organiser of the 'Blue Union') and national secretary of the IMG); a member of the Birmingham 5.

**REVOLUTIONARY XMAS CARDS:** Trotsky slaying the counter-revolutionary dragon (old Russian

**'NATIONALISATION OR EXPROPRIATION?'** Translation of a pamphlet originally produced by the Communist League in France as a critique of the 'Union of the Left'. Very relevant to the present debate in Britain around the Labour Party's programme of nationalisations. Produced by Birmingham IMG for the Red Weekly Fund Drive. Rush orders to: Alex Stein, 281 Tiverton Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham. 10p per copy plus postage.

**SOCIALIST WOMAN FORUM:** 'The Fight for Equal Pay and Phase 3', speakers include women members of the AUEW (TASSI). Wednesday 12 December at 8 pm in The Roebuck, Tottenham Court Road (Warren Street tube).

**IMG RED FORUM:** Series of introductory discussions for those in the London area on the politics of the Fourth International. Every Tuesday at 8 pm in the General Pictor pub, Caledonian Road (5 mins Kings X tube). 11 December: 'Origins of the Fourth International'.

**BRIGHTON IMG:** Public meeting on Phase 3, speaker Brian Heron. In the Stratford Arms pub, Preston Circus, Brighton on Wednesday 12 December at 8 pm.

**IRISH POLITICAL HOSTAGES:** Committee march to support of Bobby Casp's house. Assemble 2.30 pm

## Books and pamphlets on the Middle East

**Class Nature of the Israeli State /** Machover et al. 10p + 5p p&p

**Burning Issues of the Mideast Crisis /** Peter Buch 17p + 5p p&p

**The Truth About Israel and Zionism /** Weinstock & Rothschild 15p + 5p p&p

**Mideast Oil and US Imperialism /** Dick Roberts 15p + 5p p&p

**How Can the Jews Survive? A Socialist Answer to Zionism /** George Novack 10p + 5p p&p

**Documents of the Palestinian Resistance Movement /** Al Fatah, PDFLP, PFLP 17p + 5p p&p

**Roots of the Mideast War /** Selections from the ISR 25p + 6p p&p

**Israel and the Arabs /** Maxime Rodinson

**Israel: A Colonial-Settler State /** Maxime Rodinson 75p + 12p p&p

**The Jewish Question /** Abram Leon £1.25p + 15p p&p

**The Palestinian Resistance /** Gerard Chaliand 35p + 6p p&p

**The Disinherited: Journal of a Palestinian Exile /** Fawaz Turki £1 + 12p p&p

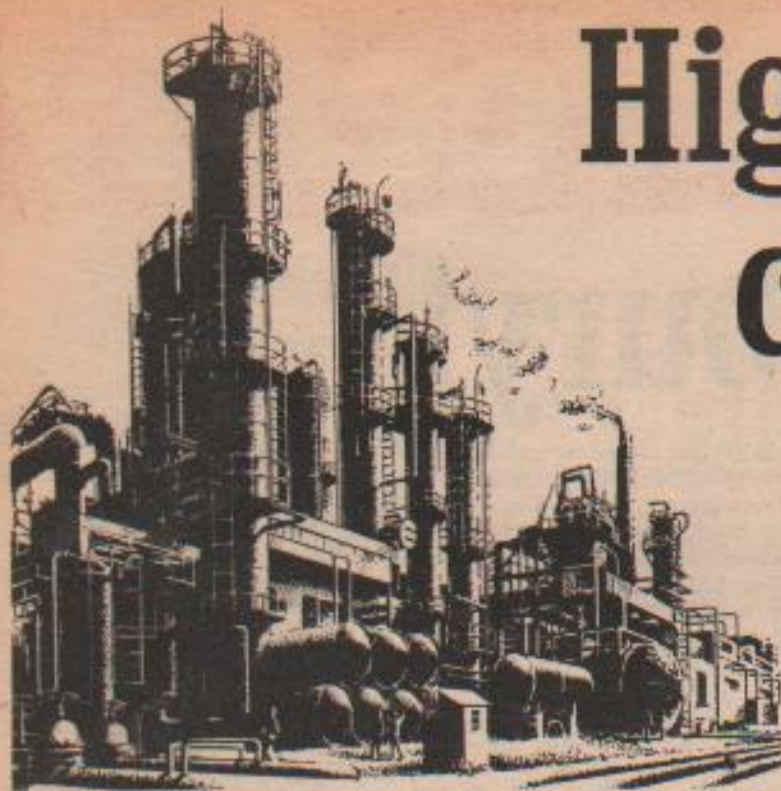
**The Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Reader /** ed Russell Stettin £1.40p + 15p p&p

Cash with orders to:

## Red Books

24 Boundary Road, London N.W.8. Red Books is open Monday to Saturday, with late opening Friday till 8.00 pm. Nearest station is South Hampstead (British Rail).

# High stakes in the oil crisis game



## Hong Kong, Thailand deport Tariq Ali

Tariq Ali, a leading militant of the Fourth International and its British section, was last week expelled from two countries in Asia.

His expulsion from Hong Kong came after he had already spent three days in the Crown Colony discussing with local Trotskyists, whose activities (such as the publication of Trotsky's writings in Chinese) are viewed by both the local Maoists and the British authorities with increasing displeasure. Ali was not given any reasons for his expulsion, but was told that he should not even attempt to enter the colony in future.

Having been expelled from Hong Kong, Tariq Ali travelled to Thailand in order to discuss with the student organisations which had participated in the overthrow of the military dictatorship. Here, too, he discovered he could only stay for two and a half days. The right-wing nature of the bulk of the student movement (a detailed report on Thailand will appear in next week's *Red Weekly*) combined with the role played by the local Thomson Newspapers affiliate, the *Bangkok Post*, ensured that he was rapidly expelled under a special order passed by the Minister for Interior.

A *Bangkok Post* reporter interviewed Ali for an hour, in the course of which many questions were asked related to the attitude of Ali and the Fourth International to the monarchy, Indochina, etc. Immediately after the interview the *Post* 'journalist' took the tape to the headquarters of the Special Police. Six hours later it had been transcribed and translated into Thai. At midnight six cops surrounded Ali's hotel room, while several cars surrounded the hotel itself. He was woken up, asked to pack and taken to the airport. There the local police chief told him in no uncertain terms: 'The next time you come here you might not be allowed to return. . .'

Comrade Ali had been touring India and Japan on behalf of the Fourth International. His ban from Hong Kong and Thailand increases the number of countries which leading members of the Fourth International are prevented from entering.

**Oil blackmail. Petroleum warfare.** In the Western press there is no lack of 'indignant declarations' characterising the current crisis.

The secretary general of NATO even stated that he considered the cut-off of oil supplies from the Arab states as the equivalent of a declaration of war. And that could justify armed intervention. Moreover, it is known that elite American troops have recently been training in desert warfare.

### HIGH STAKES

Indeed, for capitalist industry the stakes are high. While Arab oil currently accounts for only about 6-8 per cent of American oil imports, the upper limits of U.S. production are such that in spite of the exploitation of the Alaskan deposits, coming years will see a big increase in imports of Arab oil (to as much as 40 per cent of total oil imports by 1980).

As for Europe, it gets about 65 per cent of its oil from the Middle East, and even if it seeks to broaden its sources (the North Sea, Nigeria, etc.), it will be impossible for it to get by without the petroleum of the Arab-Persian Gulf.

In fact, while production from Arab countries now accounts for about 30 per cent of world oil production, the same countries hold nearly 60 per cent of total world reserves. So the stakes, which are already high today, will rise still higher during the next ten or twenty years.

But to really understand imperialism's 'oil strategy', we have to look at the various stages of production, transport, and marketing (refining, distribution).

Until 1970 some 90 per cent of Middle East oil production was controlled by seven giant companies. They are called the seven sisters, and they account for about 60 per cent of total world oil production. Of the seven, five are American: Standard Oil, Esso, Texaco, Mobil, Gulf, one is British: British Petroleum; and one is Anglo-Dutch: Royal Dutch Shell.

Since 1970, there have been some nationalisations, by Libya and Iraq among others, and it is planned that the Arab states will control 51 per cent of production within a few years.

### 'LOYAL REGIMES'

The consequences of this measure can be minimal provided the governments in Europe and the United States can make sure of the maintenance of 'loyal' regimes. That is the basis of American imperialism's whole Middle East policy, which is aimed at securing leadership for Saudi Arabia. The Anglo-French-Israeli attack of 1956 and the Israeli attack of 1967 were aimed at isolating Egypt and depriving it of the preponderant role it was playing under Nasser's management, and at dealing a death blow to the progressive nationalist regime in Syria.

It can be stated that this policy has been fully successful. The rightward turn of the Arab world under the leadership of Saudi Arabia's King Faisal is firmly under way.

That it continues is the second requirement of European and American policy. While the social and political evolution now under way in the Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen), is

Dhofar, and in Muscat and Oman does not represent an immediate threat to the outlets for Arab oil, American imperialism nevertheless understands that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The strategy? First, launch armed attacks against South Yemen and support the Sultan of Muscat, Faisal's army and some Libyan experts doing their bit. And then, control the strategic points.

### FOUR OUTLETS

There are four main oil outlets in the region:

1. The Persian Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz that command the gulf. Surveillance of the gulf and the straits has been assigned to the Iranian regime, which in 1972 occupied several islands at the mouth of the gulf. American bases maintained in the region help to fulfil this mission.

2. The mouth of the Red Sea. The 'security' of the entrance to the Red Sea is guaranteed by the Ethiopian government, an important pawn of imperialism in East Africa. The United States maintains, among others, a military base in Kagnew, Ethiopia. Further, the Israeli army is installed on certain islands off the coast of North Yemen. Because of the importance of access to the Red Sea, Egyptian troops recently took control of the Bab el-Mandeb straits at the extreme southern end of the Red Sea.

3. The far north of the Red Sea. One part of this outlet, the Suez Canal, is blocked, which strongly hinders the European oil companies, which must sail their oil around Africa. But it also hampers movement of the Soviet fleet between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. So we can see who is interested in reopening the Suez Canal to navigation.



### The four major oil outlets

The other outlet in the northern end of the Red Sea is the Elat-Ashkelon pipeline on Israeli territory. Its capacity is scheduled to be doubled. It transports not only Iranian oil, but also petroleum products originating in Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, the closing of the pipeline because of the blockade of the Bab el-Mandeb cannot have great consequences for the supply of oil to Israel. The Egyptian oil wells in the Sinai now being operated by the Israeli occupiers produce almost all the oil used by the Zionist state. Only a very small part of Israel's oil needs are supplied through the port of Elat. Hence, nearly all the oil arriving in Elat is piped through to Ashkelon and loaded on tankers for Europe.

4. Finally, part of Saudi Arabian and Iraqi production is transported through pipelines leading to Lebanese and Syrian ports. The recent war partially cut off this necessary supply source for the Europeans (deliveries of Saudi Arabian oil through the pipeline were reduced by half; the terminal at the Syrian port of Tartus was destroyed). But aside from the current conflict, it has been crucial for U.S. imperialism to establish tighter control over this region. Definitive liquidation of the Palestinian resistance is an indispensable condition for this 'pacification'.

brutally tortured and executed by firing squads for alleged 'terrorism,' while charges of drug smuggling have been concocted to get rid of dissatisfied workers and peasants. The present twelve face certain death unless international opinion is mobilised on their behalf. The Iranian Students Society is therefore urgently appealing for signatures of prominent people for a petition of protest as part of such a campaign; these should be sent to: Basement 101/3 Gower Street, London, WC1.

**TOKYO:** The recently concluded 12th conference of the Japanese Communist Party has confirmed its rightward trend. From an ultra-left line in the early 1950s (during the Korean War it called for armed struggle in Japan), it has now moved to a position of setting out a 'programme for a democratic coalition government' which will have no less than three stages: 'intermediate government', 'first-stage government', and then 'revolutionary government', while the capitalists supposedly stand patiently by. The Diet (Japanese parliament) has now chosen from

being 'a tool of reactionary rule' to 'an organ that serves the people', while to allay the fears of the middle classes there will be a 'agency' of the working class instead of the 'dictatorship' of the proletariat.

This further shift to the right came out most clearly in the debate on Chile, where the main lesson drawn was 'the importance of continuing struggles against violence-prone leftist groups', and 'the error of criticising the formula of peaceful revolution just because of the Chilean experience'. The capitalists have no such illusions, however — it is an open secret that right-wing Liberal Democrat politicians of the 'Seirengai' group have been involved in discussions with a number of army officers about a possible future coup, and a joint 'Coup Study Group' has been established. But for the CP, as this conference has shown only too clearly, all that matters is to allay the fears of the Socialist Party and the Buddhist Komeito ('Clean Government Party') in smoothing the electoral path for a 'democratic coalition government.'

Such is the strategy of American imperialism in the Middle East. The major roles in the area are assigned to Israel and, more recently, to Iran. But the role of 'reasonable leader' of the Arab world has devolved on Saudi Arabia (the same role that is played, perhaps on a more modest scale, by Ethiopia in East Africa), which has been integrated into the general picture. The strengthening of the military potential of these countries can leave no doubt about this.

And the whole structure, naturally, rests on the basic principle of peaceful co-existence between Washington and Moscow.

Because the recent Egyptian-Syrian initiative shook up certain plans, it has become urgent for Washington (and Moscow) to re-establish calm in the Middle East. The hectic voyages of Nobel War Prize winner Henry Kissinger (Moscow, Cairo, Riyadh, Tel Aviv, Amman, Peking) testify to that.

For the partial oil cut-off, while it scarcely bothers the United States (at least directly), was not greeted with great enthusiasm by Washington's European allies. Nevertheless, although small divisions may appear, the interests of the North American and European capitalists overlap sufficiently for them to agree on a common strategy.

Moreover, from the imperialist point of view, the spectacle of the Arab states defying the authority of the world's great powers must in no way be encouraged, for it could trigger a growing mobilisation of the Arab masses, despite the fact that the Arab regimes are not aiming at any such thing.

### PROFIT BONANZA

It has been noted recently—and the figures demonstrate it—that the oil companies are experiencing a profit bonanza. In Europe and the United States, profits for 1972 went up by 60-80 per cent in comparison with 1971. The boom of the Petrofina company during the last two or three years is one example (although the oil discoveries that company made in Angola have something to do with its growth).

Taking account of the devaluation of the dollar, and in spite of the price adjustments obtained by the oil-exporting countries, a metric ton of crude oil cost 930 francs in 1972 as against 1,040 francs in 1971. What explains the increased profits while the buying cost has declined is that distribution prices have gone up, under the pressure of the Belgian Petroleum Federation. Anything that is thought to be scarce will be expensive, so it is quite lucrative for the oil companies to start talking about an oil shortage. Furthermore, it might be recalled that in 1968 the Arab oil-producing states received \$0.70 on each barrel of oil, while the oil companies' profits and the fiscal income of the consuming states was running at about \$6.

Because European capitalism is more severely affected by the reduction in the export of Arab oil, it will seek to encourage competition among the oil-producing states by turning to various countries like Iran. But it will also try to affect a 'benevolent neutrality' in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This in no way involves challenging the existence of the Zionist state, but rather seeking a new status quo. No doubt Israel will have to make certain concessions—like re-opening the Suez Canal, which both Europe and the Soviet Union desire—that would allow the Arab states to recoup some of their lost prestige among their own peoples by presenting the new status quo as an Arab victory. The huge diplomatic square dance that has just begun is aimed at finding just such a compromise.

### NO FREEZE

The utilisation of the 'oil weapon' by the Arab feudal and bourgeois classes is limited to one goal to establish an international relationship of forces more favourable to them in order to make gains internally in relation to the Arab masses. If that objective is achieved, the oil spigots will open up again. Until that happens Europe may get a little chilly, but it won't freeze.

As for the rights of the Palestinian people, a theme the Arab leaders talk about often enough, they will no doubt once again be used as bargaining chips and will be sold out. But then again, how can these rights ever be granted without the triumph of the socialist revolution in the whole Middle East, in the Arab countries and in Israel as well? (*La Gauche*)

## INTERNATIONAL NOTES

**IRAN:** Twelve more intellectuals are shortly to appear before military tribunals. This time the accusation is that they planned to abduct members of the Iran Royal Family as well as the American Ambassador, and hold them as hostages to secure the release of political prisoners in Iran. This is a particularly crude lie, since according to the Paris newspaper *Le Monde* they had already been in custody for a year at the time of their alleged plotting.

Their real crime, of course, is to be political opponents of the Shah's repressive regime. Large numbers of dissident intellectuals have already been

## 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 .....

# Victory for Birmingham 5

# Forward to Shrewsbury!

A major legal victory for the entire working class movement was won in Birmingham this week, when five building workers, charged with 'conspiracy to trespass' and 'unlawful assembly' after their occupation of a lump labour contractor's office earlier this year, were acquitted in the Crown Court.

An important first-round victory was won on Monday, the opening day of the trial, when the judge threw out the charge of 'conspiracy to trespass,' on the grounds that the action of the five, as trade unionists, was protected from such a charge under the 1875 Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act.

The final victory came on Wednesday when the jury returned a verdict of 'not guilty' on the unlawful assembly charge after an hour's deliberation, despite the strong suggestion by the judge in his summing up that this charge had been proved.

The opening of the trial was met with stoppages of work on twenty of the city's most important building sites, token 2-hour stoppages on a number of others, and a demonstration of 400 outside the court house. This mobilisation was certainly an important factor in influencing both the judge's ruling on the conspiracy charge and the jury's final verdict.

There was definitely nothing 'open and shut' about the legal protection afforded the five by the 1875 Act, and the judge's decision clearly reflects a concern about the potential response of the working class movement to this particular use of the conspiracy laws. The five were fortunate in having a predominantly working class jury, and the strikes and demonstrations were undoubtedly important in bringing home to the jury the class issues involved in the trial.

The five visited Shrewsbury on Thursday as a gesture of solidarity with the building workers on trial there and with the intention of turning over the proceeds of their defence fund to the Shrewsbury defendants.

On Friday they are visiting all the sites which struck in solidarity with them to report back and discuss this important victory.

We should not draw over-optimistic conclusions from the successful outcome of this trial. The conspiracy laws are still around, and can be used whenever the state thinks it appropriate. Important spokesmen for the state machine are already voicing their doubts about the effectiveness of the jury system (see the recent televised speech of Metropolitan Police Commissioner Robert Mark). As Ireland—both South and North—shows the ruling class is quite ready to do away with this particular 'democratic right' at the drop of a hat.

Meanwhile the Shrewsbury trials go on. We should follow the example of the Birmingham 5 and work to ensure the maximum trade union backing for these militants, and a massive working class response if the state tries to lay a finger on them.

**Defend the Birmingham 5**  
IMG pamphlet on the case of the 5 Birmingham building workers acquitted of conspiracy charges for the occupation of a lump labour bureau in Birmingham. Publicise this important working class victory.

Orders to John Kendall, 281 Tiverton Rd., Selly Oak, Birmingham 29.

Price 3p per copy plus postage



Building workers demonstrate outside Birmingham court during the trial of the Five which began and ended this week

## Mass rally in Hammersmith calls for troops out of Ireland

In the teeth of the illusions being spread by the press about Whitelaw's deal over the Assembly executive having settled the Irish problem, a packed Hammersmith Town Hall last Saturday (1 December) showed the growing forces which are fighting for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, and the right of the Irish people to self-determination. The rally had been preceded by an 800-strong demonstration from Shepherds Bush Green.

Amongst the banners on the demonstration were those of NALGO Action, Southwark Trades Council, Battersea LPYS, and the British Peace Committee. The largest contingent was from the IMG, and London People's Democracy, the Wolf Tone Craobh (branch) of Clann na hEireann and Lotta Continua, the Italian left group, also participated.

Unfortunately support from the British left groups was limited. The Irish Sub Committee of IS had inserted a statement in the current *Socialist Worker* (1 December) giving general support to the idea of building a movement for the withdrawal of the troops, but refrained from supporting the actual, existing movement.

The chairperson of the rally, Pat Arrowsmith, gave the apologies of David Bolton, Vice-President of the Scottish Miners, and Joan Maynard, of the Labour Party Executive and the National Union of Agricultural Workers, who were unable to speak because of other commitments.

The rally, meeting in an unheated hall, was warmed up by the speeches of Freddy Silberman from the London and Westminster Trades Council, Jim Kemp, T&GWU building work-

ers convenor, black militant Althea Jones, and Jack Clafferty of the West London Troops Out Movement.

Jim Kemp referred to the fiftieth anniversary of John MacLean's death, and quoted MacLean's challenge to the British working class to support the Irish struggle. He stressed that the common denominator linking the British and Irish workers was not simply their common economic exploitation, but immediate political problems, such as the para-military Special Patrol Group, the conspiracy laws and other repressive methods developed in the North of Ireland. This showed how necessary it was to take up Ireland as a political issue within the British working class movement.

Althea Jones talked about her visit to Trinidad in the summer, where a guerrilla war against that country's neo-colonial regime, has reached proportions similar to the Irish struggle. One of her younger sisters was being held by the police, and another had been killed; in neither case was her family informed. She told the rally that this had made her understand what the word 'imperialism' means for the Irish people, and that this experience was being repeated a million times in Trinidad, in Ireland and in the other countries struggling to break the grip of imperialism and neo-colonialism.

Saturday's action was a first step. Patient and consistent local work, taking up such issues as Army recruitment, defence of political prisoners, and propaganda about the activities of the Army in Ireland, is required to prepare the ground for a powerful response when the hollow promises of Whitelaw are exposed in the abject failure of Pym.

**REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR:** Four posters of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, complete with all important revolutionary dates. Coloured cartridge, 25" x 18", complete with black spring holder. 75p each or 60p each for orders of 10 or more (p&p free). Cash with order to: Red Books, 24 Boundary Road, London NW8.

## Life of jailed Chilean Trotskyist in danger

Fresh information which has reached us from Chile on the situation of Trotskyist militant Luis Vitale should give an added spur to the campaign for his release.

We now know that Vitale was originally held in a cell together with a well-known folk-singer and a militant of the Communist Party. Both these have now been shot, while Vitale has been savagely tortured. It is possible that he too will be shot at any time if international attention is not focussed on his case.

Born in Argentina in 1927, Vitale has a long history of activity in the workers' movement. From 1959 to 1962 he was a member of the leadership of the Chilean CUT (equivalent to the TUC here), and in 1965 he took part in setting up the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left). More recently he has been a leading member of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, which emerged from a regroupment of Trotskyist forces at the end of 1972. At the time of the coup he was a lecturer in geography at the University of Concepcion, and had published three volumes of a major work, *A Marxist Interpretation of the History of Chile*.

Students at a number of colleges and universities in Britain have already

## Pacifist on trial for leafleting army camp

Pat Arrowsmith, who chaired the Troops Out demonstration last weekend (see report on this page) has been charged with two offences under the Incitement to Disaffection Act. The charges arise from her alleged distribution of leaflets at Westminster Army Barracks married quarters, for which she was arrested about two months ago.

Pat was acquitted of charges of insulting behaviour after a similar incident at Colchester Military Tattoo last summer. On that occasion the papers of the case were sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions, and charges under the Incitement to Disaffection Act were considered, but apparently rejected.

At the Colchester trial the prosecution failed to convince the jury that the leaflets, which gave information about facilities for British soldiers who wanted to go to Sweden or to buy themselves out, would 'insult' soldiers who received them. This acquittal, combined with fear of growing opposition in Britain to the operations of the British Army in Ireland, has led the Director of Public Prosecutions, on this second occasion, to charge Pat with incitement to disaffection.

Conviction under this Act can bring a sentence of anything up to two years imprisonment. Earlier this year Michael Tobin, who pleaded guilty to possession of such material, was given the maximum sentence of two years.

This prosecution is an extremely important political intervention by the State, designed to discourage activity on the question of the British Army. The North London Troops Out Movement, of which Pat is a member, has discussed the case, and a vigorous defence campaign will undoubtedly be mounted. The campaign should receive maximum support from left organisations, Irish organisations, anti-war and pacifist activists, and should be taken up within the Labour Movement.

Support Red Weekly - **SUBSCRIBE!**

Rates: £4 per year, £2 for 6 months  
Foreign £6 per year, £9 airmail  
Special offer! 12 issues for 50p

Name

Address

Please send cash with order to:  
Red Weekly, 182 Pentonville rd, London N1