



LABOUR PLAN USELESS - COATS OFF FOR STRUGGLE!

Any confused *Daily Telegraph* readers, still in a state of excitement from the election red-scare, who huddled around their television sets last Tuesday waiting to hear if the Queen would proclaim the introduction of socialism, must have been immensely relieved by her speech.

Not only was there nothing in Labour's plans for the coming year which caused Her Majesty to falter or blush, but the capitalist press found much in them that was to their liking. The Queen's speech, was, in the words of the *Times*, 'moderate and reasonable.'

CHRIS BALFOUR

For the working class, this coin has another side. Labour's plans are acceptable to the ruling class precisely because they contain nothing that grabs the capitalist bull by the horns or pledges the Government to defend workers' interests.

In all of the areas where Labour managed to tip-toe down to the water's edge—prices, housing, education, pensions, North Sea oil—they were not prepared to get their feet wet, adopting the most pathetic and bankrupt half-measures.

In other areas—such as Ireland and NATO—they were more daring: but only because they are marching hand-in-hand with the Tories, adopting their policies lock-stock-and-barrel.

Over the next twelve months Britain—along with most of the capitalist world—faces an immense economic crisis. The economy will go into sharp decline, while prices and unemployment mount at an ever-faster pace. The capitalists will use every trick in the book to ensure that the working class bears the cost of the crisis, and capitalist profits suffer as little as possible.

But you would never guess it from listening to Labour's siren-song. Fancy phrases about 'overcoming the economic difficulties,' 'promoting national industrial expansion' and 'redistributing wealth' abound. But search as you may through Labour's rag-bag, not even the remnant of a policy capable of achieving such aims can be found. 'Nationalisation' appears to have disappeared from Labour's vocabulary.

Workers were correct to vote Labour, but now they must rely only on their own struggles. It is only

through these struggles and the organisations that arise out of them that the workers movement can resist the capitalist offensive and implement the socialist measures necessary to solve the crisis. Labour is incapable of doing this.

No form of wage restraint—'voluntary' or statutory—must be accepted under capitalism. A united wages offensive should be launched to extend the gains of the miners' settlement to the entire class. The workers' movement must use its own strength to beat capitalist inflation: by demanding a sliding scale that will protect all working class incomes against price rises, and by taking industrial and mass action to monitor and regulate prices.

Unemployment must not be tolerated. The workers' movement must insist on *work or full pay*. Every firm rejecting this and declaring redundancies should be taken over by the workers, who should insist on its immediate nationalisation.

Students in Newcastle and squatters in London who have taken over empty office blocks and property bought up by capitalist speculators have shown how mass, direct action can be used to counter-attack against capitalist profiteering.

This example must be taken up everywhere in the country, in reply to every failure of the capitalist system to meet basic social needs and every attempt of the capitalist class to force the burdens of the crisis on to the backs of working people.

Labour's Parliamentary schemes produce only smiles from the ruling class. Measures like these will make them shake with fear and anger, for such measures threaten their privilege and power and hold out the promise of a real solution to the crisis—a socialist solution.

Labour's rag-bag

On **PRICES** the only clear commitment is for selective subsidies on certain foods. This can only reduce the cost of living by 1% in a year in which it is expected to go up by 15%. It will, of course, maintain the profits of the big capitalist food firms.

On **HOUSING** there are no plans to launch a massive building programme to provide adequate homes for all, only the pathetic pledge to 'reverse the fall in house building'. Rents are to be frozen, but only for 9 months, and while the Housing Finance Act will be repealed, rent rises already imposed under it will stand. The provisions for nationalising development land may reduce land costs and undercut part of speculators' profits, but housing will still have to bear the costs of the immense profits made by the building industry and the big finance houses.

The Government is pledged to 'oppose all forms of **RACIAL DISCRIMINATION** at home and abroad', but there is not a word about translating this into action. All the vicious racist laws—the Immigration Acts, the Aliens Acts, the Pakistan Act—will remain in effect.

The real outlook of the Government is shown by its attitude to NATO: it will 'give full support to the maintenance of the North Atlantic Alliance'. Vast sums will be spent in 'maintaining a modern and effective defence system' to bolster up this rotten imperialist alliance, which backs up the colonialist ventures of our NATO 'ally', Portugal, in Southern Africa.

On **IRELAND**, the Labour Government has pledged to underwrite totally the Tory-concocted Sunningdale deal—already torn apart in the general election—and will continue to deny the right of self-determination to the Irish people. British troops will be kept there to do the dirty work.

On **NORTH SEA OIL**, only vague proposals are made. There is talk of the Government buying a majority slice of the oil drilling operations and setting up a state company to buy and sell all the oil produced. But even if this is done, it will be meaningless as long as the big oil monopolies have a stranglehold over refining, distribution, and sales.

On **TRADE UNION RIGHTS**, the Industrial Relations Act is to go, but there is no commitment to protect the right to picket, so viciously attacked under the Tory Government. Phase 3 is to remain in effect until a 'voluntary' deal on wage restraint is worked out with the union bureaucrats.

Shrewsbury - no more fairy tales

How much longer do the Shrewsbury lads, two of them now on hunger strike, have to wait in jail before we gain them their freedom?

They waited patiently for two months as one-day stoppages, demonstrations and lobbies failed to divert the course of capitalist 'justice'. Worse, while all this was going on, three more pickets received suspended prison sentences, and the Appeal Court firmly turned the key on John McKinzie Jones for conspiracy and unlawful assembly.

They waited patiently for the trade union leaders to organise a strike movement. But it never came. The bureaucrats, more interested in drafting new laws for sunnier days, proved happy to leave the 'criminals', as UCATT called them, to rot in prison.

Over the next few days—as the 'Week of Action on Shrewsbury' opens with the London Conference on Saturday (replete with star trade union leaders), followed by a mass lobby of Labour MPs at the Commons on Wednesday—there will be many who will tell them that with a Labour Home Secretary, a mere nudge from the workers movement will have them out.

This is likely to prove the cruellest illusion of all. The Labour Cabinet will

treat the Shrewsbury men with the same contempt it heaps on the ex-Councillors at Clay Cross, even as it repeals or amends the very Acts under which these working class fighters were imprisoned.

Let's tell them no more fairy tales. Only indefinite strike action can guarantee to force the Home Secretary, whether his underpants be red or blue, to pardon all those convicted at Shrewsbury and stop the trials.

Saturday's conference is an opportunity to make this clear, against the wishes of many on its illustrious platform. It must be repeated at Wednesday's demonstration, so that Labour MPs in the Commons know we mean business, and rank and file workers encouraged to take up the fight once again.

The one group of workers who could really get the struggle moving are the miners. Their Executive failed to demand the release of the pickets before settling the coal strike, despite the plea from Jack Collins, executive member for the Kent Area NUM. But the strength revealed in the miners' victory means that other workers, especially in the building trade, would rapidly respond to a call from them for united strike action to turn the defeat at Shrewsbury into a victory.



Roy Jenkins (who as Labour's Home Secretary, can free the Shrewsbury pickets with a jot of his pen) should be familiar with the sort of 'criminals' the Shrewsbury lads are alleged to be. In 1926 a miners' agent in Monmouthshire was found guilty of breaking the picketing laws during the national coal strike and sentenced to nine months in prison. That man was Arthur Jenkins, Roy Jenkins' father.

STUDENTS FIGHT REPRESSION

This article is the first in a series which will examine the tactics and strategy necessary to build a movement of revolutionary students in Britain. The subject will be discussed at the International Marxist Group's Revolutionary Students' Rally to be held in London on 4 May. Speakers will include leaders of the student movements in France and Belgium, a leader of the Czech student movement in 1968, and leading members of the IMG. Contact your local IMG militants for more detail.

The present resistance by students to repression from university authorities and the police at Kent, Essex, and Oxford Universities are important struggles in the defence of the right of students to organisation and militant activity.

But these struggles are even more important in the context of the general struggle for political freedom and democratic rights, and the development of the means necessary to build a worker-student alliance around such issues. Such struggles take on burning urgency under repressive conditions in many colonial countries; under repressive regimes like those in Spain, Greece, and Argentina; in the anti-bureaucratic struggle in the workers' states; and lastly in the growing moves towards strong state techniques in the countries of Western Europe.

STUDENTS AND WORKERS

The universities in Czechoslovakia were strongholds of resistance to the Soviet invasion in 1968. After the invasion the student sit-in strike received support from many factories, some going on strike in sympathy.

The present fighting in Cordoba, the largest industrial city in Argentina, follows a whole series of struggles by workers and students against repression. In Cordoba and Rosario in 1969 there were armed uprisings organised by students and workers committees against the military junta of General Onganía.

The uprisings were sparked off by the ferocious response of the police and army against students struggling over an issue which is very

familiar to students in this country—a humble protest over rises in university cafeteria prices. The same issue, incidentally, sparked off the recent student mass movement in Ibadan, Nigeria.

The present Argentinian Government of Peron is very well aware of the threat to the capitalist system in the country posed by an alliance by the working class with other sections of the population against repression. In the universities, for example, as a leading defence lawyer Jorge Sivak has stated:

'The Supreme Criminal Court functions as a super tribunal of student conduct whose jurisdiction overlaps with that of the deans. The Court rules on the norms of discipline in the college which the deans feel that students ought to observe. In other words the State intervenes quite directly to act as a life jacket of law and order in the universities.'

A simple occupation of a bookshop demanding that the price of books be lowered becomes 'encroachment and illegal deprivation of freedom' with a possible prison sentence of 10 years.

ALLIANCES IN ACTION

Only by conducting each and all of their struggles in the context of building a worker-student alliance in action, can students hope to rally enough strength to win victories in their struggle and defend themselves from repression.

In this country we have seen in the past months very close links being forged between college authorities and local police. Police ringed the campus at Essex before breaking a picket; the violence used by police and hired thugs against students in

Oxford; the growing cooperation between the law courts and the college authorities in dealing with occupations and rent strikes; and the possibility of conspiracy charges being brought against students at the Universities of Kent and Nottingham.

All these moves take place at a time when strong state techniques are being used to deal with militant trade unionism, and there is increasing harassment of blacks, tenants and Irish people.

The lessons are clear—revolutionary students must respond to all these cases of repression no matter where they occur. Forms of organisation must be built which link students with other sections of the population, in particular the organised working class.

Revolutionaries should fight for occupation or action committees elected by, and accountable to, mass meetings of students. In every case of repression on the campuses, links must be sought with workers in the locality, both campus workers, and the local trades councils and trade union branches.

MAXIMUM PRESSURE

This is what direct action really means. Not just 'more militancy' or 'confrontation', but the democratic fighting involvement of militants in forms of action that bring maximum pressure on the authorities. In this way student struggles can be a pole of attraction, not just for those students who usually remain uninvolved, but also for militants in the working class.

These were the sort of tactics that won the reinstatement of students at Stirling last year, the reinstatement of militant lecturer Steve Whitley in Newcastle. This is the sort of struggle that must be launched if we are to ensure that students are capable of playing a full role in the struggle for socialism.

RAY BURNS

The sun sets on Sunningdale

The Sunningdale Agreement, the centrepiece of the British 'solution' to the Irish revolt, has been badly mauled by the results of the British General Election in both Britain and Ireland.

The massive 11 out of 12 victory of the anti-Sunningdale Unionists, and Heath's cynical manoeuvre in offering the Tory whip to Harry West's supporters have sent shivers down the spine of Fitt, Faulkner and the Southern establishment.

PROPAGANDA

In the last hours before the election, when it seemed clear that the Paisleyites would do well, the British propaganda machine went into operation, explaining throughout the world that the number of seats won would not be the crucial issue and that more importance should be placed on the number of votes cast for the pro- and anti-Sunningdale candidates.

In fact, the voting figures, as analysed in the Provo paper *An Phoblacht*, show that 431,682 people voted against Sunningdale, to 293,719 votes for. This represented an overwhelming majority in the 'Protestant' constituencies, and a very substantial minority in the 'Catholic' constituencies.

As a result of the election, Faulkner has now demanded that the Southern government eliminate from its constitution the claim to sovereignty over the whole island, as a precaution for proceeding further with the Sunningdale Agreement.

Faulkner is aware that the Southern government is not at the moment in any position to carry a referendum on this subject, but he hopes by these moves to achieve a freezing of the implementation of the agreement. This he believes is essential to stop defections inside his own 'Faulknerite' rump of the Unionist Assembly Party.

The signatories to the Sunningdale Agreement in September had expected to achieve majority support in six months. To date they have

failed. In the same period, they had expected to smash the military campaign of the Provos. Instead last week we saw the largest outbreak of streaking in the world, when 400 British soldiers ran terrified from the main British Army base in Belfast City before it collapsed around their ears. This happened within hours of the British GOC telling Merlyn Rees, Labour's new Gauleiter of Ireland, that they had the Provos on the run.

As the possibility of early stabilisation sinks behind the steeples of Fermanagh and Tyrone, the election of Wilson's Government provides the opportunity for socialists in Britain to accelerate a campaign to demand that Labour breaks with its bi-partisan approach to Ireland, and withdraws the troops.

BYE-BYE BI-PARTISAN

The main prongs of this must be a campaign to obtain signatures for the Troops Out Movement petition and to secure sponsorship and delegates to the conference called by the Troops Out Movement which is now fixed for 11 May.

Meanwhile, Labour's election has opened up the possibility of an important victory for the campaign to secure the transfer of the four Irish hunger strikers to Ireland.

The British legal, political, medical, and media establishments have staked their reputations on denying these four prisoners their demands. Thanks to the unparalleled courage of the hunger strikers, and the tenacity of the campaigners in Britain and Ireland, as we go to press it appears almost certain that the small forces of the left and Republicans will have humiliated the British ruling class. If this proves correct, a stronger, longer term campaign for the release of all Irish political prisoners must be built on the momentum gained by this victory.

Details of the TOM conference from Alistair Renwick, 28 Lammas Park Road, Ealing, London W5.

Details of Irish Political Hostages Campaign from Mairead Maguire, 88 Rosshyn Road, London N15.

SEAN REED



Photo: PETER HARRAP (Reprocut)

Enfield students rout sexists

Students at Middlesex Poly celebrated International Women's Day on 8 March in practical fashion when a mass picket of over 50 women's liberationists and socialist students turned up to a stag night, featuring strippers and other sexist 'entertainment', organised at Hendon College by the poly rugby club.

Resolutions condemning the event as sexist, and contrary to

NUS policy, had previously been passed by the Enfield site branch and poly student representative committee.

Picketers lined the corridors to chant and jeer at stag night supporters approaching the entrance, and found a number of ways to disrupt proceedings inside the hall. This successful picket followed a series of initiatives by Enfield College women's liberation group challenging the sexist content of much traditional student

'fun'—including rag week jokes against women, gays and racial minorities, and drag queen and heavy contests.

The women's group's insistence that pious anti-sexist NUS policy be implemented in practice has polarised Enfield Students' Union for much of the term, with the result that the issue is no longer seen as an irrelevant minority interest and has won the increasing support of the majority of the students. Women students at Hendon are now setting up their own women's liberation group.

TENTH WORLD CONGRESS OF THE 4th INTERNATIONAL

The 10th World Congress of the Fourth International (4th World Congress since reunification) was held in Sweden during the last week in February.

The delegates to the Congress paid tribute to the memory of those militants of our movement who had died since the 9th World Congress, in particular: Tomas Chambi, a member of the Central Committee of the Bolivian section, who fell at the head of a peasant column in La Paz while resisting the Banzer coup on 21 August, 1971; Luis Mamaní Limachi, murdered by the Bolivian military dictatorship; Eduardo Marín, murdered by the Brazilian military dictatorship; Luis Pujals, Pedro Bonnet, the other Trotskyist leaders of the PRT-Combatiente and their comrades including those killed at Trelew, murdered by the Argentinian military dictatorship; Peter Graham (Ireland), murdered; Jose Zuniga, peasant leader of the FIR in Cuzco, Peru, murdered.

The Congress elected as its honorary presidium the Trotskyist comrades imprisoned in Spain, Chile, China, Bolivia and Uruguay, and as its honorary president Luis Vitale, held prisoner by the junta in Chile and a symbol of the revolutionary victims of repression throughout the world.

The following questions were discussed by the Congress: a general resolution on the international situation; a resolution on 'Bolivia: balance-sheet and way forward'; a resolution on 'The political crisis and revolutionary perspectives in Argentina'; a resolution on the question of armed struggle in Latin America; a resolution on the question of building revolutionary parties in Western Europe.

On all these questions, the resolutions put forward by the majority of the outgoing IEC were adopted by a majority. The Congress then elected a new International Executive Committee with proportional representation for various declared tendencies.

The Congress also voted unanimously to adopt the draft statutes of the Fourth International, and unanimously called for solidarity with the striking British miners, with the Chilean workers in struggle against the military dictatorship, and with the Greek workers and students. It also carried unanimously a declaration of solidarity with Rohan Wijeweera and the comrades of the JVP imprisoned by the Government of Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

The 10th World Congress of the Fourth International took note of the important progress made by numerous sections since 1969, as well as the increase in the number of sections and sympathising groups. It marked the conclusion of a long period of animated internal discussion, involving the publication of 150 discussion documents, with the unanimous acceptance of organisational decisions which confirmed the unity of the Fourth International and its adherence to the principles of democratic centralism.

Shrewsbury: Official support for pickets - a helping hand?

One of the main speakers at the London conference on Shrewsbury this Saturday is George Smith, General Secretary of UCATT.

This is the same man who, along with his Executive, has scabbed on the Shrewsbury pickets from the start.

NO LEGAL AID

A recent statement by UCATT said it would be against union rules to grant legal aid to those like the Shrewsbury pickets charged with criminal acts. 'Nor would we be seen to be condoning the use of these techniques to further industrial ends.'

This same statement, issued just a few days before the Shrewsbury Three came face to face with Lord Widgery in the Appeal Court, even went so far as to assume the guilt of the pickets in the text.

So it isn't likely that George Smith will be endorsing any plans this weekend for industrial action to release these 'criminals' from prison.

Bureaucrats like Smith are not concerned with opening the prison doors. Rather they want only to enter a debate in the corridors of Parliament about what should replace the Industrial Relations Act or how to modify the 1875 Conspiracy Act under which the pickets were imprisoned.

Of course this is an important debate for the workers' movement, and a Parliamentary struggle may ensue. But the defence of the right to picket, which is what the Shrewsbury struggle is all about, must also involve a pardon for the convicted pickets.

HOLLOW VICTORY

Any legal change will be a hollow victory unless the ruling class is dealt a bloody nose over Shrewsbury. And this will only be possible by industrial action to gain a pardon for the pickets.

For George Smith, the UCATT Executive, and indeed the whole Labour Party and trade union leadership, laws like the 1875 Conspiracy Act are 'bad' laws, even 'anti-working class' laws. They must be changed through Parliament.

In the meantime, to sanction law-breakers like the Shrewsbury pickets or the Clay Cross Councilors would be to blaspheme against their hallowed parliamentary principles.

Of course, it is a good thing to involve bureaucrats in the struggle. But the reaction of Smith and his ilk was perfectly predictable because of their bourgeois political principles.

The issue is therefore how to use these bureaucrats to further the campaign without allowing them to dominate it politically. Only stepping up the independent initiatives of the rank and file can ensure this.

Yet it was in an effort to get these bureaucrats to take the helm that the CP broke the back of the rank and file movement which was built up so painstakingly throughout 1973.

This can be seen in the conduct of the campaign over the last two months. The Shrewsbury court had timed the first judgement to fall a few days before Christmas, making it impossible to develop mass strike action immediately. Nevertheless, some preliminary moves were made.

One of these was the call by the North Wales Defence Committee for indefinite strikes from 1 January. The *Morning Star* never reported it. It did however report a later recommendation for workers to return to work on 1 January 'pending further calls.'

Then, early in January, the Birmingham UCATT shop stewards committee endorsed a resolution calling for an indefinite national building strike as a first step to drawing in other sections of workers, pledging to start this in Birmingham towards the end of January.

MILITANTS ISOLATED

The *Morning Star* failed to report this too, and the Birmingham militants remained isolated.

Instead the CP projected at one conference after another a series of one-day actions and protests. These were ambiguous in aim. They failed to affect the course of events in the courts. They did succeed in getting the Executives of UCATT and the T&GWU behind the campaign, and even to raise the matter with the TUC in the 'proper' way. But the TUC never actually 'led' the campaign as intended. For that matter, the *Star* never spelt out where the campaign should be led to. Never did it call for an indefinite national building strike.

At the Liverpool Conference on 2 February, Kevin Halpin said that 'the building trade cannot lead the movement—we must kill this idea-stone dead.' This is exactly what the CP did in North Wales and Birmingham.

Instead of the Liverpool Conference calling for indefinite industrial action to be led by the building trade, it agreed to yet another day of action—nearly two months into the

future. The campaign had clearly run out of steam.

CP speakers often argue against a lead by the building trade. The working class was uneducated about Shrewsbury. Action of a direct type would remain isolated. Yet on the other hand it is quite clear that when the ruling class puts militants into jail, a rapid response is needed. The longer they stay inside, the stronger the ruling class becomes.

INDEFINITE STRIKE

To overcome this problem, it would have been necessary to start an indefinite building strike, using flying picket teams to go around, simultaneously educating other workers and pulling them out on strike to back up the builders.

This is the value of the flying picket which the entire Shrewsbury campaign was designed to defend!

The miners are a group of workers neither isolated nor weak. They had a direct interest in defending pickets. Their militants faced imprisonment under 'conspiracy laws' if picketing had become intense during the coal strike. And they voted to strike just as the Liverpool Conference met.

It was also the same weekend that Jack Collins called for the NUM to include the release of the Shrewsbury pickets among its demands.

Yet the Liverpool Conference failed to see the miners as a spearhead for the Shrewsbury campaign. Subsequently, notable Communists such as Mick McGahey of the NUM Executive ignored the Collins call, even though the *Star* was calling for union executives to 'take action' on Shrewsbury.

So the campaign is now being led by the 'leaders.' Yet the troops have fallen by the wayside, exhausted and dispirited during the long detour away from the front to the headquarters of a reluctant general staff. Now the generals will not fight a battle, but negotiate with the enemy around a table to change the protocols of war.

Repealing laws which attack workers is a necessary objective. But in the fight to defend the 'right' to picket effectively, such a change in the law will be a hollow victory if it is not coupled with dealing the enemy a bloody nose over Shrewsbury.

For the enemy's need to attack pickets is stronger than any legal protocols. But to beat the enemy, troops are needed. The fighting forces must be reassembled once again.

DAVE BAILEY

London squatters move into luxury quarters



Photo: PETER HARRAP (Report)

The widely-publicised take-over of a block of luxury Mayfair flats by London squatters on Sunday marks a new coming together of forces struggling for decent housing, and simultaneously exposes the rightward development of the reformist 'protest' wing of the housing action movement.

The Mayfair squat was jointly organised by activists from the All London Squatters Federation, a grouping of 'unofficial' squatters, together with members of the Family Squatting Advisory Service, which makes 'official' arrangements with councils.

The flats at 5-7 Dover St, W1, are owned by Brompton Securities, backed by Harry Hyams and Joe Levy, and symbolically stand a stone's throw from the Ritz Hotel. Brompton Securities is presently negotiating ownership of the luxury flats at Centre Point.

SPECULATORS' EXPENSE

The take-over of the block was initiated for two main reasons. Firstly, to house homeless people, including families, at the expense of speculators. In contrast to the Centre Point weekend occupation in January, the Dover St squatters have made it clear that they intend to hold out for as long as possible.

Secondly, again in contrast to the Centre Point escapade which was posed merely as a protest to urge the authorities to intervene, the Dover St action demonstrates a practical way forward in the struggle for decent housing, by providing a focus for intervention

by the labour movement.

Following from this active approach, the squatters are putting forward a series of political demands: for the re-imposition of the statutory obligation on local authorities to house the homeless, scheduled by the Tories to be removed on 1 April; requisition of all empty properties; the right of squatters to be supplied with electricity, gas, and water—which electricity boards have recently in some instances refused to do; and abolition of the conspiracy laws, together with the release of the Shrewsbury Six.

The Dover St squat, unlike the epic takeover of nearby 144 Piccadilly by 'alternative society' protagonists in 1968, has the possibility of real and necessary support by the labour movement.

PITCHED BATTLE

The importance of this is highlighted by the fact that on the same day as Dover St hit the headlines, a group of 'alternative society' squatters were evicted by Camden Council and arrested, in spite of a hard-fought pitched battle. This was unfortunately met largely with indifference by the local labour movement, emphasising the necessity for a political campaign, on the lines of the 220 Camden High St squat, for example.

Drawing from these lessons, the Dover St squatters have now almost filled their building with about 50 people but are not stopping there. The building will be used as a political organising centre for meetings and publicity, and the referral of additional homeless families to other squats.

PIERS CORBYN

Kent students' action week

The NUS week of action on the grants campaign was taken up with particular enthusiasm at Kent University, where activities focussed on issues which have lain dormant elsewhere.

The week began with an 80-strong contingent joining the anti-victimisation demonstration in Oxford, and this was followed by a successful catering boycott over a recent 10 per cent increase in food prices.

Wide circulation was given to a confidential letter sent to heads of campus colleges saying that if an inquiry were held into the raising of

catering prices, no adequate explanation could be given!

On Thursday a crowded meeting heard a member of the Swansea University Postgraduate Strike Committee describe the action taken at Swansea and Edinburgh by postgraduates striking for improved pay and conditions.

Friday was devoted to the question of women's oppression. The problems of married women's grants and the hardship facing unmarried mothers were discussed at forums, together with the question of gay oppression. These forums helped to mobilise support for Saturday's International Women's Day march in London.

Coventry workers win 18% pay rise

A section of the workers at Coventry Motor Fittings have won an 18 per cent wage increase and other concessions, after a short, sharp fight supported by all of the other workers at the factory, which supplies radiators to local car plants.

Last Monday all the labourers in the factory went to the management and demanded re-grading as material handlers, a pay increase, and the right to trade union representation.

The management replied by threatening to sack the labourers, who had joined the National Society of Metal Mechanics. But after they had been locked out for the morning they were recalled and told that their demands would be met, including a wage increase of £4 per week.

The material handlers, who immediately elected a shop steward, will now be demanding payment for the time they were locked out.

CAV WAVERS ON STAFF CUTS

The threat of redundancies at CAV Acton is building into a massive struggle. Between 250 and 300 workers, the management says, will be faced with the sack within the next two months.

This proposal was met by militancy from APEX and TASS workers who unanimously called for a ban on overtime, non-cooperation, and a refusal to cover for people who have left the firm for any reason whatsoever.

A mass meeting of shop floor workers from AUEW and GMWU supported the shop stewards' demands for non-cooperation and total resistance to any attempts by the management to reduce the labour force.

The management, faced with unprecedented solidarity and militancy among all sections of the company, has now hesitated in implementing its 'rationalisation policy' of which this was just the first phase.

Newcastle occupiers demand land take-over

The occupation of an empty office block in Newcastle, taken over by Newcastle University last week in support of the grants campaign, continues, with demands for the requisitioning of empty properties and for the nationalisation of land, 'from above or below'.

A rally last Saturday in support of the occupation heard speeches from representatives of Newcastle Trades Council and the local Labour Party.

Paul Deason, spokesman for the squatters told the rally: 'What we can realistically demand is that if the Labour Party claims to be the defender of the working class that it carry out its promises; that we force it to carry out its promises against its will if necessary. But we urge the people never to rely on the Labour Government but rely on their own struggles.'

The rally was followed by a demonstration to the Civic Centre, known locally as 'Dan's Castle', after the one-time Labour Party boss of the North East, Dan Smith, presently on trial with Poulson.

The occupied office block, built two years ago, is owned jointly by the City of Newcastle and Ravensell Holdings, a subsidiary of Land Securities, the largest property company in Britain with profits last year of £33 million. The chairman of Land Securities is Lord Samuel, a Labour peer. The owners have threatened to have the occupiers forcibly evicted.

On Saturday, the students decided to withdraw from the occupation, on the basis that the demands of the campaign had already begun to be carried into the heart of the Labour movement.

The majority of the occupiers are now 'dossers', one of whom noted: 'It's better than the Salvation Army. Here we are treated like people not animals.'

The activities around the occupation have been organised by a daily general meeting of the occupants, where those engaged in the struggle have run all their affairs, including publicity, food supplies, security, and fund-raising. These meetings, one of the participants says, were usually over a hundred strong and were the scene of healthy discussion. 'The creativity of mass struggle was apparent to all who took part.'

As the world capitalist economy moves into recession the outlook for Britain seems bleak: rising unemployment, rocketing inflation, and plummeting growth are the predictions being made by experts from all quarters.

One factor that has been highlighted as a cause of all these problems is the so-called 'energy crisis'. The picture of evil, money-grubbing 'oil sheiks' sowing the seeds of western destruction has become a popular one.

Bastard

Of course, the world capitalist crisis has its *real* cause in the nature of capitalism as an economic system. But there can be no doubt that the appearance of oil shortages in the advanced capitalist countries and the rapid rise in world oil prices has served to fan the flames. Certainly a big part of this country's mounting trade deficit and rising rate of inflation over the next few years will be due to the rising cost of energy.

What lies at the root of this sudden upheaval? In *Red Weekly* 41 we showed that the international oil monopolies have both feet planted firmly in the 'oil crisis' pie. We looked at some of the activities of these firms in the United States, and demonstrated that there they were the architects of a phony 'energy crisis' designed to boost their profits, extract increased Government handouts, and remove Government restrictions on their operations.

But the energy crisis in the US goes back eighteen months. It only broke over Britain's shores last October, in the wake of the Middle East war and the decision of the Arab oil producers to cut back on oil production and impose a boycott on nations supporting Israel. Was our oil crisis the legitimate offspring of these diplomatic manoeuvres? Or was it another bastard of the oil monopolies?

British capital

Of the giant oil monopolies that control the production, shipping, processing and marketing of oil and petroleum products throughout the world, five are based on American capital. Two—BP and Royal Dutch Shell—have strong links with British capital.

Shell—with assets of over £5 billion, the largest non-American corporation in the world—is a joint British-Dutch operation, with the British parent company (Shell Transport and Trading) holding a 40% slice.

British Petroleum (BP) is almost entirely based on British capital, with 48% of its shares held by the British Government and 22% by Burmah Oil (itself an important British 'independent' oil firm, engaged in refining and marketing). The history of BP—formerly Anglo-Persian Oil—should destroy once-and-for-all the illusion that 'public enterprise' is a particularly 'socialist' concept. The Government first acquired a stake in Anglo-Persian—originally a 51% interest—in 1914. This was done at the instigation of Winston Churchill who, as First Lord of the Admiralty, was eager to ensure the steady flow of oil for British warships.

British firms have shown themselves no less prepared than their American counterparts to deal vigorously and viciously with any challenge to their immense power. When BP's operations were nationalised by Libya, for example, BP promptly withdrew all their technical personnel. Because Libyan oil has a high wax content, they expected this to result in the pipelines becoming hopelessly clogged within a matter of weeks, causing damage in excess of £10 million and bringing Libyan oil production to a total stop. The Libyan Government was forced to do a deal with the American firm operating the remaining Libyan oilfields in order to get the technical staff necessary to stave off such a disaster.

Recently, Shell has been one of

British Oil Crisis: MONOPOLIES STRIKE AGAIN

a number of monopolies involved in a fight with the Japanese Government over higher fuel prices. To back up their demands for higher prices they have used all kinds of manoeuvres—including the threat to cut Japanese oil supplies.

Not have the British-based firms been shy about cashing in on rising world oil prices. Shell's profits for the third quarter of last year were three times what they had been in the previous three-month period, and profits in the first nine months of last year were almost 50% above what had been made throughout all of 1972.

Arab cuts

When war broke out once again in the Middle East last October it was widely assumed that oil supplies to Western Europe and America would be disrupted by the conflict. There was little surprise when, in mid-October, the Arab oil producers decided to put up the 'posted prices' on which tax payments by the oil companies to the producing Governments are based, and to cut back production by 5%. This latter move was designed to put teeth into a decision to cut off oil supplies from the US and Holland, because of their support for Israel.

These moves were of minor significance. Only a small share of total US oil supplies (6%) come from the Arab countries. Holland is more dependent on the Arab producers, but most of her domestic needs (as opposed to oil which is refined in Holland and then exported to Belgium and Germany) could be met from non-Arab suppliers and existing stocks for some time to come.

In November, the Arab states resorted to tougher measures and cut back production by 25%. At the same time, however, they issued assurances that those countries who had taken a 'friendly' stance towards the Arabs—France, Spain and Britain—would be excluded from the new cuts.

From the very first the Arab measures ran into difficulty with the oil monopolies. Because these firms control the shipping and distribution of world oil, the enforcement of the boycott would depend on their cooperation. However the monopolies preferred to distribute existing oil supplies among all their customers, no matter what the producing states' intentions were. It was for this reason that the producing states had to put teeth into their boycott by imposing production cuts, so that the oil

monopolies could only ignore the boycott by cutting back on supplies to other customers.

Only Libya and Saudi Arabia were in a position to actually monitor the destination of oil produced in their countries. But the oil companies could get around this as well. They could strictly observe the rule that no Arab oil was to go to certain countries, but still equalise the existing supplies by re-routing increased supplies of non-Arab oil to those customers who were subject to the Arab cuts and away from those who were not.

When the cuts were first announced—and for some time afterwards—the British Government was not very worried. The production of petroleum in British refineries during November should not have been affected, because the necessary oil supplies should all have left the Persian Gulf ports before the cuts came into effect (this was confirmed by Tory Industry Minister Peter Walker, who repeatedly referred to 30 days supply of oil 'at sea'). Moreover, existing stocks of petroleum products were enough to meet the country's needs for 79 days (again according to Walker).

Scare campaign

Yet from the start the oil companies launched a scare campaign. Off their own but they cut back supplies to selected customers, and insisted that the Government must impose cuts and provide the industry with a list of 'priority' customers who would get first refusal on oil supplies.

On 15 November the *Financial Times* reported: 'According to some companies the situation on oil supplies and the current run-down of stocks is now becoming so serious that if no Government action is forthcoming the industry itself will have to start reducing all deliveries to customers by the end of the month.' It went on to say that stocks were supposed to have fallen to 70 days supply.

In other words, 9 days stocks had been used up in the space of 30 days, despite the fact that there was no reason why imports and production should have fallen. Either there was a mass, unreported sinking of oil tankers in mid-Atlantic, or something was indeed fishy!

One solution to the 'case of the missing oil tankers' is suggested by a comment made in an article that appeared in the *Financial Times* just after the mid-October cuts were announced: '... production cut-backs could affect the destination of many tankers. These could be changed abruptly while they were

still at sea.'

Panicked by the oil companies' manoeuvre, the Government obligingly imposed a 10% cutback in oil consumption on 20 November, and gave the companies their list of 'priority customers'. They went even further and set up an appeals procedure which required the supplier's support for an application for exemption from the cuts—an enviable position for any firm to find itself in with regard to its customers.

Prices in the pipeline

It is certainly more than coincidental that these dramatic shortages should have come at a time when the oil companies were trying to shepherd a round of price rises through the Price Commission.

The Tory Government would undoubtedly deny most indignantly that there was any connection between these two questions. But the oil companies didn't quite see it that way. One customer received a letter from his oil supplier which, after notifying him that he was being totally cut off, went on to say: 'You will be aware of the fact that we cannot arbitrarily increase our selling price, therefore we are left in the position of having to allocate supplies on as fair a basis as possible.'

Despite the 'tragic' shortage of oil supplies, black market oil always seemed to be available—at a price. A massive world black market grew up in oil for shipping firms (who, because they have in the past used their importance in the oil market to force down oil prices, found themselves virtually blacklisted by the big companies now that the shoe was on the other foot). One American firm found this out when it telephoned its usual fuel supplier. It was told that no oil at all was available, but fifteen minutes later received a call from some obscure firm offering it up to 1 million tons of oil a month for five years—at black market prices, of course.

This country is no exception. The *Sunday Times* commented on 25 November 'As the price commission is finding out, oil can be bought from profiteers who are now offering oil at a vastly inflated price to desperate consumers. ...'

This game of hide-and-seek continued into December. At the beginning of the month the shortage of petrol and diesel fuel reached its peak. On 3 December the Oil Industry's Emergency Committee met, and a 'leak' to the press warned that petrol stocks were just

above the 'danger level' of 45 days supply (although they had been reported to be at the 65 days level on 24 November; a fall of almost 20 days stocks had thus taken place in 10 days!) A similar warning about fuel oil was made on 15 December.

Deepening mystery

Yet in between these two pronouncements of doom, on 11 December, Peter Walker told Parliament: 'Deliveries of crude oil to the UK last month were much as expected before the crisis. This month, oil companies expected a shortfall of about 15 per cent and reductions in imports of oil products.'

How was it then, that despite the oil companies' own rationing schemes and the Government-imposed 10% cuts, oil stocks had plummeted to these 'danger levels'? *?*

A report appearing in *The Economist* on 15 December deepens the mystery still further: 'An observer near Milford Haven [the big oil tanker depot] said this week he had never seen so many super-tankers waiting to unload. The oil companies are using them as floating stores, just as they are paying some garage owners to keep their tanks full'. At about the same time reports began to come from oil-starved Holland (whose dire predicament was supposed to explain some of our shortages) that all the refineries' oil storage tanks were full to the brim, and that private storage space was not to be had at any price.

The Economist commented 'The oil-buying public, and this applies to Governments too, are in the oil firms' hands. While the Arabs say that Britain's supplies are secure, the multinationals consider that they have the responsibility of running their own world system of rationing, as the chairman of Royal Dutch Shell admitted last week. It is also they who, apart from the Arabs themselves, have a monopoly of information on what is really happening in the Gulf. The only independent source is the reports of tanker sailings sent to people like Lloyd's by their agents at the terminals.'

When it took a look at this independent information *The Economist* uncovered the astounding fact that tanker departures from the most important oil ports in the Arab Gulf in the first four days of December were up by 49% over the same period in 1972!

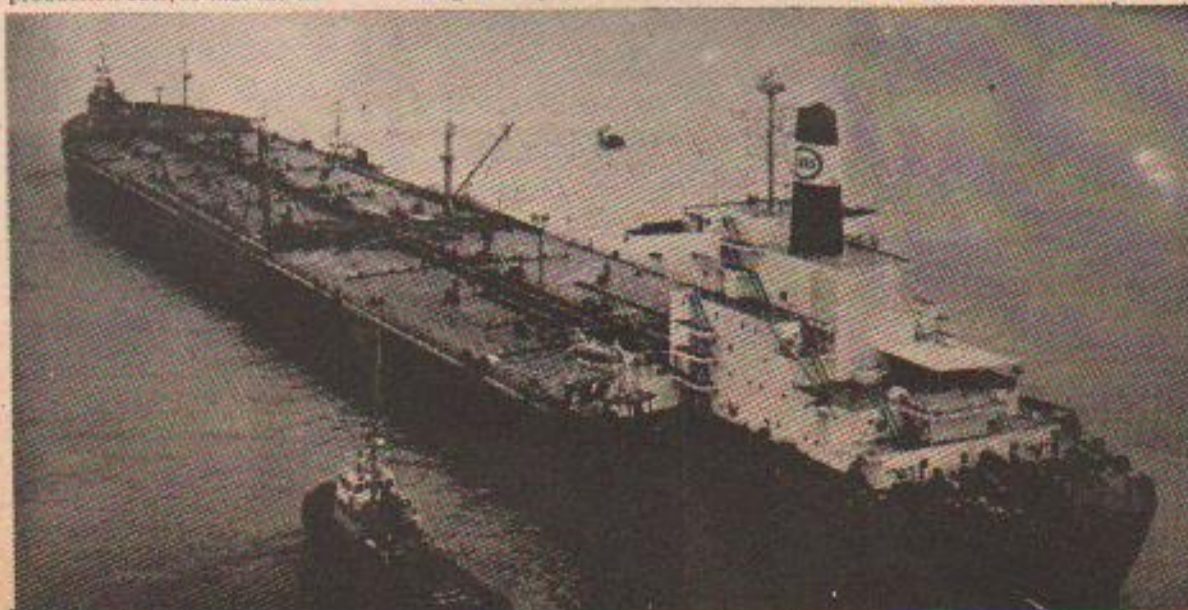
The Economist drew the inevitable conclusion '... it cannot be right that the public should be left so in the dark about what is happening or fed a continuous line about desperate shortages when much evidence suggests otherwise.'

While the stranglehold of the oil monopolies over the oil industry makes it impossible to prove that Britain's 'oil crisis' was a deliberately engineered manoeuvre, a tremendous amount of evidence points in that direction. Moreover, the oil companies had two important aims which were conveniently smoothed by the oil shortages: they wanted rapid concession of the price increases necessary to meet the extra tax payments to the oil producing countries and to boost company profits, and they wanted Government cooperation in speeding up and financing the development of the North Sea oil bonanza.

The Government was left with no choice. They did not even have the information necessary to put up an argument against the oil companies, much less the weapons to make them toe the line. They simply folded up and met the demands of the monopolies—both on prices and North Sea oil development.

Next week we will look in more detail at North Sea oil and how to deal with the power of the oil monopolies.

Ray Alexander



'The Soviet was and remained the organised expression of the class will of the proletariat'

To meet the needs of the workers in the midst of the 1905 strike, the St. Petersburg Soviet was forced to take over the functions of the State which it had so thoroughly disrupted, if it was not to perish at its own hand.

The strike threatened to starve itself, to cut off all its communication with other centres of struggle. At the same time as the Soviet took on the task of solving these basic problems, it was nurturing the elements of workers' State power and rendering the old State power redundant.

Concluding our two-part Review of Trotsky's great classic, '1905' (Penguin, 75p)

The railway and telegraph workers were among the most militant in denying industry and commerce transport and communication. However, facilities were established for the workers themselves. Railwaymen transported detachments of armed workers from place to place, and telegraph messages were exchanged by centres of workers' struggles.

IMMOBILISATION

In addition, the refusal of railway workers to carry the Tsarist armies severely weakened the powers of repression. The Soviet alone decided which of these 'breaches' of the strike were necessary, thus taking decisions about the use of capitalist property in the interests of the workers.

Partly as a result of the effective halt to the transportation of troops by rail and the unreliability of sections of the army, the Tsarist State was forced to call on the most backward, misguided members of the unemployed and the impoverished middle-classes to attempt violent pogroms of the workers' organisations and strike meetings. They were formed into 'Black Hundred' gangs, and in many cases were armed by the police.

The Soviet immediately declared itself in favour of physically smashing these gangs and set up armed workers' militia to patrol the streets and protect the population. Some engineering factories were turned over to the production of knives and other basic weapons with which to arm the militia. The print-workers in the Soviet formulated the immediate tasks in the following resolution:

'Recognising the inadequacy of passive struggle and of the mere cessation of work, we resolve: to transform the army of the striking working class into a revolutionary army; that is to say, to organise detach-

ments of armed workers forthwith. Let these detachments take care of arming the rest of the working masses, if necessary by raiding gun shops and confiscating arms from the police and troops wherever possible.'

It is worth noting that though in the rest of Russia these drunken, blood-crazed Black Hundred thugs killed three to four thousand, such murderous attacks on strikers scarcely occurred in St Petersburg, and this was a result of the prompt self-defence measures of the Soviet.

WORKERS' ARMY

In the same way that street-

with practical workers' control of the printing industry. One example of this was the ultimatum to right-wing papers by their print-workers that they print the official statements of the Soviet, or they would print nothing at all.

'FLYING PRINT-SHOP'

The most important example was the method which was adopted for printing *Izvestia*, the newspaper of the Soviet. On the eve of publication of the paper, which appeared some half dozen times, an armed detachment of the Soviet would descend on the printing-works of a capitalist

task as supporting and maintaining this mutinous mood, and winning sections of that army and their arms to the side of the workers' movement.

Martial law had been declared in an attempt to quell the mutiny and the St Petersburg Soviet declared its solidarity with the mutineers by a political general strike (the first general strike, begun by the printing workers, had by now been called off).

By this action, sentences on some soldiers for their part in the mutiny were commuted because the Tsarist army authorities feared the consequences of executing them.



The lessons of 1905 were learned, and in 1917 the workers, led by the Bolsheviks, were able to pass on from demonstrations to the actual creation of a workers' state.

barricades had been built in Moscow purely as defence measures against Cossack cavalry charges, but later turned into rallying points from which to launch attacks, so the forming of a self-defence militia in St Petersburg marked the first steps in the formation of a workers' army, which could win over and defeat the regular capitalist forces.

Another important prop of the bourgeois State is the control of communications media. The St Petersburg Soviet met this head on. As soon as the policy of the Black Hundred pogroms was adopted by the Tsarist State, the printing workers in the Soviet refused to handle any articles which advocated such a policy, and smashed the presses of right-wing papers which did publish such articles.

Official State censorship had operated in Russia for many years. The Soviet openly defied this reactionary law, and for the duration of the Soviet no articles were submitted to the censor in St Petersburg, not even by the liberal press—on the orders of the Soviet. Real 'freedom of the press' was established, together

with practical workers' control of the resources of that factory be put at the disposal of the Soviet to print *Izvestia*. The work was carried out in the night and the paper whisked away before the police found out what had been happening.

In the last analysis the power of the capitalists to remain the ruling-class and resist working-class attempts to oust them rests on the army and the police as instruments of repression. As Lenin observed: 'The State consists of armed bodies of men.' But the problem of the army cannot be dealt with on a local basis, and one of the problems for the St Petersburg Soviet was that the working class was not as well organised in the other industrial centres.

However, certain lessons were learned from the confrontation which were successfully put to use by the Bolsheviks in 1917. We have already mentioned the self-defence militia as the embryos of the workers' army. Trotsky summed up the more general problem succinctly when he said: 'An insurrection is not so much a struggle against the army as a struggle for the army.'

MUTINY

In late October, agitated by the struggle of the St Petersburg workers, the army and naval ratings in the nearby garrison of Kronstadt mutinied, and the Soviet immediately saw its

The unrest in the army continued into November and grew in scope. Commissions of sailors, soldiers, and the social democratic workers were set up in the barracks to organise the struggle and formulate demands. Mass meetings of soldiers were held and links forged between the Soviet and rebellious sections of the armed forces. As part of its propaganda programme, the Soviet issued a 'Manifesto to the Soldiers.'

But the rising was crushed. The main reason for this was summed up by Trotsky in a passage which briefly explains the correct relationship between propaganda in the army, the insurrection, and the possibility of winning soldiers to the side of the revolutionary masses:

'The army's political mood, the great unknown of every revolution, can be determined only in the process of a clash between the soldiers and the people. The army's crossing over to the camp of the revolution is a moral process; but it cannot be brought about by moral means alone . . .

'The majority is capable of laying down its arms or, eventually, of pointing its bayonets at the reaction only if it begins to believe in the possibility of a people's victory. Such a belief is not created by political agitation alone.

'Only when the soldiers become convinced that the people have come out onto the streets for a life-and-death struggle . . . does it become

possible for them to cross over to the side of the people.'

These are the only methods by which the workers can counter and neutralise the superior fire-power of the army—a combination of agitation and resolute struggle. In Russia at that time the proletariat on a national scale were not sufficiently combative to have this effect.

If they disobey orders, soldiers expect victimisation and court-martial—unless they see the workers' organisations willing to defend them with all their might and recognise in the workers' organs of dual power the beginnings of an alternative State which they can fight for and which will protect them.

After the November strike, the demand for an 8-hour day came naturally to the fore again. The new-found involvement of the mass of workers in widespread political discussion and organisation meant that they demanded more free time from work in which to do this. The Soviet endorsed the demand, and many workers simply stopped work when eight hours had been completed.

LOCK-OUT

To this the employers replied by a lock-out and increasingly succeeded in dispersing street-meetings. The workers were on the retreat. Because of the fragmentation of the struggle, the Soviet was forced to call off the fight for an 8-hour day on 12 November.

Though some victories were won later that month, the State and the capitalists regained the initiative. On the 26th, Khrustalev, the chairman of the Soviet, was arrested, and on 3 December the entire Soviet executive was arrested in session.

The workers in Moscow struck in sympathy, and though the St Petersburg workers also struck, the strike was weaker than the previous ones and collapsed on 12 December. It is worth mentioning that in the working-class districts of Moscow, small hands of poorly-armed workers, organised in guerilla units and 'clad in popular sympathy', held out for ten days against a full-mobilised military offensive.

'The Soviet represented power insofar as power was assured by the revolutionary strength of the working class districts; it struggled for power insofar as power still remained in the hands of the military-political monarchy.'

In these words Trotsky summed up the dilemma of dual power which faced the Soviet and which it was unable to solve in 1905. 'The revolution proved insufficiently strong to destroy the old machinery of the State and construct a new one out of the elements of its own organisation.'

But the lessons were learned and found their victorious expression in the revolution of 1917, when the workers, led by the Bolsheviks, were able to pass from an unstable situation of dual power to a workers' state which grew out of the steps taken in the months before.

CARL GARDNER

WHAT'S ON

LONDON RED FORUM: Every Tuesday at 8 pm in the General Picton pub, Caledonian Road, N1, (5 mins Kings X tube).

CHILE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN: National Action Conference, Saturday 23 March, 11 am at Digbeth Hall, Birmingham. Credentials from: Chile Solidarity Campaign, Co-operative Centre, 129

Sven Sisters Road, London N7 7QG.

'WOMEN & THE TORY OFFENSIVE': 26-page pamphlet analysing the Tory offensive against women workers and women in the home, and taking up the immediate struggle. Price 15p inc. postage—10p for orders of six or more from: IMG Women's Commission, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1.

'UKRAINE: UNREST & REPRESSION'—pamphlet produced by the Committee to Defend Ukrainian Prisoners, price 15p plus p&pp from: 83 Gregory Crescent, Eltham, London SE8.

HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK: Socialist Medical Association Day Seminar, Sunday 24th March, 10 am to 6.30 pm

in Assembly Hall, NUR Headquarters, Custon Road, NW1. Details from: T.C. Thomas, 64 Finchley Court, London N3 1NH.

RED BOOKS: Revolutionary literature—Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Eastern Europe, Third World, Ireland, Women's Liberation, 84 Hershaw Street, Liverpool. Tues-Fri: 12.30-3pm, Sat: 11am-3pm.

READING IMG public meeting: 'The workers movement and the Labour Government'—speaker Tariq Ali. Tuesday 19 March, 7.45 pm, Palmer Building, Whiteknights Park, University.

NEWBURY IMG public meeting: 'The Right Wing in British Politics'—speaker Nigel Brown, Monday 18 March, 12.40 pm, Lecture Theatre, College of Further

Education.

FIGHT RACISM and the IQ myth in education! Public meeting organised by Campaign on Racism, IQ and the Class Society. Speakers: Mike Cooley, Steve Rose, Aithia Jones; plus workshops and discussion. Saturday 23 March, Polytechnic of Central London, 115 New Cavendish Street, from 10.30 to 6.30. Details c/o BSSRS, 9 Poland Street, W1.

GAY WOMEN'S CONFERENCE: To be held at University of Kent at Canterbury, from Friday evening 26 April to Sunday 28 April. Please send all ideas, suggestions, papers for discussion, applications etc to: Sherry Mayrent, Keynes College, University of Kent, Canterbury, or phone Cathy

McFerran at Canterbury 80614.

SQUATTING IN LATIN AMERICA: Discussion organised by Latin American Front, Tuesday 19 March at 6 pm in Planning Lecture Hall, Architectural Association.

BENGALI FRIENDS in Europe and elsewhere, for Bengali books and Lari (Fourth International paper), contact: Bengali, Mullboden, Box 3274, 10365 Stockholm, Sweden.

NOTTINGHAM RED CIRCLES: Wide-ranging series of discussions based on the politics of the Fourth International. Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday in the month at 8 pm in the Lion Hotel, Clumber Street.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SOLZHENITSYN

'Despite a fierce individualism, his position is the most banal and time-worn imaginable—the old petty-bourgeois dream that it is possible to halt the advance of technology and return to a mythical era of tranquillity, based on small-scale production'

The recent exiling of Alexander Solzhenitsyn has led to a rash of claims and counter-claims as to his significance.

On the one hand, some socialist papers have implied that he is an authentic representative of the movement for socialist democracy in the USSR. On the other, the capitalist press have claimed him as one of their own.

Neither version is correct. So what does he really represent?

BOLSHEVIKS

Solzhenitsyn was born on 11 December 1918. His formative years were therefore not those of struggle against a Tsarist autocracy which condemned the masses to hunger, illiteracy and slaughter on the battlefields of Europe. Nor did he know anything of the early years when the Bolsheviks stood in the forefront of millions of revolutionary workers, fighting throughout the world to put an end to capitalist exploitation and violence.

Instead, the Soviet Union Solzhenitsyn grew up to know was one where to be a Bolshevik was to be on short-term reprieve from Stalin's firing squads; one where the party of Lenin and the Communist International had been transformed into the servile instruments of a privileged bureaucratic layer that had seized hold of the reins of Soviet power.

LOST BEARINGS

After Solzhenitsyn's own arrest in 1945 for privately criticising Stalin, he went through eight years of personal experience of the vast network of prisons and labour-camps.

In the camps it was easy to lose sight of the international class struggle. When daily life was reduced to the struggle for survival, when the only arguments used were the punishment cell, the cudgel and the machine-gun, when class solidarity gave way to self-preservation or a primitive mutual aid against the guards and their spies—in such a situation, it was only the most conscious elements who remained attached to the cause of socialist

revolution.

It is clear that Solzhenitsyn was not among these elements and that, on the contrary, he has now completely lost his bearings in today's world of colonial wars and revolutions.

The source of Solzhenitsyn's literary inspiration lies above all in an individual gut reaction against the lies and brutality of Stalinist rule.

In his novels he presents a broad series of character studies of Soviet men and women, ranging from Stalin himself to an ordinary prisoner in a labour camp. If any ideal emerges, it is that of the simple hard-working individual who wishes for nothing more than to be left in peace by the world, and especially by the swollen ranks of Soviet officialdom.

PROLETARIAT

One of the most striking features of the novels, warping their historical perspective, is the almost total absence of the Soviet proletariat as a class with certain distinct, historical interests. One of the few characters to express the revolutionary aspirations of the Soviet workers, the left oppositionist of *The First Circle*, is portrayed as little more than a narrow-minded fanatic.

In 1962, when Solzhenitsyn's first and only novel to be published in the Soviet Union (*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*) appeared, it was possible to hope that with a new working-class upsurge he would be drawn into, and give literary expression to, a movement for socialist democracy.

However, the Soviet proletariat has not yet exploded back onto the historical arena with the same force as in Hungary, Czechoslovakia or Poland. The years since 1962 have seen a continuous tightening of the bureaucratic dictatorship. The camps have been filling once again with oppositionists of all shades.

For Solzhenitsyn, they have been years of growing personal and social isolation. He has been constantly hounded by the bureaucratic apparatus, culminating in his recent expulsion from the Soviet Union.

Most importantly, because of his special stature as a major writer, Solzhenitsyn has felt obliged to enter the foreign territory of politics—that is, to give some political form to his primitive, individualist revolt. The fullest statement to have appeared so far is the *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*, published by the *Sunday Times* (3 March).

Even in this uninspired, pathetically naive document, Solzhenitsyn presents a number of insights into the deep social crisis of Soviet society—revealed in, for example, the rampant alcoholism, cultural degeneration and widespread pollution caused by a chaotic planning system.

In his proposed way forward, however, he reverts to the most reactionary utopias of pre-revolutionary Russia. Despite a fierce individualism, his position is the most banal and time-worn imaginable—the old petty-bourgeois dream that it is possible to halt the advance of technology and return to a mythical era of tranquillity, based on small-scale production.

He calls on the Soviet leaders to turn their backs on 'decadent' Moscow, and cultivate the wastes of Siberia in a new 'stable economy.' And the means to this are... animal manure instead of chemical fertiliser, horses instead of motor-cars—in short, 7th century Orthodox Christianity instead of scientific socialism.

CONTRADICTION

And yet, Solzhenitsyn cannot bring himself to accept the logical conclusion: a glorification of Tsardom and pre-revolutionary Russia as an alternative to bureaucratic power. Incongruously, he calls, in one passage, for the restoration of the powers of the Soviets. The contradiction could not be more glaring: Soviets plus icons, the most advanced form of human organisation plus medieval superstition.

Solzhenitsyn is right about one thing: the working masses are not attracted to the regime of bureaucratic power and privileges. But nor is there much future for them in



Solzhenitsyn's prescribed diet of wizened icons and animal fertiliser.

What they can be won to is the perspective of building a socialist society that will guarantee the fullest democracy and satisfaction of human needs on the basis of a rational system of planning making use of the most advanced technology.

MOTHER RUSSIA

Such a perspective, however, flies in the face of Solzhenitsyn's jealous concern to preserve the natural and 'spiritual' resources of Mother Russia. Indeed, he pinpoints the crisis in Russia as stemming from 'an exact adherence to the precepts of Marxism-Leninism—ie in the first instance to harm the cause of world imperialism and in the second, to support communist movements abroad. In both cases national considerations were completely lacking.' [emphasis in original]

As evidence of this 'Marxism' in Stalin's policy, he mentions 'how we bred Mao Tse-tung in place of a peaceable neighbour [!] such as Chiang Kai-shek, and helped him in the atomic race.' Yet the principal aim of the Kremlin bureaucracy has always been to seek an accommodation with imperialism. Indeed, it is well known that Stalin continued to the last to advise Mao to 'make peace' with Chiang Kai-shek: while one of

the roots of the Sino-Soviet split was precisely Khrushchev's refusal to hand over atomic secrets to China.

Strange fruits indeed grow on the tree of Stalin's 'Socialism in One Country!' Solzhenitsyn knows that there are powerful voices within the bureaucracy itself that are opposed to the sale of Siberian natural gas to 'foreigners' or that see China as the main enemy of the 'Russian people'. In his contemptuous dismissal of the Vietnamese and Latin American revolutionaries, in his fear of the class struggle, and above all in his Russo-centrism, Solzhenitsyn is rather closer than he realises to these very sections of the bureaucracy.

MYSTIC

There are some Western Marxists who think that, confronted with the reality of capitalist society, Solzhenitsyn will now find his way back to Marxism. There is, unfortunately, no basis for such optimism. Despite a naive faith in the power of 'public opinion', Solzhenitsyn's hostility to the 'decadent' West is essentially that of a reactionary mystic.

Indeed, the saddest irony of all is that Solzhenitsyn's mysticism has its roots in the Stalinist degeneration brought about by the very forces he has opposed for so long.

JOE GREENWOOD

Trotskyist statement on execution of Spanish militant

'WE ARE ALL SALVADOR PUIG ANTICH!'

On Saturday 2 March, the Spanish authorities garrotted Salvador Puig Antich, a member of the anarchist Iberian Liberation Movement found guilty of killing a policeman.

This was the first political execution by the Spanish regime since that of Julian Grimau (Communist Party member) in 1963. It is the most horrible in-

Salvador Puig Antich... this new name, written into the bloody history of 35 years of Francoist repression, is no longer simply that of our murdered comrade: it belongs to all the revolutionaries, to all the workers, to the whole Spanish people. We are all Salvador Puig Antich! And this name is already more than a name: it is clear and definitive evidence of the criminal nature of the dictatorship; it is a new reason to struggle unceasingly for its overthrow.

It is a fighting weapon for the revolutionary general strike when, without doubt, the millions of men and women who will then bring Francoism tumbling down in ruins will carry engraved in their memories, their hearts and their banners the three words: *Salvador Puig Antich*—as a war cry against his executioners...

Could we have saved the life of

Salvador Puig? ... For as long as the dictatorship exists, to save the life of a revolutionary means breaking with the way of doing things laid down by the bourgeoisie, and smashing up their thoroughly criminal plans.

Our experience has shown us that there is only one way to achieve this objective: mass action, the mobilisation of the whole movement to defend the threatened comrade. If Burgos [when mass demonstrations forced through a reprieve for Basque militants sentenced to death in 1970] was a positive example of this truth, then the murder of Salvador Puig has just proved it negatively.

On this occasion, official and unofficial appeals for clemency, telegrams addressed to the dictator and his closest lackies, and the 'good offices' of well-

known democratic figures and foreign governments were not lacking. What was lacking was the struggle in the streets of thousands and tens of thousands of workers and students, leaning on international solidarity and pushing it forward in turn, to save Salvador Puig...

The significance of this action was explained in a statement issued on 4 March by the Political Bureau of the LCR-ETA(VI), sympathising organisation of the Fourth International in Spain. Extracts from this follow below.

Both the trial of the Carabanchel 10 and the murder of Salvador Puig have marked partial victories for the bourgeoisie, encouraging it to pursue its methods of ultra-repression. Unless we respond with the necessary speed and vigour, a series of such partial victories could produce serious demoralisation in the ranks of the masses, and would thus indicate the danger of a serious defeat.

The revolutionary counter-offensive must be opened up immediately. And to do this it is necessary, today more than ever, to create a united front of all the organisations of the workers' and popular movement against repression. This must go beyond existing strategic and tactical differences—the only common basis necessary is rejection of the right of the bourgeoisie or any of its political spokesmen to intervene in the

dedication yet of the increase in repression under the Arias Navarro government, in which hundreds of militants have already been rounded up and incarcerated.

known democratic figures and foreign governments were not lacking. What was lacking was the struggle in the streets of thousands and tens of thousands of workers and students, leaning on international solidarity and pushing it forward in turn, to save Salvador Puig...

life of the movement. Such a basis can achieve a united response by the whole mass movement to each act of repression. But these possibilities have been systematically ruined through the weakness, the vacillations and the sectarianism of the revolutionary organisations.

Each of these struggles has clearly shown that what is lacking is not that element indispensable to any revolutionary victory: the willingness to struggle of the proletariat. But each one has demonstrated this weakness, these vacillations, this sectarianism in the ranks of the vanguard—preventing the workers of Standard, Astilleros, Hunosa and Indocasa from achieving victory, and most importantly, leading to the failure to generate and lead the mass movement which could have saved Salvador Puig.

This life has been dragged from our hands because we were not capable of mustering sufficient strength to hold on to it. The tragic and bitter lesson given to us by the class struggle on 2 March 1974 must never be forgotten.

Today, more than ever, we must go forward through mass direct action, through the self-organisation and self-defence of the movement in the struggle for demands at work, for democratic freedoms, for the freeing of all political prisoners, for the dissolution of the repressive bodies and the special tribunals—as the only way to forge the political and organisational weapons needed for the revolutionary general strike.

Argentina closer to civil war

Argentina has moved several steps closer to civil war with the recent events in Cordoba, where President Peron has now intervened to legitimise the police coup against the leftist provincial governor.

Cordoba has long been a centre of working class militancy, and was the scene of an insurrectional general strike—the 'Cordobazo'—in 1969 against the military regime of Onganía. With the end of the military dictatorship, and the electoral victory of Peronism, two representatives of the 'revolutionary tendency' of Peronism, Obregon Cano and Atilio Lopez, were elected as governor and deputy governor.

However, this 'revolutionary tendency' has proved incapable in practice of breaking with the most right-wing elements of Peronism—such as the remnants of the 'black' or scab CGT trade union federation, which collaborated with a series of military dictators. At every point where a clash between the two wings threatened, Obregon and Lopez retreated rather than pursue their course, which would logically have entailed a break with Peronism itself.

VIOLENT DISPUTES

But in recent months large sections of the working class movement in Cordoba have lost their illusions in these 'lefts' and launched their own independent struggles. There have been long and violent disputes involving car workers at Fiat and Perkins, and at the Concord/Maurer factory. Central to these has been the demand for affiliation to the militant SMATA (Mechanical and Allied Sectors of Automobile Transport Union), a 'class union', as against the collaborationist UOM (Union of Metal Workers).

Then, towards the end of January, the UTA Cordoba (bus drivers' union) became the first group of workers to smash through the 'Social Pact'—Peron's incomes policy, designed to hold back wages and thus attract badly-needed imperialist investment. Still under the nominal leadership of Atilio Lopez, the bus drivers forced the authorities to grant a 40% increase. Federal intervention was threatened, but did not actually occur.

Since then, however, the raid by the ERP (People's Revolutionary Army) on the Azul military base has been used as a pretext to step up the attack on 'Marxist' and 'terrorist' elements. The Penal Code has been revised so as to restore to the police the wide powers they wielded under the military regime—powers which can also be used to crush labour disputes. Those few Peronist deputies, representing the youth wing of the movement, who refused to vote for these measures were forced to resign their seats.

WELL-PREPARED

It was against this background of impending confrontation on a national scale that the clashes in Cordoba broke out. The local police chief refused to

accept a retirement order, and instead arrested the governor, deputy governor, and the heads of a number of provincial ministries for being soft on 'Marxist elements'.

The police coup was obviously well-prepared. Armed groups in civilian dress were reported to be assisting the police take-over of the city, while the right-wing CGT leaders called a 24-hour strike in support of the police. But this was countered by the leader of the left wing union faction, Agustin Tosco, who called for mass demonstrations in the streets against the police action.

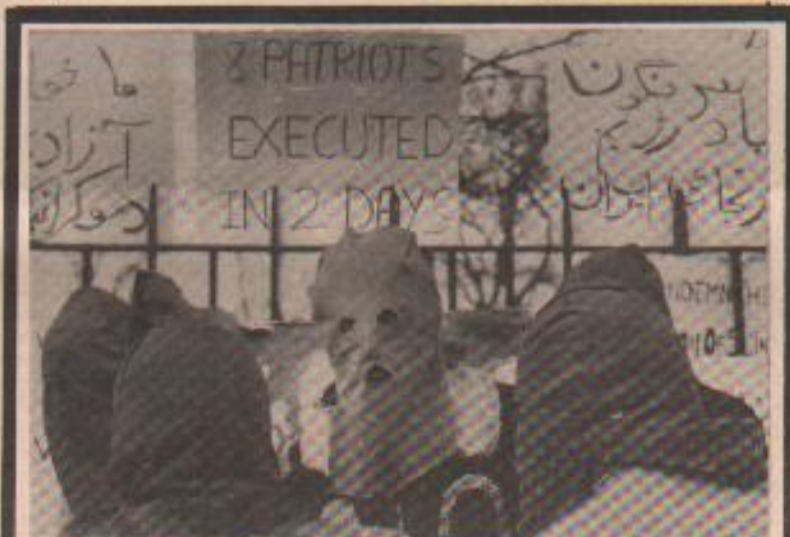
As street fighting between the police (aided by right wing civilian squads) and left wing militants began, federal troops were flown to Cordoba and the troops were put on alert. Heavy fighting occurred—with both sides using machine guns and automatic rifles—around government house and the police headquarters, and in the student residential area and some suburbs. The Marxist ERP also joined in the fray on the side of the 'revolutionary' armed Peronist groups like the Montoneros.

THINGS TO COME

It seems that Obregon Cano—who on being released fled into the hills and declared that he still remained governor—has now had talks with the Peronist leadership in Buenos Aires and may well have agreed to resign. Certainly the situation in Cordoba now appears to be quietening down, and a right-wing Peronist has been sent in as the new governor.

But Cordoba is only a taste of things to come. The repression can only intensify as the working masses increasingly realise that Peron is setting not to satisfy their aspirations but to rescue an ailing capitalism.

Cordoba has also shown, however, the complete inability of the 'revolutionary' Peronists to break with the government and spearhead any mass, independent struggle. That task means breaking the political hold of Peronism itself on the masses—a task which can only be carried out by the Marxist revolutionaries in Argentina.



Iranian students occupied the embassies of their country in Stockholm and Brussels and in London organised a picket (see above), last Friday in protest at the latest executions in Iran—especially those of the two Marxist revolutionaries, Golestan and Daneshmand.

The demonstrators also expressed their solidarity with the protest movement which has developed inside Iran itself. On 16 February, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Students Society, police opened fire on a demonstration by students and secondary school pupils in Tehran. Three policemen and several students were killed in subsequent clashes. The University of Tehran was also occupied, and remains closed. Photo: PETER HARRAP (Report)

Thieu's chapter of disasters

'Another chapter of the war ended today when the remains of 12 Americans who died in prison in North Vietnam were flown from Hanoi to Thailand on their way to America', wrote the Times correspondent in Saigon on 6 March.

Yet the war continues, despite such astounding precision in isolating its segments. Indeed, for President Thieu of South Vietnam, each chapter must seem very like the one before—more of the same, only worse.

For instance, the release of National Liberation Front cadre and other opponents of Thieu at Loc Ninh over the last few weeks has been accompanied by a drive by his army (ARVN) to force their way into the Central Highlands and Mekong Delta. Using the free-flight paths of the International Control Commission (ICC) for cover, bombers have attacked zones controlled by the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) to pave the way for ground incursions.

But the infantry following these

planes in have been decisively routed—so decisively, in fact, that one of the biggest battles took place only 35 miles north of Thieu's capital, Saigon. The heaviest defeats, however, have been inflicted in the Mekong Delta provinces bordering Cambodia. These provinces are important both strategically and as a rich rice-growing area. Unfortunately for Thieu, they also happen to be firmly under the control of the PRG on one side and the Cambodian liberation forces on the other.

CRISIS WORSENS

Thieu's problems are far from being purely military in nature, however. His regime is also fast losing any diplomatic credibility it may once have had. Last September he was snubbed at the Algiers conference of non-aligned nations. Now it seems that the humiliation may be repeated at the Geneva Conference on Human Rights. The initiative of his air-force pilots in thoroughly destroying a 150-bed PRG hospital in full view of the Iranian delegate to the ICC can hardly have helped, either.

More importantly, the social and economic crisis of the regime worsens

South Africa: Leyland strike highlights role of British firms

On Wednesday 6 March, British Leyland sacked all 220 of the African workers at its branch in Durban, South Africa.

The management took this action after the workers had demanded a wage increase through their union, the African Metal and Allied Workers Union (which has 100% membership in the plant). British Leyland is no exception in refusing to recognise African trade unions, demanding instead that negotiations be carried out through the works committee.

STOOGES

However the works committee is simply a company-controlled device through which the bosses appoint a limited number of stooges to act on behalf of the entire workforce. The British Leyland workers refused to use this procedure and instead went on strike—a move which prompted their sacking.

Since then, a compromise solution has been worked out following a hurried visit to Durban by Leyland's finance and planning director in Britain. After all, the continuation of the strike might have brought adverse publicity at the very time when attention has been directly focused on the labour

situation in South Africa through the recent report of the Parliamentary Select Committee.

So British Leyland have agreed to re-employ all the workers and to negotiate a wage increase through

RICHARD McBRIDE

a committee elected by the whole workforce—although they still refuse to recognise the union.

NOT UNIQUE

However this situation is far from unique to British Leyland. Indeed, the South African Government will only recognise white trade unions. Blacks are excluded from these and their own unions are denied recognition. Furthermore, it is a criminal offence for blacks to go on strike.

Nevertheless, the Government has recently been shaken by a flood of strikes. In 1972 a huge strike swept Namibia, involving over 13,000 workers who demanded the end of the contract labour system (whereby a worker does not have the right to change his/her job or to choose where to live).

MORE STRIKES

In the United Nations report on South Africa (published in June 1973) six different strikes by black workers during the second half of 1972 are listed, involving miners, dockers and bus drivers among others. But for the first four months of 1973 no less than 34 strikes are listed, including the strike in Natal which lasted for five weeks and involved more than 100,000 workers.

Such actions are not undertaken lightly. Many workers have been killed—for example, the eleven African miners shot by police last September.

Others have been given vicious prison sentences, or have simply been sacked—2,600 workers lost their jobs at Consolidated Textile Mills, for instance, after a recent strike there. And to be sacked means to starve, since saving is impossible on current wage levels, and there is no unemployment benefit.

CONCESSIONS

The determination of black

workers to continue the struggle has already won some concessions. Wages have improved, and the Government has also moved to legalise strikes by blacks in certain, limited instances.

In Britain, publicity on the involvement of British firms in the super-exploitation of black workers forced the Tories to set up a Parliamentary Select Committee to look into the question. More significantly, a delegation from the TUC was allowed to visit South Africa.

No-one expected the Tory-appointed Select Committee to be unduly concerned with finding ways to advance the workers' struggle. So it came as no surprise when they reported recently to find that the best they could do was to advise companies to pull out of South Africa if they could not afford (!) to pay wages above the so-called 'poverty datum line'.

OPPORTUNITY

But the TUC had a fantastic chance to attack the migratory labour system, the pass laws, the catch-all Suppression of Communism Act, and to demand that full recognition be given to black trade unions. They could have used this opportunity to pledge their full support for all struggles of black workers, and to undertake a campaign to inform and involve British workers.

Instead, they limply 'pointed to the need for the establishment of the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining through trade unions for all workers'. In fact, the report consisted of little else but meaningless platitudes about the need for 'a living wage and fair conditions of employment'.

There is no need, however, for the spinelessness of the TUC to be reflected in the rank-and-file organisations of the working class. After all, it is precisely the fact that wages are low in South Africa which enables firms like British Leyland to hold over the heads of their British workers the threat to transfer production should militant struggles here be launched.

If British shop stewards' organisations were to threaten strike action in defence of their African brothers, that would go a long way to foiling these plans by the British capitalists.

daily. Thieu can expect little help from outside, despite the 'deep concern' expressed by the USA, Japan, Australia, and other imperialist powers.

The influential *Wall Street Journal*, for instance, has now virtually written him off. A recent article makes it plain that there is no prospect of an influx of capital into Saigon until Thieu strengthens his control—and also makes it clear that he has little chance of doing so. Ian Cargill, a vice-president of the World Bank, put his finger on the insoluble contradiction for imperialism when he pointed out that 'aid' (ie capital investment) for South Vietnam is ruled out unless the 'security situation' improves, yet unless Thieu's government does receive massive 'aid' it is likely to fall in the very near future.

Hence, despite their own efforts and Kissinger's exhortations, the representatives of imperialism who sit on the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the IMF and so on can see no way to salvage South Vietnam's drowning economy. The imperialism. Certainly Thieu's frenzied measures (begging missions to various countries, and repeated devaluations—the latest on 5 March being the third this year!) are unlikely to have much impact.

CONTROL SLIPS AWAY

In the country itself, Thieu's control

is slipping further and further away. In many areas in the Central Highlands and coastal regions, local functionaries are being executed or arrested by NLF units in full view of the local militia. In the cities, meanwhile, the militancy of the urban workers is being spurred on by the strike of the economic crisis and the carrot of the NLF's presence.

The release of NLF cadre and 'neutralist' Third Force leaders recently has played a big part in sharpening these struggles. They are already tending to go beyond the limits laid down by their 'neutralist' spokesmen.

The impact of this social upheaval can be seen in two recent developments. On the one hand, it is becoming more and more difficult to prevent mass protest demonstrations from becoming a regular feature of life in the cities. On the other hand, Thieu has been forced to sack no less than 11 generals and province chiefs in the last week. Another 15 military officers and six civilian chiefs have been transferred to different posts.

As a final note to the US chapter in the history of Indochina, a report just released by the National Academy for Science in Washington reveals that between 1961 and 1971 approximately one-seventh of the arable land of Vietnam was destroyed by US defoliation and bombing. This was in addition to the killing and deforming of hundreds of

children and the clearing of vast areas of river and sea of fish.

It is estimated that the ecological effects of these attempts to save Vietnam for the 'free world' will continue for more than 100 years. Not that Thieu is likely to lose much sleep over this—he is unlikely to last as ruler of even a portion of Vietnam for more than the tiniest fraction of that time.

DAVID JOHNSON

International Marxist Group
(British Section of the Fourth International)
97 Caledonian Road,
London N.1.
I would like more information about the IMG and its activities.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Maclaren's occupation wins major concession

A major concession has been forced out of the management of Maclaren Controls, the ITT factory in Glasgow which has been occupied for over 19 weeks.

Previously they had refused to negotiate before the sit-in ended, and had demanded immediate redundancies. But the growing support for the occupation among trade unionists in the Glasgow area, and the moves towards the setting up of an ITT combine committee, which has discussed a blacking campaign, have forced the management to step back from its intransigent position.

COMBINE COMMITTEE

Last weekend, shop stewards from ITT factories all over Britain, including London, the Midlands and Scotland, and also from Belfast, met in the occupied factory in a second meeting to discuss the combine

committee and support for the occupation. They represented a total of 10,000 workers.

The ITT stewards passed the following resolution: 'This meeting of combine stewards pledges to fully report the current situation in the Maclaren dispute, and if no satisfactory settlement is reached in the next round of talks with the management then positive action in support of the Maclaren's workers will be considered.'

The Maclaren's stewards are acutely aware of the management's previous record, and have presented them with a set of terms of reference which must be accepted before negotiations can begin. These terms are designed to ensure that in any negotiations the jobs and trade union rights of the workers are protected.

'SUPPORT MACLARENS'

Glasgow IMG Public Meeting

Speakers: JOHN MORRISON (AUEW Convenor, Maclaren's); KENNY MacMILLAN (Sec. E. Kilbride Trades Council); ALEC HOGG (NUM Cardowen); PAT KANE (IMG)

Thurs 21 March, 7.30 pm in Woodside Halls, Clarendon Street

Final push for Irish prisoners

The Irish Political Hostages Campaign is 'more confident than at any time' that its demand for the return to the North of Ireland of the hunger-striking Irish prisoners will be won soon, Eamonn McCann said at an IPHC press conference last Monday.

The press conference was called to launch a new pamphlet (Red Books, 10p) published by the IPHC entitled 'The Case of the Irish Political Hostages'.

McCann stressed that there would be no let up in the campaign, and Harold Wilson had unexpected visitors last Sunday afternoon when 70 members of the IPHC, supported by Sinn Fein and IMG, called at his private house in Westminster. The visit followed a rally in Hyde Park, to launch Phase 3 of the campaign initiated by the IPHC in October.

Phase 1 consisted of a series of meetings, rallies and demonstrations. Phase 2 involved getting prominent figures in political, legal, medical, theatrical and sporting circles to support the campaign, by means of individual petitioning. This was completed with 21 interventions at election rallies on the question of the hunger strikers. The highlight of this campaign came when a meeting addressed by William Whitelaw was disrupted. This incident was featured on television, and was the lead story in the *Times* the following day.

The last phase, which many believe could shortly lead to victory, will involve maintaining the weekly pickets of the Home Office and Brixton Prison, simultaneously with a campaign of harassment against the Labour Party 'left' until they support the demand for the return of the hunger-strikers.

ROSEMARY SULLIVAN



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

The 2,500-strong International Women's Day march raised a battery of militant demands on its way from Charing Cross to Hyde Park last Saturday. The IMG slogans were taken up by many of the marchers.

'Irish women take the lead: Price sisters must be freed.' 'International Women's Day: Struggle now for equal pay.' 'Struggle for a prices freeze: Food monopolies must be seized.'

These demands were in sharp contrast to the platform speeches at a CP rally later in the afternoon which focussed on the potential content of anti-discrimination legislation, offering such radical possibilities as State-controlled tribunals to investigate women's oppression.

Fascists sent packing

A bleak future for the Left was predicted by speakers from the 'National Democratic Movement' at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park last Sunday. This organisation, which split from the National Front in Leeds because it wasn't militant enough, openly proclaims its fascist nature and promises to 'drive the communists off the streets by violence'.

A large crowd gathered, including a contingent from London IMG, and after half an hour of heckling and

chanting anti-fascist slogans, the crowd decided it was time to deal with these characters.

Putting into practice the slogan 'No Platform for Fascists', IMG members and supporters overturned the kitchen table from which the fascist was speaking and drove the leaders and their thugs up against the park railings. They and their broken table had then to be rescued by the police and escorted away. The NDM were last seen skulking off into the underground, like bedraggled rats into the sewers.

Essex students expelled

Two IMG members have been expelled from Essex University on charges arising from the NUS day of action for the Grants Campaign last November.

The two comrades, Will Rich and Ronnie Munc, were also found guilty of two charges arising from the occupation at Essex last term, for which they have been excluded from the campus. They were also fined a total of £55.

The charges for which they were expelled arose from picketing lectures, and entering them to persuade students to strike. Both students

The selective assassination of militants has now replaced the previous indiscriminate mass murder as the chief weapon in the Chilean junta's armoury of repression, according to reports now reaching this country

These murders are mainly carried out during the night curfew by special army death squads. The bodies of the victims are deposited in the streets, or into the main river of Santiago, where they serve as a grim warning to the workers.

The repression continues without let-up in other ways, too. According to *The Economist*, inflation over the last year has run at 528%, and the standard of living of the working class has declined by at least 50% since the coup. At the same time, political sackings and unemploy-

ment are also reaching massive proportions.

At least 10,000 political prisoners are now held in the various concentration camps. Those on Dawson Island are being compelled to build new accommodation for four times as many prisoners, and as the winter approaches they face death from the freezing Antarctic cold.

This massive repression is an essential part of the junta's attempt to crush the working class and impose the maximum rate of exploitation. But this attempt is meeting with failure. Production figures show that output has been only marginally increased as compared to the last three months under Popular Unity, a period when the sabotaging activities of the bourgeoisie were at their height. Not only that but workers have increasingly begun to take strike action against the junta (see *Red Weekly*, 41).

These facts demonstrate clearly the urgent need for continuing solidarity actions with the Chilean workers and peasants, particularly for actions which will have an impact on the struggle in Chile itself.

One issue must be taken up at once. For the first time the junta has decided to try some of the leading national political figures.

Three ex-ministers of the Popular Unity have been transferred from Dawson Island to Santiago to stand 'trial.' These 'trials' will be held before Military Tribunals. The defence lawyers are not permitted to see the defendants at any stage, nor will they be allowed to attend the court. All they can do is submit a written statement to the Tribunal.

There can only be one outcome of such trials. It is imperative that a campaign be launched immediately to demand an end to the trials, the release of all political prisoners, and most importantly that the Labour Government severs at once all links with the junta.

On 30 September last year, the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party issued a statement on Chile. They said: 'The Labour Party recognises the events in Chile for what they are, a savage blow to the aspirations of the working people of Chile, and a temporary victory for international capitalism.'

Police training in Northern Ireland

By 1976 every police officer in Britain above the rank of superintendent will have spent two months in the North of Ireland absorbing techniques of counter-insurgency and joint planning with the Army.

This is the result of a Home Office plan which has been put into effect over the past 18 months, revealed by

It also called for definite action: 'The Labour Party calls on the British Government to recall our Ambassador from Chile ... Labour will oppose any attempt to restore to a fascist junta credits denied to a democratically elected government, and we will oppose all British aid or trade designed to sustain the regime in power ...'

'At the same time the Labour Party calls on the British Government to press for the release of all political prisoners ... The Government should offer to refugees from Chile the assistance and hospitality which Britain has traditionally provided ...'

That was what Labour said in Opposition six months ago, but it is what they will do now that they are in office which matters to the Chilean workers. Labour now has a golden opportunity to strike back against 'international capitalism.' It should at once withdraw recognition from the junta, end all aid and trade, allow entry for all refugees who wish to come from Chile, and send material aid to the resistance.

Such actions would have an immediate impact in Chile. What is more, they do not require legislation; they simply need Callaghan to give the order. For good measure he should also instruct the Ambassador to publicly denounce the junta and its repression before leaving.

But it is clear from the whole history of the Labour Party—most recently, from its complicity with American imperialism in Vietnam—that it will take no such actions unless it is faced with a mass campaign which will compel it to act. As a first step resolutions should flood in to Callaghan from trade union branches all over the country.

In the London area, the picket called by the Chile Solidarity Campaign at Downing Street for this Friday, 15 March, at 5.30 p.m., should receive massive support. It is demanding an end to the trials, the release of all political prisoners, and that the Labour Government breaks all links with the junta at once.

In addition, the National Action Conference called by the CSC in Birmingham on 23 March must also discuss how to take this campaign forward. It is to be structured so that there will be workshops in the afternoon during which three areas can be discussed in detail. These are: trade union actions (including blacking of goods and arms), other forms of solidarity (refugees, etc.), and the lessons of the coup. The conference is open to delegates from trade union branches and student unions.

Gerry Corby

Fred Halliday at a key conference on the British Army held in Cambridge on Saturday.

Halliday, a member of the *New Left Review* editorial board and an expert on the Persian Gulf, spoke about the lessons learnt by the Army in the multitude of 'small' wars fought since the end of World War 2—in Greece, Palestine, Kenya, Cyprus, Malaysia, Aden, and the Arab Gulf. During these conflicts the Army was able to refine its methods of gathering intelligence, and counter-insurgency.

In the present conflict in Oman their methods range from the crude bombing of crops (known euphemistically as 'food control'), to tricks such as laying dummy mines with Soviet markings around water-holes on the edge of the liberated zones.

Speakers from the Troops Out Movement pointed out the necessity of building a strong movement among working-class people in Britain to get the troops out of Ireland and allow the Irish people to determine their own future.

HELP US IMPROVE THE PAPER

The other day the House of Commons Library phoned us; there had been some slip-up and they had not received one or two issues of *Red Weekly*. 'We would like to make sure of getting it,' the librarian told us, 'because the Members are always asking to see it.'

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