

# RED WEEKLY

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**Joan Maynard,  
Ernie Roberts  
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open letter**

THE FIGHT against the Prevention of Terrorism Act requires the maximum unity of the working class movement. It is a fight that is inseparably bound up with the campaign for the withdrawal of troops from Ireland.

The left must not give one inch on these struggles and it must resolutely refuse to be intimidated by the attacks of the press and the pressure that the state will exert through its police force.

The following letter is being circulated by the IMG throughout the labour movement so that a broad campaign can be built to fight Jenkins' Act. Joan Maynard, Labour MP for Sheffield Brightside and Ernie Roberts, assistant general secretary of the AUEW have both signed the letter.

We appeal to our readers to circulate the letter in their workplaces, in their unions and on the campuses. Signatories should be sent to: Open Letter, 97 Caltonian Road, London, N.1.

## OPEN LETTER TO THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The Birmingham bombings have been used as a pretext for the introduction of unprecedented repressive legislation. We believe that the Emergency Regulations pose an extremely serious threat to trade union and democratic rights in this country.

The measures include deportations and restrictions on entry for the Irish into Britain; fines and jail sentences for people alleged to belong to Irish political organisations or to give support to such organisations. Further sweeping powers are given to the police to allow them to arrest without warrant, to hold without trial and to suppress political views.

Jenkins himself calls the measures 'draconian'. They have two aims: firstly, to smash all opposition inside the working class movement to Britain's occupation of the North of Ireland; secondly to hound trade-unionists and attack working class organisations. These proposals follow on the heel of the Prebbles' anti-picketing decision, the returning to jail of the Shrewsbury two, increased state repression against squatters, striking workers and immigrants along with the death of an anti-fascist militant as a result of police action. The Scarman tribunal is at present discussing the strengthening of police powers.

The legislation strengthens fascist groups like the National Front and their ability to build on anti-Irish chauvinism and exploit issues like the re-introduction of capital punishment. It introduces the possibility of systematic police harassment of Irish workers and indeed the possible arrest of anyone opposed to present British policy in Ireland. It brings internment to Britain in the form of seven days detention without trial. It imposes censorship of the media by making it illegal to express legitimate political views.

We reject the idea that the violence of the Irish situation can be resolved by increasing the powers of the British state; a solution can only come with an end to attempts to impose a British solution to the Irish question. We urge the broadest campaign be organised in the working class movement for:

THE REPEAL OF THE JENKINS ACT  
THE WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH  
TROOPS FROM IRELAND.

# STUDENT CONFERENCE SAYS— Fight police state laws



Demonstrators outside the Labour Party Conference last Saturday demanded the immediate withdrawal of troops and an end to the Jenkins laws

## Government critics in confusion

The debate in Parliament about Labour's 'anti-terrorist' law showed the Labour Party opponents of Government policy to be totally confused.

Some stood up to point out the big dangers for the workers' movement in such a law. Others pointed out that the Birmingham bombings were the result of both Tory and Labour Government policy in Ireland, and that more repression was

no answer. But in the end they all voted for the law! The main group of the Labour left

Tribune Group-backed the law as a whole, limiting themselves to a few amendments. Veteran 'left' Ian Mikardo at one point actually spoke in favour of a Tory-sponsored amendment that would have made the law even more sweeping!

Even the two pathetic Tribune amendments—proposing a body to hear appeals against deportations, and another body to investigate complaints that the police were abusing their new power to hold suspects—gained no support from the 'lefts' in the Government. Eric Hoffer, for example, voted against both.

The following are some of the statements made by Labour MPs who had doubts about Roy Jenkins's proposals.

## inside:

Birmingham bombings  
Labour's repressive laws  
Labour Party Conference  
NUS Conference  
Women's Charter

The National Union of Students has become the first major organisation to reject Labour's new 'Prevention of Terrorism Act'

The NUS delegates at the Margate Conference correctly denounced the Act as being designed to make 'dangerous inroads into civil rights and liberties.'

The opposition to this Act must now be extended into every section of the labour movement, because it is the working class who will eventually suffer the brunt of this reactionary law.

The Tories are of course smirking with ill-concealed delight. After all it was their brain-child, prepared under their orders 18 months ago. Now it is the loyal Labour servants of British capitalism who are doing the Tories' dirty work for them.

The police are delighted with the Act. They see their new powers as an effective means of waging a terrorising offensive against the Irish community and the British opponents of imperialism's war in Ireland.

No doubt the police are rubbing their hands with glee at the provisions in the Act which allow them to detain suspects for 48 hours, and up to seven days with Home Office permission. This is the time that 'experts' consider is ideal for 'breaking' a suspect. This means that they will be able to worm more 'confessions' out of innocent people. Those with Republican or left-wing connections will be especially subject to this treatment.

The ruling class is licking its chops, savouring the new powers to proscribe organisations and casting longing

eyes at sections of the left. They also see the witchhunt atmosphere as an excellent opportunity to tip off the police about 'subversives' in their factories who are organising the workforce against the employers.

The working class movement must not wait until the repression gets in full swing before mounting a fight back. The fight against the Prevention of Terrorism Act must begin now before the police feel confident enough to start cracking down on all and sundry.

The delegates at the NUS conference also understood that the labour movement will only be able to fight effectively against these police state moves if it puts forward an alternative policy on Ireland to that of the Labour Government. Therefore the NUS has called for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.

Unfortunately, the NUS failed to come out for immediate withdrawal of British troops, limiting themselves to demanding that the troops be confined to barracks 'pending complete withdrawal'. Nevertheless the demand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops is now more urgent than ever, and must be taken up by the entire labour movement.

... the Bill gives the police certain powers which in terms of our traditions are frightening. We are all aware that a person can be arrested merely on a hunch—a feeling—on the part of an individual police officer ... We have to think of the climate that would inevitably be created by the Bill. A man is taken into prison. What happens to his family? People will say "There is no smoke without fire. He has been away in the poky-hole for the last five days. There must be something up. Let us go and smash his windows." (Tom Litterick, Labour MP, Birmingham Selly Oak).

... As in every colonial situation, repressive legislation is no substitute for policy. We have no policy ... We are hopefully waiting for a Convention, waiting for decisions to come out of it. Everyone knows our hopes will be proved illusory. I repeat, we have no policy.' (Leo Abse, Labour MP, Pontypool).

'The proposed legislation represents precisely the kind of power exercised by the South African Government, and that power is one of the most detested powers of the South African Government.' (Frank Hooley, Labour MP, Sheffield, Healey).

**We need action not words**

# RANK AND FILE CONFERENCE



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

'Go forth and multiply!' were the chairman's closing remarks to Saturday's conference of the National Rank and File Movement—the industrial wing of the International Socialists.

The delegates numbered 422, from 311 organisations—no significant gain from the last conference—although there were more strike committees and stewards committees than last year. But the main resolution (passed by 292 votes to 84) led nowhere. All it proposed was big wage claims against inflation and pious slogans against redundancy.

The Conference organisers were defeated over their patronising efforts to prevent speakers on the Women's Charter Campaign. Hilary Wainwright (Durham ASTMS) (above) said the resolution limiting support of women's struggles to the issue of Equal Pay went no further than resolutions of the TUC in 1980. But the chair managed to rail-road through a procedural resolution to prevent the Charter being voted on.

As long as International Socialism desperately hold on to the idea that simply hating the bosses and joining IS is the answer to capitalism's crisis, Rank and File will continue to achieve nothing.

Lock-outs are a tactic which employers are using more and more these days. In London, following closely on the heels of Hoover, the management at Associated Automation in Willesden have locked out their entire production workforce.

Last summer the company, which is part of Arnold Weinstock's GEC empire, agreed to pay a threshold payment to its 600 workers. Months later they were still waiting. So the decision was taken to work to rule.

The management was angry at this 'drastic' step, and lock-out its production workforce. The workers' clock cards were removed on 14 November and the foreman told them to go home.

The management lied blatantly to the local press over what had occurred. When the locked-out workers arrived to sign on at the local social security office, they discovered that the management had got there first and informed the officials that the workforce was on strike and therefore should not be paid

benefits!

Like the Hoover workers at Perivale, the workers at Associated Automation fear that massive redundancies are in the air. The management hope to demoralise the workers by keeping them out over Christmas and forcing many of them to find fresh jobs.

It is strongly rumoured that GEC are attempting to close down the factory. There was a week's stoppage in this connection last year when the management tried to remove machinery from the plant. As one woman worker remarked: 'In this way the management are able to rationalise the workforce and at the same time dodge out of the expense of redundancy payments.'

The rates of pay at Associated Auto-

mation are by far the lowest in the whole district. Delegations of shop stewards from the factory visiting other workplaces in the area last week to seek support were met by cries of disbelief that their wages were so low. Labourers get a basic rate of only £22 a week, on which it is clearly impossible to live, especially in London. Skilled toolmakers get £36 compared with £55 at the neighbouring Rolls Royce plant.

### UNANIMOUSLY

At Friday's mass meeting it was unanimously decided not to return to work until guarantees of more pay are forthcoming. Now a desperate fight is on with the social security office over the payment of benefits. Some of the workers especially single men and women are

Vicious police attacks on journalists in the streets. The use of the courts to suppress press articles. Police spy photographers posing as journalists on demonstrations.

Is this some Latin American republic, labouring under a military dictatorship? No, it is London in 1974.

The Action Committee for the Defence of Journalists was set up by members of the National Union of Journalists to campaign against these developments after several photographers were attacked by the police during the National Front demonstration on 7 September. Its main aim is to try to get the media unions to set up an official Commission of Enquiry into interference by the state and the police in this field.

A resolution to this effect has so far been endorsed by at least 10 branches of the NUJ, although the union's executive has yet to discuss the question.

### PICKET

The ACDJ has also organised a successful picket of the Home Office in Oct-

ober, attended by 40 journalists. The picket called for the ending of the system of police press cards to selected journalists—the notorious 'red cards'—the disbanding of the Special Branch spy photographers who regularly infiltrate demos and pickets in the guise of press photographers, and the ending of the Paul Foot/Socialist Worker trial and the David May/Tyne Out trial.

A letter to this effect was handed in to the Home Secretary and sent to media union and Tribune MPs. Several MPs have replied to this letter expressing concern and interest. Joe Ashton (Bassetlaw) has raised the matter in the House of Commons, while Tom Litterick (Sally Oak) has informed the ACDJ that he himself complained to the West Midlands police in June about being photographed on a demonstration.

The reply from the police to this complaint was almost identical to Brother Jenkins' whitewash reply to the ACDJ: 'No evidence that police have been acting improperly'.

### NEW TRIAL

Since that picket, Paul Foot and Socialist Worker have been severely hit by the courts for their reporting of the Janis Jones case. To avoid the legalistic mistake made by IS in relying simply on a 'good case' the ACDJ is campaigning to make the David May trial—which opens on 16 December—a focus for action by media trade unionists.

The implications of this case are probably more serious than even the Paul Foot judgement. If David May is found guilty, it could mean that no journalist could use any material not obtained through recognised, 'official' channels.

The ACDJ is calling for a picket of the May trial on 16 December, and is also organising a public meeting to focus attention around these issues on Wednesday 11 December at 7.00pm in the St. Bride Institute, Bride Lane, London EC4. Speakers invited include Eddie Loyden MP, Ron Knowles (editor of the *Journalist*), and Eamonn McCann.

A major point of discussion at this meeting is likely to be around the question of possible industrial action of some form if David May is imprisoned or heavily fined.

INGRID FALCONER

CARL GARDNER

## Employers latch on to lock-outs

## Problems of Women's Charter raised in Leeds

There is still considerable confusion about the meaning of the Working Women's Charter and how to organise around its demands—that at least was apparent from the Women in Socialism Conference on the Charter held last Saturday in Leeds.

Although there was opposition to the Charter from a few small groups like the Power of Women Collective (the advocates of the 'Wages for Housework' theory), the main differences among the 150 women present

were on the actual ways and means of organising around it.

Many women had reservations about the present form of the Charter, and felt the need for it to be radically amended. Amendments are to be put forward for discussion at the next Women in Socialism Conference in the spring, where national perspectives will be the main item on the agenda. But as Karen Margolis from the IMG pointed out, while the Charter is not a perfect document, the polishing and refining of it should not be a precondition for organising around it.

### REPRESENTATIVE

A call for a national conference on the Charter has come recently from two trade union bodies—Sheffield Trades Council and the South Eastern TUC. It is to be hoped that any necessary amendments will be agreed at such a conference. It is crucial that any national conference, to be truly representative, should be open to all Charter groups and other organisations working on the demands and not be restricted to trades council delegates. The Conference agreed to contact these two bodies to ensure that this would be the case.

The Conference also heard examples from various groups of their support work in struggles on the shop floor. Bristol WWCC are working with the women tobacco workers from Wills. The Brent WWCC are active in the disputes at Hoovers and Associated Automation.

It was explained that the Charter Campaign should not only respond to struggles going on, but also help initiate struggles. In many cases the experience gained by women workers in a fight on an economic demand such as equal pay has acted as a catalyst to a greater consciousness about other demands raised in the Charter.

### AUTONOMY

A message of solidarity is to be sent to the women workers at Hoovers and at Associated Automation from the Women in Socialism Conference, together with the £35 raised there for the hardship funds.

Ingrid Falconer

## Ancillary workers plan conference on claim

The rejection last week of the local authority manual workers' claim for a basic wage of £30 means that the hospital ancillary workers' wage claim will probably get the same treatment.

Ancillary workers, dissatisfied with the official £30 claim, can expect a tough struggle if they are going to beat inflation and win a higher minimum wage. Portsmouth NUPE branch has already gone on record for a basic wage of £40 for 35 hours, and has called for area delegate conferences to discuss the offer—which is due to be made on 13 December.

Support for a regional conference was endorsed by NUPE Western Divisional Council at its meeting of 23 November. They recognised that this is one of the most effective ways to mobilise the membership and ensure that the rank and file have a say on what the claim should be and how to organise to win it.

Portsmouth NUPE branch are also calling a National Delegate Conference on Saturday 14 December in London. Further information from: Ron Pearson, Royal Portsmouth Hospital, Portsmouth, Hants.

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# Labour conference LEFT DAMPS DOWN THE FIRES

Morgan Phillips, one-time general secretary of the Labour Party, used to boast that the British Labour Party owed more to Methodism than Marxism. Last week Labour went home — to London's Central Hall, the home of British Methodism.

As the Conference plodded along in its ethereal surroundings, the Government was giving a more earthly demonstration of how to keep capitalism functioning across the road in the House of Commons. The 'brave' reforms of democratic socialism had already been buried by Healey's Budget. Now the 'democracy' so cherished by the Fabians and 'left' alike was being wiped out by Jenkins' Bill.

No movement swept the Conference against Jenkins' draconian measures. Wilson and company could afford their smug expressions. The 'left' of the Labour Party National Executive dutifully pulled the delegates into line.

The Tribune Group hawked their bleeding hearts around the Conference to get Merlyn Rees off the hook and to let Jenkins unleash his police force against the opposition to the

war in Ireland.

On the contentious issue of party democracy it was also the 'left' who scurried to the platform to rescue the right. An attempt to make MPs submit themselves for re-selection to their constituency parties was defeated with the help of the old Bevanite Ian Mikardo. His comment was: 'Divorce should never be easy'

The threatened walk out by the left against Helmut Schmidt's pro-Market speech did not materialise. Instead the MPs responded to Schmidt's gag writers and their opposition turned into well-mannered chuckles.

Shrewsbury was a carefully stage-managed affair. George Smith, UCATT General Secretary, moved a pious resolution calling for the release of Warren and Tomlinson. The spokesperson for the executive then explained the formula agreed with the 'left': that only the Home Secretary 'had the power to recommend the exercise of the Royal Prerogative or remit part of the sentence, but the executive intended to try to persuade the Home Secretary to recommend the use of the prerogative'.

If the 'civilised' and 'liberal' Mr Jenkins remains unconvinced by

the persuasive eloquence of the NEC, nobody suggested what to do next.

## REMITTED

On defence, Mikardo did his rescue act again. In reply to the Orpington resolution calling for defence cuts of at least £1,000million, Mikardo promised that the NEC 'would cast a close, careful and critical eye' over the coming defence review. The Orpington resolution was then dutifully remitted to the NEC.

It was Lena Jeger, another NEC member with 'left' pretensions, who replied for the NEC on Clay Cross. Her attitude was that the matter should simply be discussed with the NEC and noted right-winger Antony Crossland. Under this 'left' cover the Labour leaders managed to get a motion exempting the Clay Cross ex-councillors from any financial penalty soundly defeated.

During the debate on South Africa, Joan Lester encouraged the delegates that a break was on the way. No sooner had the delegates got home than it was clear that the Labour Cabinet had no intention of making such a break.

Roy Mason, Secretary for Defence, has made that crystal clear. All Lab-

our has made is a woolly statement of intent. Future policy will depend on negotiations with South Africa. Those negotiations have not even started. At least Mr Mason should be grateful to Lester for keeping the delegates at bay during the Conference.

Even on Chile the left did its best to make excuses for the Government's appalling record. Judith Hart, replying to criticisms about the decision to allow the Chilean Government until 1983 to repay £24 million of its £124 million debt, claimed that 'the initial negotiations were taking place when the Labour Government came to power last February.' True, but the actual decision was not made until March, more than three weeks after Labour took office.

## CONTEMPT

As the right wing watched with ill-concealed contempt the antics of the left to 'unite' the party, they openly boasted that they intended to go their own way. Callaghan was quite blunt and brutal about the EEC. He explained that 'whatever a special conference decides would not be binding on the Government'.

Healey said: 'The Government will have to reach its own conclusions on the Common Market terms'. Just to make sure that everyone got the message loud and clear, he added: 'There cannot be any party Conference that can bind the Government of the day on what it regards as the national interest.'

Many of the pro-Marketees are now dropping their original hostility to the referendum on the Common Market. Short's conference speech, the tough line of Healey and Callaghan, and Wilson's positions give them confidence that providing a deal can be worked out with the EEC partners, then the Labour leaders will throw their weight behind Britain staying in Europe.

Even during the Conference the right wing felt able to go on the offensive. At a meeting outside the

Conference, Reg Prentice made an impassioned plea for a 'permanent incomes policy'. His speech was coupled with his usual invective against the 'left'.

Mr Prentice does not even feel grateful to his colleagues on the NEC. He recognises that their capitulation just makes it easier for the right wing to get on with the essential task of saving British capitalism.

## DISCONTENT

Underneath the surface discontent and resentment against Labour's right-wing policies was growing. Many rank and file members wanted anti-capitalist policies. But as long as opposition is just channelled into resolutions inside the Labour Party and demands that the Cabinet and the NEC fight for socialist policies, it will be bureaucratically throttled.

All the big struggles of the working class in the recent period have been against the policies of the Labour Government.

The wages battles have been against Labour's social contract. The fight of the Clay Cross councillors, the struggle to free the Shrewsbury workers, the movement to get the troops out of Ireland and now the resistance to Jenkins' Bill all violently clash with the Labour Government's policy.

Local Labour Party activists have to associate themselves with those struggles. But that is not just a matter of individually supporting them — as many in fact do — it means that they must make every effort to win over their local parties as organisations to give full and unstinting material support.

Labour Party members must ensure that they and their organisations openly identify themselves with these fights. The right wing can only be fought successfully by turning the local parties towards involvement in the real struggles of the working class.

Bob Pennington



While Conference delegates seemed content to allow the release of the Shrewsbury lads to depend on the eloquence of the NEC in persuading Roy Jenkins to 'recommend exercise of the Royal Prerogative' at some time in the distant future, rank-and-file militants gathered outside had other ideas. 'Free the pickets now' and 'Scrap the conspiracy laws' were their no-nonsense slogans.



Photos: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

## BAKERS STRIKE FOR LIVING WAGE

By KEVIN BARKE, Bakers' Union shop steward and strike committee member, Barton's (Basildon) Bakery

An adult baker's wage for the basic shift pattern of 40 hours is a mere £23.80 per week. This is nowhere near a living wage.

We were tired of waiting for a positive move from our union leaders, so we came out on unofficial strike. Now they have been forced to call all-out action.

At our annual conference this year, the union executive was mandated to negotiate for £40 for 40 hours, equal pay for women, full rate at 18, an end to Sunday working, and an extra week's holiday. The employers' reply to this was a

union executive recommended acceptance it was overwhelmingly defeated.

Many bakeries then called for a national strike, and some came out unofficially. But our executive wanted more negotiations, so we got round the table with the employers once again. All that happened was that they made the same offer as before, only they would include our threshold into our basic wage.

This offer was then put to another ballot, and was once more overwhelmingly thrown out even though the executive had again recommended acceptance. The calls for a national official strike became deafening. But the union bureaucrats' response was simply to call for yet more negotiations along with an overtime ban.

kers across the country we came out anyway. And we soon forced the bureaucrats to change their tune!

Through the use of flying pickets we persuaded most of the bakeries in this area to join the unofficial action. Now we are trying to build a strong local leadership by co-ordinating the activities of the various strike committees. This will help us to resist any self-out moves by the bureaucrats.

Success here will also mean that we will be in a strong position to counter the scare tactics which the employers will use to whip up shoppers' feeling against us. We will have to put out our own material exposing the way in which they are trying to use this dispute to get the Government to agree to a price increase which will protect

## MASS PICKET CALLED FOR PREBBLE'S DEFEND THE RIGHT TO PICKET!

The recent anti-pickets ruling by Judge Forbes in the case brought by property speculators Prebble's has come as a special Xmas bonus for the Islington police.

They now have complete authority to prevent any person with a placard from standing on a pavement. But the Prebble's picket continues, with the police showing how 'reasonable' they are by allowing six people to walk up and down on the edge of the pavement.

Reasonable? Last week they pushed 'excess' pickets into a nearby cafe and refused to let them come out at all. But they are worried about arresting any more tenants for fear of sparking off a giant re-jection from the local labour movement.

On 16 November, eight days after the Forbes ruling, the police selected four innocent peaceful pickets and carted them off to prison. As news of this spread local anger began to mount, and the tenants held a noisy picket outside the police station. This threw the cops into confusion.

ceased (though the charges weren't dropped).

The offensive against civil liberties launched by the state through its judicial arm is now forcing the Islington Tenants Campaign to develop links with other groups under attack, and a start has been made by linking up with the Dagenham Shrewsbury Defence Committee. But it is vital to unite with other groups now (threatened such as the Irish republicans and left-wing political organisations).

A united campaign against the 'strong state' measures of the Labour Government (supported by the Labour Party conference) is the only effective method of self-defence.

As part of this campaign, there will be a mass picket outside Prebble's offices at 108/9 Upper Street, Islington this Saturday 7 December, starting at 10.30am. A number of trades councils, trade union branches, and tenants' associations are already sponsoring this action. There will also be a picket outside Old Street Magistrates Court at 10.00am on Thursday 10 December.

# LETTERS

## ZIONIST PLATITUDES

The letter you published from Mapam (*Red Weekly*, 31 October) consists of the stalest Zionist platitudes.

For example, John de Frece attempts to pass off as serious analysis the staggering assertion that 'Jews are oppressed by the ruling class'. The fact that the Jewish community in this country is itself divided into different social classes with sharply opposed interests is evidently beyond the comprehension of our 'socialist' Zionist analyst.

Zionism, it is true, is a response to the existence of anti-semitism. But what de Frece fails to point out is that Zionism needs anti-semitism. If Jews felt secure in their countries of residence, how would the Zionist organisations manage to raise such huge sums of money? As Zionist leaders have said on more than one occasion, anti-semitism is, within limits, useful. Doesn't it help 'maintain the cohesion of the Jewish people' and 'dispel the myth of assimilation'?

The revolutionary left, which has sought to alert the vanguard of the labour movement to the fascist danger, is accused by de Frece of alienating 95% of its anti-Zionist stand on the Middle East. What absurd logic! Would de Frece similarly argue that the refusal of the left to support the protestant ascendancy in the north of Ireland is responsible for the reactionary ideas of the protestant working class?

Mapam's hypocrisy knows no bounds.



They claim to speak for the Jewish working class; yet in Israel they participate in a Government which has just drastically cut the living standards of the Israeli working class. In London Mapam joins with the left in demonstrations against the Chilean junta; in Israel it is part of a coalition which includes the National Religious Party, a party of clerical reaction which has very amicable relations with the Pinochet regime.

If Mapam wishes to participate in anti-fascist demonstrations, the revolutionary left should put no obstacles in its way. At the same time, however, we

must expose their daily support for military annexation and terror in the Middle East.

The labour movement in this country has a consistent record of pro-Zionism. For the Labour reformists, left and right, support for Zionism is an article of faith. The stalinists sit quite happily with Mapam in 'Liberation'. But the Trotskyists must continue to fight Zionism as an agency of imperialism and the enemy of Jewish and Arab workers alike.—BOB SLANSKY, London

## Womens' Charter - how can the campaign be taken forward?

Some of the points raised in the letter you published last week on the Working Women's Charter (*Red Weekly*, 21 November) appear to be relevant to the

way in which the Charter Campaign is being carried forward in Hackney.

Several sisters from the Brent Working Women's Charter Campaign (BWWCC) attended the Hackney Charter Conference held recently. We were very disappointed at the outcome—or rather lack of it. True, the discussion which took place was very useful and many interesting issues were raised. But only recommendations were permitted, these having to be put to the Trades Council to accept or reject.

The conference was thus powerless to take any meaningful decisions. This seems to be due to the fact that the majority of Hackney Trades Council have failed to understand the significance of the Working Women's Charter.

Of course the role played by trade unions is a vital one, but one of the most significant points about the Working Women's Charter is that it attempts to write militants in the trade unions with those in other organisations fighting for the demands raised in the Charter. To channel all activity through the official trade union structures is to miss this point.

BWWCC is currently engaged in active support work for the Hoover workers locked out by management from the factory in Perivale, West London. One aspect of this support has been to organise a speaking tour, by the Hoover shop stewards, to twenty of the main local factories in order to gain solidarity from other sections of workers.

Sisters reported on this to the Hackney Conference. The Hoover workers are in desperate need of financial support, and the BWWCC attempted at the Conference to make an appeal for money and messages of solidarity. But this was deliberately squashed by the Secretary of the Trades Council, who counterposed to this the taking of a collection for the Trades Council funds.

Hackney Trades Council should follow the lead given by Brent Trades Council in concretely supporting the actual struggles of women workers, as well as broadening out the Charter Campaign in their locality to encompass women's groups, tenants' associations, and other organisations working on the demands of the Charter.—INGRID FALCONER, Brent.



Hoover strikers — appeal for financial aid squashed at Hackney conference

## More about living struggles please!

Although I agree with many of the ideas expressed in *Red Weekly*, these ideas seem to be divorced from living struggles. As an example of what I mean, take the idea that hospital workers must reject bonus schemes and the totally inadequate wage claim the trade union bureaucrats are negotiating on our behalf. These bonus schemes are designed to increase work-load, so that the collapse of the NHS can be papered over at our cost.

As a hospital ancillary worker, I witness every day what this amounts to. In the hospital I work in, bonus schemes have been brought in to the kitchens. These schemes encourage low staffing levels, as the bonus goes up if you are understaffed. The foreman encourages understaffing so that the

bonus rises.

The result is a terrific work load; dinner is half-cold left overs from the patients' meals; the shift is a 10-hour shift because of the permanent shortage of staff. Last week a young Italian worker was seriously injured in a car crash after weeks of working extended shifts and overtime.

At the same time other hospital porters are working to store expensive wines from France and Germany, and salmon from Scotland for the private patients wing in this hospital.

Behind the phrases lies a complicated living reality; to grasp that reality and let it speak is surely an important part of revolutionary journalism, and a part I find sadly lacking in *Red Weekly*.—J. REED, London.

## STATEMENT BY FORMER I.S. LEFT OPPOSITION

We have received the following public statement from the Steering Committee of the former Left Opposition tendency of the International Socialists.

On 16 November the IS Control Commission rejected the appeal for reinstatement by the expelled Left Opposition on the grounds that our continued membership would lead to more problems and divisions within IS. Our expulsion represents a new stage in the degeneration of IS into an irrelevant sect. At the Control Commission meeting our representatives pointed out that the basis of democratic centralism is that only by political struggle within an organisation can the correct policy emerge. The petit-bourgeois fear of open political discussion that characterizes the IS leadership has stifled the political life of the group, and led to the development of a bureaucratic centralism that is driving out its revolutionary members.

The refusal to allow debate within the organisation is of course a consequence of the overall rejection of the Leninist conception of a marxist party of the most class-conscious workers, which analyses the political situation and from this analysis works out and fights for a political programme for the class. Because IS considers that political consciousness develops spontaneously out of militancy, it sees the task of a party as organisational, merely generalising and bringing together workers' struggles. This is why it sees political criticism as a threat to its everyday work rather than part of the process of developing a correct policy. It is also why it ends up tailing the class.

Our representatives at the Control Com-

mission repeated our view that the rejection of the theory of imperialism and the theory of permanent revolution in favour of 'the permanent arms economy' and the 'inevitability of state capitalism in the third world' were unjustified adaptations to the apparent stability of the 1950s and 1960s. Precisely because they are basically 'radical' versions of bourgeois theory, they cannot explain the re-emergence of the crisis of capitalism in its classical imperialist form, and instead they encourage the drift of IS towards a radical reformist but non-marxist organisation.

We were prepared to remain members only on the basis that we could challenge the reformist tendency of IS. The rejection of our appeal shows that there is no hope of a healthy development of IS. We call on all revolutionaries still in IS to follow us out of the group.

The present crisis of international capitalism and of British capitalism in particular makes it all the more urgent that comrades devote themselves tirelessly to the building of a revolutionary movement. It is no good waiting for a revolutionary organisation to arise spontaneously. It is only by developing a thorough understanding of the present crisis, and the strengths and weaknesses of the British and international socialist movements, that the political basis for such a revolutionary organisation can be laid.

It is to these tasks that we are addressing ourselves, without at this stage taking a definite position in relation to the other Trotskyist groups.

## LABOUR'S BETRAYAL IN IRELAND

Listeners to 'The World at One' on BBC radio on 10 November will have heard Enoch Powell give voice to the secret fear which is shared by many far-sighted socialists.

He stated that he draws deep satisfaction for himself and his party of the extreme right in Northern Ireland from 'the omission in the Queen's Speech of any reference to the Irish dimension'. More ominous still, this evil but nevertheless astute and far-sighted politician attached great significance to the words 'some form of power-sharing for Northern Ireland, which was referred to in the exposition of

the Government's intentions.

To those few members of the Labour Party who show concern for the long-neglected Irish people, it was like having a secret fear about a cancerous growth suddenly confirmed by an eminent specialist. It is to be hoped that the Tribune Group will be awakened by the smell of betrayal which is seeping out.

Surely they will resist any conspiracy to hand over the long-suffering minority to the loyalist right wing, and will not be hoodwinked by 'some form' of power-sharing facade decorated by a few castle catholics.—M.W., Birmingham.

## WHAT'S ON

**IMG GAY GROUP:** Contact J. Mills, 153 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds.

**'BRITISH LEYLAND' — An Economic Report**, pamphlet on the background to the present crisis inside BLMC. 10p per copy, send cash with order to: 72, Cambridge Road, King's Heath, Birmingham.

**'NATIONALISATION or Expropriation'** second edition of pamphlet produced in 1973 by the Ligue Communiste, French section of the Fourth International. 10p per copy, send cash with order to 72 Cambridge Road, King's Heath, Birmingham.

**SHEFFIELD RED CIRCLES:** Every Wednesday at 7.30pm in the Lion Hotel (corner of The Wicker and Nursery Street).

**LONDON RED FORUMS:** Next one is on Tuesday 10 December at 8pm in University of London Union, Malet St, WC1—Room 2F. Topic: 'Argentina'.

**'SEXISM, SEXUALITY and Class Struggle' — new pamphlet** including interview with French women bank workers, produced by Bristol IMG for Red Weekly Fund Drive. Single copies 15p inc p&pp, or 10 copies for £1 post free. Order from: Jo Ray, 4 Badminton Road, Bristol 2; or K-K Corp., 20 Villa Road, London SE24.

**FOR SALE** in aid of Red Weekly Fund Drive: poetry book 'Last Summer's Diary' by Robert B Findlay. Send 20p for book and postage (with address) to Bob, Keynes Tower, Flat 1, University of Essex, Colchester.

**ACTION COMMITTEE** for the Defence of Journalists public meeting, Weds 11 December at 7 pm in St Bride Institute, Bride Lane, London E.C.4. End police & state interference in the media! Stop the David May trial!

**COMRADES** (3 or more) seek cheap self-contained flat/house, South/central London preferred. Contact Val, 837 6954 (day).

**COULD ANYBODY** who has been black-listed by employers i.e. been prevented from getting other employment after leaving a job! please contact Box RW/78; hoping to compile a dossier to expose this; for a National Council for Civil Liberties campaign; all communications will be treated with necessary confidentiality.

**WATFORD RED FORUMS:** Fortnightly in the Green Man, Watford High Street. Next meeting, Monday 9 December: Debate on the new repressive laws.

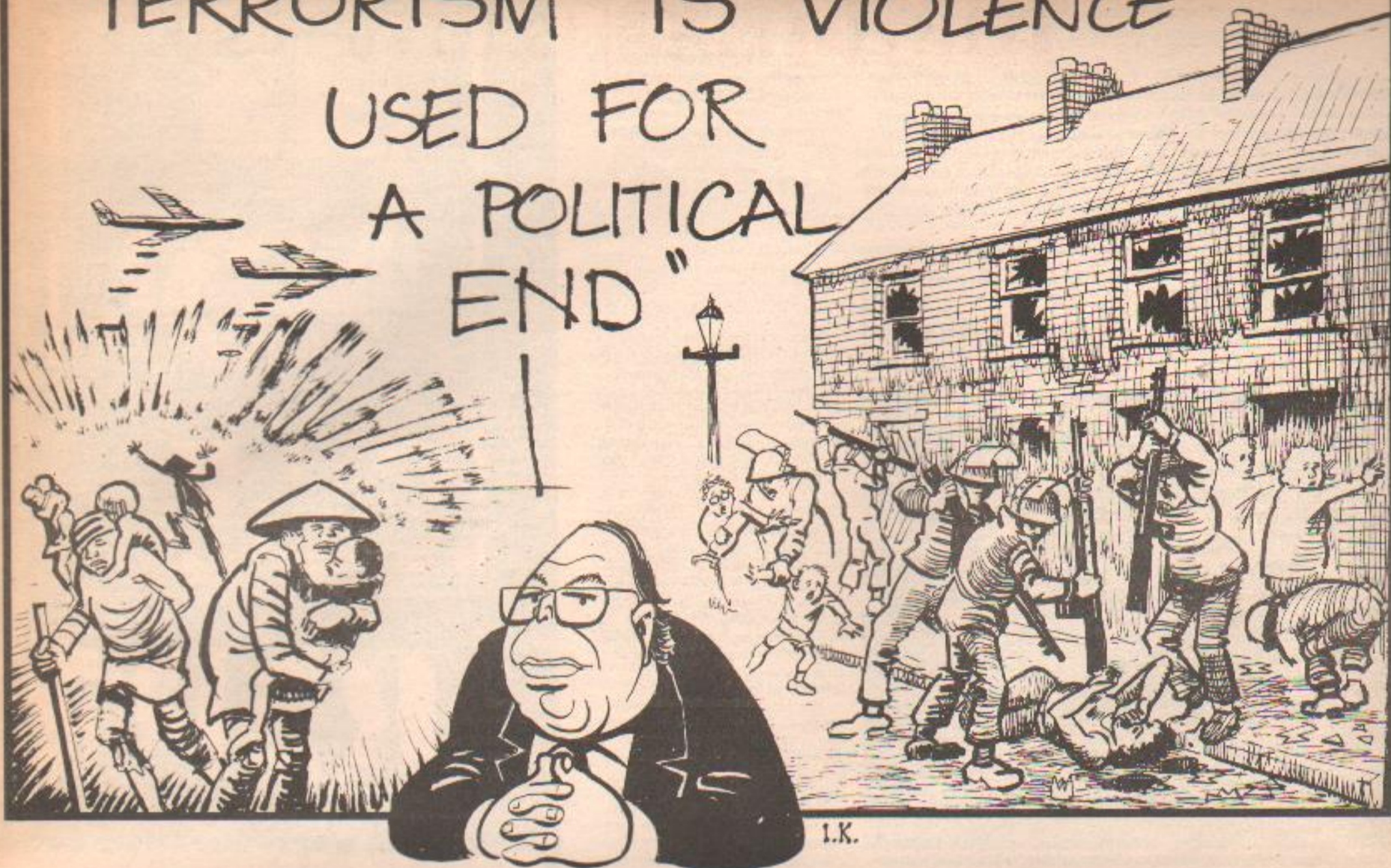
### SOCIALIST WOMAN

New issue now out, with articles on the Charter campaign, the NUS women's campaign, the socialism and women conference, women and fascism.

Single copies 10p (10 or more, 8p each including postage—or 8p if picked up direct) from:

RED BOOKS, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

# "TERRORISM IS VIOLENCE USED FOR A POLITICAL END"



## TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND!



Ask those people who the terrorists are, ask them who caused the 'troubles' in Ireland, and ask them if they think British troops have any right to be in Ireland in the first place. The answer would come back loud and clear: British troops in Ireland are imperialist troops, they are oppressive troops, and they have absolutely *no* right to be there.

Since the formation of the Northern Ireland statelet in 1922, British imperialism has fostered the most vicious sectarianism, between Protestant and Catholic. Seldom can a state have come into existence with such barbarity. Endless curfews and shootings followed the setting up of this totally artificial division of Ireland.

Now that British imperialism looks at its needs in Ireland slightly differently, the sectarian divisions have become a harmful nuisance. The monster created by

## SCRAP LABOUR'S REPRESSIVE LAWS!

the British imperialists is beyond their control: the protestant ultras still see the only solution to their problems in terms of blocking any steps forward on the part of the Catholic workers.

Labour would have liked to draw the whole of Ireland together in some 'federal solution' and allow the government of the South to police the whole country in the interests of British capitalism. The loyalist strike smashed this dream.

Since the steps towards a 'federal solution' were destroyed, Labour's emissary of imperialism in Ireland, Merlyn Rees, has turned once again to the traditional allies of British imperialism in Ireland — the loyalists. The whole idea of 'power-sharing', however vague, has been dropped; the security forces have been massively increased; the loyalist para-military groups have been allowed to recruit to these 'official' bully-boys and even further increase their control over them.

The imperialist policies of the Labour Government are beginning to turn an appallingly bloody situation

into a real bloodbath. Such a bloodbath is guaranteed if the British army remains in the North of Ireland and succeeds in disarming the Republican population. British workers must realise that the longer the troops stay in Ireland, the more Irish workers will die and the more likely it becomes that the war will spread to England, in one form or another.

That is why trade union militants must take up the call that is beginning to come from small sections and individuals in the labour movement: 'take the situation out of the control of the military and place it in the hands of the labour movement' as a member of the TGWU Midlands Executive has put it. This call has already been echoed by Labour MP Jock Stallard, and by the District President of the Manchester AUEW.

The Labour Government prefers a different approach. Their new laws are indeed 'draconian', but they have confused many workers. Acceptance of these laws ties workers to Labour's 'solution' of *increased repression* and prevents them from understanding that the only real solution lies in British withdrawal and Irish self-determination.

Moreover, such laws constitute a powerful new weapon that reactionaries can use to split British and Irish workers. We should also remember that the con-

## STOP THE MOVES TOWARDS A POLICE STATE!

spiracy laws were first revived by the state to deal with alleged 'bombers', but they soon found another target — the Shrewsbury pickets. The Irish may pay the price for these laws today, but British workers will receive the bill tomorrow.

Militants in the trade unions must act now. The right have been able to make the most of recent events precisely because of the confusion in the British working class on the question of Ireland and the struggle of its workers for self-determination.

The hypocritical response of the capitalist press and the politicians to the Birmingham bombings, carefully ignores the daily harassment and murder of Catholic workers in the North, and the figure grows each day.

Ever since British troops were sent to Ireland on a 'civilising mission' 300 years ago, the story has been the same. Cromwell began the process when his army massacred 30,000 at Drogheda. The terror of the British army 50 years ago, in the fancy dress costume of the Black and Tans, continued it. This gory thread of British imperialist history in Ireland, has been re-tied many times since — especially since 1969.

The same reactionaries who now scream for more repressive laws, hanging and shooting, conveniently forget the terror meted out by British troops against the Irish people. Ask the 11 children of Mrs Emily Grove, who was blinded and had most of the bones in her face broken by a rubber bullet fired at point blank range. Ask the families of those workers murdered by paratroopers in Derry on Bloody Sunday. Ask the internees and their families.

# LABOUR THROWS THE SWITCH

THE NEW LAW proposed by the Labour Government to crack down on the Irish republican movement in this country gives the state some of the most sweeping powers it has ever had outside of wartime.

The only peacetime precedent is the Prevention of Violence Act introduced by the Conservative Government in 1939, also in the wake of a spate of bombings connected with the Irish situation. That Act—on which the present law is very closely modelled—led to a massive wave of police harassment directed against the entire Irish community in Britain.

## POLITICAL

The importance of the ban on the IRA is not *legal* (for this reason the police have not been too enthusiastic about it) but *political*. It will help create a witch-hunt atmosphere in this country against the Irish community and all supporters of the

by  
**Chris Balfour**

time needed 'to break a man by conventional police interrogation'. But 'breaking' means much more than simply obtaining information—it means getting suspects into a state where they will agree with just about anything, especially if they are as psychologically disturbed as the Special Branch's latest 'catches'—Judith Ward and Sean O'Connell.

The new powers which the Home Secretary has to deport suspected terrorists are also very ominous. They exist over and above the powers that already exist under the Immigration Act, can be applied against UK citizens if they weren't born here or haven't lived here for at least 20 years, and can be used to ship people who come from the north of Ireland out of Britain—even though the Government claims it is all part of the 'United Kingdom'.

Anyone who has any illusions that they can count on the 'good sense' of Roy Jenkins and the Labour Government to see that these sweeping powers are used in moderation is dreaming. The Labour Government proved itself in the past quite willing to go to whatever extremes necessary to defend the interests of British imperialism.

But Labour's hand is not even firmly on the throttle this time. It was not an accident that Roy Jenkins, when pressed in the House of Commons about the exact meaning of certain of the more complex parts of 'his' law, had to admit that he didn't know what they meant! Nor that Labour's legal brain, Attorney General Sam Silkin, could only mumble that he 'agreed with the Home Secretary'. As the *Observer* revealed on Sunday, these laws were drawn up under the Tories 18 months ago by a committee of Home Office civil servants.

## WITCH-HUNT

The *real* threat of the law is not just what is *written* in it, but the fact that it will be seen as a green light to the forces of the state—the police and the courts in particular—to launch a massive witch-hunt against all the supporters of the Irish struggle in this country, without having to worry about resistance from the Labour Government.

The police will not move into high-gear right away. For a while they will play it cool, lest too sudden a move should arouse opposition within the labour movement and cause the Government to waver. But if the labour movement does not begin to display opposition to this new law, then the state will make its move. That is why it is extremely urgent that a massive campaign against the law is opened up *now*.

**WILLIAM CRAIG**, Ulster Unionist MP, Belfast East: 'You may rely on our support for the speedy passage of the proposed Bill.'

**GERRY FITT**, Social Democratic & Labour Party MP, Belfast West: 'The overwhelming majority of Irish people and the Irish race will support the Home Secretary in the measures he has announced.'

**THE TRIBUNE GROUP** at their meeting on Wednesday 27 November agreed 'to support' Jenkins' Bill.

**ROY JENKINS**, Home Secretary: 'These powers are draconian. In combination they are unprecedented in peacetime.'

**SIR KEITH JOSEPH**, Tory Shadow Home Secretary: 'We will try to help the Government get the Bill through as quickly as possible.'

**ALAN BEITH**, Liberal MP, Berwick-on-Tweed: 'The Liberals would want to assist in getting Parliamentary approval for the measures...'

**DONALD STEWART**, Scottish Nationalist MP, Western Isles: 'We believe these measures are fully justified by the present situation.'

**ROY JENKINS**, Home Secretary: 'I have indicated that I have no doubt that this matter will have to be, and should be, debated.'



While Labour brings in repressive legislation, which could be used against the labour movement, the two Shrewsbury pickets rot in jail. With a 'socialist' government like this, who needs a right-wing administration!

struggle of the Irish people. Certainly those who busied themselves denouncing 'illegal immigrants' after the House of Lords ruling that the Immigration Act was retrospective will now have a field day turning in 'IRA members.'

This section could become far more dangerous if Jenkins—or some future Home Secretary—decides to add to the list of 'proscribed' organisations. The new law allows him to ban 'any organisation that appears to him to be concerned in terrorism occurring in the United Kingdom and connected with Northern Irish affairs, or in promoting or encouraging it.' (our emphasis). This clause is so open-ended that it allows the Government, through the Home Secretary, to freely ban any group that opposes its Irish policy.

In the short term the most dangerous sections are those that allow the police to hold suspects for lengthy periods of time without laying charges, and permit the Home Secretary to exclude 'suspected terrorists'

from British soil.

At the moment the police have *no legal power at all* to detain anyone for questioning—but in practice magistrates allow them to hold a suspect for 24 hours before insisting that charges are laid. The new law both clearly establishes and extends the powers of the police. They can now hold someone whom they suspect of being involved in terrorist activities for up to 48 hours at will, and for five days more with the approval of the Home Secretary.

## TWO PROVISIONS

In practice there will be little difference between these two provisions, since the Home Secretary will have to base his decision on the recommendations of the police. So, as long as they don't overdo it, the police can now keep a prisoner in custody for a week without any worries.

According to a 'former colonial security officer' quoted in last Sunday's *Observer*, this is the minimum



Roy Jenkins — a 'civilised' Home Secretary, shows his real colours.

# REPR

**HYSTERIA AND CHAUVINISM** swept the House of Commons like a tornado last week. The Tories seized on Jenkins' Bill with glee. This was their kind of politics.

Capital punishment, greater powers for the police, sweeping powers to deport—not just blacks but now the Irish—and every demonstration against the bloody war in Ireland can be made illegal. The Tories had a field day. Today it's the Irish, tomorrow it is the British working class.

The Labour MPs were blown over like a pack of cards. The capitalist state whistled and like well trained-dogs they came to heel. Prostrating themselves before the altar of patriotism, they sold out the working class. Brian Walden muttered about 'vengeance'. Andrew Faulds talked about the 'reintroduction of capital punishment'.

Two of the Shrewsbury pickets are still in jail. The judges, the lawyers



4000 trade-unionists gathered last week for an open-air memorial service to the people killed in Birmingham. Front tried to exploit, that such understandable sympathy for the victims, could become a working-class and play into the hands of the bosses.

## All together now...

**MICHAEL ENGLISH**, Labour MP, Nottingham West: 'Some of the people charged with murder in connection with terrorist offences may be guilty of an offence which is still a capital offence. Is it an accident or design that they are never charged with that offence?'

**JILL KNIGHT**, Conservative MP, Birmingham Edgbaston: 'Will he [the Home Secretary] also accept that there is a demand outside the House in the country that persons guilty of the crime of terrorism should face capital punishment?'

**ANDREW FAULDS**, Labour MP, Warrley East: 'When tempers have cooled the Commons should be given a chance to debate the reintroduction of capital punishment for crimes of this kind.'

**REGINALD EYRE**, Conservative MP, Hull Green: 'The feeling of revulsion of the people in Birmingham is so great, nothing less than the reimposition of the death penalty for terrorism will be accepted...'



Andrew Faulds — 'bring back hanging'.

## FASCISTS GET THE SIGNAL

The Birmingham bombings have certainly provided the Labour Government with a pretext for strengthening the state apparatus. But they have done much more. They have given the fascists in this country their biggest op-

portunity since the Ugandan Asian affair.

The more blatant attempts by the fascists to mobilise the mass of workers have flopped miserably. The National Front's call for a one-day general strike went unanswered and their 'mass rally' against the IRA drew a grand total of 40 people. Nonetheless it would be wrong to minimise their impact over the last fortnight.

Tom Finagagan, a National Front candidate in the last election, has been heard repeatedly on Radio Birmingham urging workers to demand the return of hanging. NF members also handed out leaflets calling for strike action in Birmingham's biggest factories—including Austin Longbridge, Lucas, Daimler, BLMC Rover, etc.

# GREEN LIGHT FOR SESSION

and the police who framed those workers have had their powers extended. Now they can start witch-hunting every opponent of the Orange statelet of Craig, Powell and the sectarian bigots who finance and support them.

Heath, Joseph, and Jill Knight are delighted. They have called the tune and Jenkins, Heffer, Fitt and their friends have danced. Unlike the patriots of social democracy, the ruling class is well aware that these measures can be used to throttle the working class. At least the Tories make no pretence about upholding workers' rights.

The Labour leaders and the back-bench MPs, with their unseemly capitulation to the baying of the media, the screams of the Tories and the anti-Irish upsurge from their constituents, have calmly handed over the key which will be used to jail working class militants.



The Birmingham bombings. However there is a danger, which the National led into a reactionary, anti-Irish campaign, which could only divide the

On the Saturday after the bombing, they distributed 20,000 leaflets in the centre of Birmingham without any opposition and incited passers-by to attack *Red Weekly* and *Socialist Worker* sellers. They shouted slogans like 'Here is the IRA—take your revenge', and 'Here are the murderers of your children, let's get them'. At one stage the situation appeared quite menacing, but fortunately the bulk of the crowd were not totally convinced by the fascist agitators.

What is certain, however, is that the NF have considerably increased their membership over the last fortnight.

## CHALLENGE

Outside Birmingham the anti-fascist forces have managed to successfully challenge the fascists. In Coventry a 'Smash the IRA' meeting organised by the fascists in the city's main

shopping precinct failed because of the opposition mounted by members and supporters of the IS, IMG and the CP. The meeting had to be abandoned with the NF fuhrer John Tyndall beating a hasty retreat.

In Horsham a fascist meeting addressed by Martin Webster was vigorously heckled by a coach-load of 60 militants mobilised by the Crawley Anti-Fascist Committee to rout the fascists. A leading militant of the AFC, Dave Ward, an executive member of Crawley Trades Council, was attacked by a fascist with a hammer when he tried to enter the hall. Dave was taken to hospital with a suspected fracture of the skull.

In Liverpool the 'more-fascist-than-thou' British Movement organised a 'Smash the IRA' demon-

stration attended by all of 24 persons and Colin Jordan. They were heavily guarded by the police as there were also 200 militants from the local AFC present who chanted anti-fascist slogans throughout.

**ATTRACTIVE**  
In the wave of hysteria which has followed the bombings, and the total capitulation to chauvinism by Labour MPs of both right and 'left' variety, it is hardly surprising that fascist propaganda is beginning to sound attractive. Attempts in factories to isolate and expel all left-wing militants are reported elsewhere in this paper. The latest example comes from Imperial Metal Industries in Birmingham, where a 'workers court' has suspended a militant from Workers Fight for 'supporting the IRA'.

How did the right wing at Wilmot Breeden go about launching their attack?

It started on the Monday after the Birmingham bombings. That afternoon right wing elements in the assembly shop, where one of us works, began to circulate rumours that we were members of the IRA and had been involved in the bombings.

The following day they secured a stoppage of work in the assembly plant and we were advised to leave the shop floor and go into conference with the convenors. Later that day a mass meeting of the two shops where we work—assembly and blanking—was called. We sent a statement to the meeting, but it voted 54 to 22 to have us suspended.

Was this vote representative of the feeling in the two shops?

Not really. There are about 200 workers in the two shops, but many militants abstained in the vote because they knew the charges against us were absurd and thought the whole thing was stupid.

This is borne out by the fact that after the decision to suspend us was taken, the blanking shop met and voted unanimously to demand our reinstatement.

Why was the right able to influence the assembly workers?

You've got to appreciate the fact that the assembly plant is mainly made up of women workers. Because of all the problems they face and the fact that the unions do little about them, their involvement in the union is pretty low. This gives the shop stewards in that plant a lot of opportunity to manoeuvre, and that's just what they did at the first meeting.

You can get an idea of what we're up against if I tell you that one of the assembly shop stewards likes to boast of the fact that she used to be one of the only six women paratroopers in the British army.

Was this the first time the right had tried to get at you?

Oh no. During the national AUEW overtime ban they managed to get the comrade who works in the assembly plant—a member of the National Society of Metal Mechanics—sacked because she called for solidarity with the AUEW members' action. She was

other trade unionists in support of us has under-cut the right wing. So we're both going to be back at work on Monday, and expect that we'll be able to work without any disruption. Has this sort of attack occurred in other factories?

I personally know of four similar cases—two militants who have been

## UNION RIGHT ON THE BANDWAGON

only reinstated after the convenor stepped in.

What happened after Tuesday?

Well, I returned to work in the blanking shop on Thursday. A number of other shops and shop stewards called for the reinstatement of both of us, and talked about strike action if there was any move to sack either of us.

That day another mass meeting was held—this time just of the assembly shop. The AUEW factory convenor tried to put our case, but he was shouted down by the shop steward's lackeys. So he denounced the meeting as a put-up job and walked out. He was supported by the majority of workers at the meeting who walked out with him. The meeting then broke up in a shambles. So what happens now?

We think that the clear-cut stand we took and the principled stand of

suspended from work at Imperial Metal Industries in Witton, and another two at Norton-Villiers, Triumph. I also know of two stewards at the Austin Longbridge plant who've been forced to resign.

The management at IMI must be as pleased as punch, because they've just had to weather a five week militant strike. Now there's a real danger that they can get rid of two militants under cover of the 'outcry' from the shop floor. It's important that trade unionists across the country take up such cases, and prevent the bosses from taking advantage of the situation to split the workforce and victimise militants.

INTERVIEW BY OUR  
MIDLANDS CORRESPONDENT.

## IMG MILITANTS SPEAK OUT

The following is the statement issued to the shop floor mass meeting by the two IMG comrades at Wilmot Breeden.

At this point in time it would seem that rumours are circulating in the plant with respect to our supposed involvement in the bombing incidents that took place on Thursday night in Birmingham. In order to clarify the position and put an end to these rumours we will state below what our real position on the issue is.

1. We are in no way involved in the bombings.
2. We are in no way associated by membership with any organisation that may have carried out these bombings.
3. We believe that the root cause behind the bombings is, as Roy Jenkins stated on television last night, the problems in the six counties of Ireland.
4. We believe the basis for any solution to the problems in Ireland is dependent on the economic, military and political withdrawal of British forces from Ireland.
5. It is true that in the early hours of Friday morning our house was raided by the Special Branch, who took away quantities of mouse poison, cello tape, materials used for motor bike repairs and some written materials, newspapers, hand bills and cuttings from the *Birmingham Evening Mail*. We have not been charged with any offence, and have independent witnesses, including union officials, as to our whereabouts on Thursday

night.

6. The only reason we can put behind these incidents is that we are involved in the movement for withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and no doubt in the eyes of the security forces this puts us under suspicion, as it no doubt does any other person who holds these views.

The Troops Out Movement is a fully legal organisation which is in no way connected with the IRA. It includes in its sponsorship six Labour MPs, including John Lee from Handsworth, and Jeff Rooker from Perry Barr, as well as many trade unionists.

We have attended meetings addressed by Joan Maynard, Labour MP for Sheffield Brightside, Jeff Rooker, Labour MP for Perry Barr, and Pat Hickey, UCATT convenor. We also attended a demonstration called by the Troops Out Movement in London last month which was sponsored by the six Labour MPs and attracted 3000 other individuals.

7. We have heard nothing from the police since, and we are in the process of contacting a solicitor to ensure the return of our possessions which were confiscated.

JOHN GRAHAM (AUEW)  
LINDA SIMON (NSMMI)

ration attended by all of 24 persons and Colin Jordan. They were heavily guarded by the police as there were also 200 militants from the local AFC present who chanted anti-fascist slogans throughout.

## ATTRACTIVE

In the wave of hysteria which has followed the bombings, and the total capitulation to chauvinism by Labour MPs of both right and 'left' variety, it is hardly surprising that fascist propaganda is beginning to sound attractive. Attempts in factories to isolate and expel all left-wing militants are reported elsewhere in this paper. The latest example comes from Imperial Metal Industries in Birmingham, where a 'workers court' has suspended a militant from Workers Fight for 'supporting the IRA'.

The Labour Party, instead of combating this hysteria and withdrawing troops from Ireland, actually sustains it. Most of its Midlands leaders have joined with local Tories to demand that capital punishment be restored for 'terrorism'. Most shop-stewards have either attempted to simply 'pacify' the situation or avoid factory meetings from taking place.

This is not the way in which chauvinism is going to be overcome in the British labour movement. Even the Labour MP for Birmingham, Handsworth, John Lee, who supported and still supports the demand for troops out of Ireland, has demanded the institution of a system of 'identity cards', a demand which Jenkins had to turn down!

While the task confronting the left in Birmingham and nationally

in the coming months is an uphill one, it can be achieved by: (a) developing a united front of all organisations opposed to the Jenkins measures to demand their immediate repeal; and (b) taking up the call initially made by Joan Maynard MP and supported by the Birmingham Troops Out Movement and York Woods building site UCATT for a trade union conference in the New Year on Ireland.

The right-wing backlash has left deep scars—but given time they will heal, provided that socialists begin to develop a united fight back now.

TERRY  
KELLY

# The state's dirty

## Italy -the state doesn't play clean

ALMOST EXACTLY five years ago, the people of Milan experienced the same shock, horror and panic as the people of Birmingham.

A bomb had exploded, blowing 16 people to pieces and crippling dozens more. It was just as indiscriminate as the Birmingham pub bomb, for those who died were everyday customers at the Bank of Agriculture in the city centre.

But the similarity does not end there. Without a shred of evidence, government officials, magistrates, police commissioners and the press denounced left-wing extremists and 'anarchists' as responsible. Without further ado, police arrested five members of the anarchist 'May 22 Movement', and charged one of its leaders, Pietro Valpreda, with the bombing. In the streets, fascists (posing as 'outraged members of the public') beat up left-wingers and held a huge rally in Milan to call on the armed forces to take over and 'restore order'.

### GODSEND

The bomb was better than a dozen papal blessings for the Italian ruling class. Italy had just passed through what became known as the 'hot autumn'. Strikes in all the major factories, huge rent struggles, the creation of workers councils in some areas, and even an outright insurrection against redundancies in the town of Battipaglia, had thrown the bosses on to the defensive. They were about to concede the fruits of the struggle to the workers when the bomb went off.

With suspicion of the left gripping the population, the bosses had an easier time in the contract negotiations with the union bureaucrats. Parliamentary Bills on housing, schools and social security resulting from the strikers' demands failed to get through Parliament that winter. After further bombs went off in the autumn of 1970, the trade union bureaucrats even went round calling a halt to strikes, saying they would lead to 'anarchy'.

The bombings also gave the police the excuse they needed to launch a crack down. After a series of police raids, further bombings, and yet more raids and arrests, the far-left organisations calculated that by 1972 70 per cent of their members were either in prison, under preventive detention, or being prosecuted.

They were charged not with planting bombs, but with 'inciting to overthrow the state', 'distributing subversive and anti-national propaganda' and other 'crimes' under the never-repealed laws of Mussolini, whose use against the left the bombings now made easier....

### FASCISTS ON TRIAL

It is not surprising therefore that in fact the left had nothing to do with the bombings. Virtually everyone in Italy now admits this.

Three fascists, one a leading member of the MSI (Italian Social Movement - the largest fascist organisation, with 56 deputies in Parliament) now face trial for the Milan outrage while Valpreda has finally been released after years in jail. Meanwhile, fascist action squads like Ordine Nero and the Mussolini Action Squad are now claiming responsibility for scores of bombings that have taken place since 1969.

It is even less surprising that it took five years for the truth to be generally acknowledged. Evidence

pointing to the fascists had been systematically concealed by state officials active in framing Valpreda. These included such notables as the one-time Interior Minister, Franco Restivo (equivalent of Roy Jenkins).

Evidence was destroyed by the heads of the political branch of the Rome and Milan police forces, and the Director of the bureau of 'secret affairs' in the Ministry of the Interior (Home Office). A member of the security services (SID - equivalent of Special Branch and MI6), Guido Giannettini, has recently confessed to having had working links with the three fascists now on trial at the time of the Milan operation. Lawyers trying to draw attention to the truth at various times since 1969 have been murdered or have 'disappeared'.

The majority of Italian businessmen profited from the effects of the bombs, but this group want a more drastic solution. A few weeks ago General Vito Miceli, the head of SID, was finally arrested for conspiring with Valerio Borghese (the fascist 'Black Prince') to bring about a coup d'etat in the December of 1970.

The immediate aim of the Milan bombing - known to, if not actually planned by, the SID - was in fact to provoke a military coup in Italy, exactly as the fascist criminals had demanded while the bodies were still warm.

### REAL AUTHORS

The bombings and military plots express the despair of a section of Italian capital. Yet the real authors are to be found in NATO and the CIA, whose pet Greek colonels trained and supplied the squads of the MSI. For those who plant the bombs and do the cover-ups are the willing instruments in what has been called a 'strategy of tension'.

This strategy is simple. By spreading uncertainty and suspicion, the aim is to frighten the trade union bureaucracy, justify witch-hunts and frame-ups against the left, allow the Government to step up repression against the whole of the working class movement, and prevent (in Italy) a govern-



A bomb planted at this Milan bank in 1969 blew 16 people to pieces. Scores of left-wingers were rounded up, while the fascists used the occasion to demand military intervention 'to restore order'. Now it is known that the fascists themselves were responsible.

ment of socialists and communists coming to power. Simultaneously, the fascist butchers, the spies and the Army gorillas who carry it out are all the time straining to bring the tension to an end by putting themselves forward for power.

Next time innocent people are blown to bits, stop and ask yourself: who really profits from this? When the IMG or the IRA point the finger

## JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED?

The bulk of the capitalist press were in no doubt at all that the Birmingham bombings were the work of the Provisional IRA.

Like most other papers, the *Sun* found no room in its 'Smash the IRA' edition to print the Provo disclaimer. Confusion there may be on the length of the warning, doubt as to whether the Provo code was used, but unanimity there is on one point - the Birmingham bombs were Provo bombs.

But rather more than the assertions of Fleet Street are required here. In the past, the press have failed to explain why after a bombing campaign of more than three years the Provos should suddenly start planting no-warning bombs in Britain. Even under conditions of occupation by 15,000 troops and the best bomb squads in the world in Northern Ireland, the warning has been a regular hallmark of their campaign.

The Birmingham target, too, is equally strange. Certainly it does not fit into the categories outlined by David O'Connell on television recently.

The gentlemen of Scotland Yard assure us that at long last the fiendish IRA have perfected their 'British units', which will continue to operate from inside the country. Strange, then, that the well-bruised Birmingham 'suspects' should have been found on the train to Belfast. But then the IRA are 'desperate men' - confused as well, to judge from the fact that the pillar-box bomb in Caledonian Road last week went off immediately outside the offices of the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign!

### WHO'S BEHIND THEM?

Of course there is absolutely no

P. Goodhart (Tory MP for Beckenham) - "Does the Home Secretary recognise that the Special Branch and intelligence services are the front line of our defence against terrorism? Will he resist any attempt to cut these services or to impose any fresh restrictions on their activities at home and abroad?"  
Roy Jenkins - "I am well aware of the importance of these services, particularly at the present time. There is no proposal to cut them. As I have made clear in the past they will receive my full support in the discharge of all their proper functions." (House of Commons debate, 28 November)

doubt that the Provisionals have been behind some of the bombs in Britain - the tributes paid to Patrick McDade as an IRA Lieutenant were only the latest confirmation of this. But who was behind those for which the Provos have specifically denied responsibility, like the Tower of London and Birmingham bombings?

It isn't an idle question. Two years ago the Southern Irish Government was able to push through drastic new anti-IRA legislation after a couple of car bombs went off in the centre of Dublin. Since then further evidence has come to light, partly as a result of the Littlejohn affair, which has led even Fianna Fail leader Jack Lynch (who was prime minister at the time) to speculate on the possible involvement of British intelligence.

Dublin yesterday, Birmingham today? Jack Lynch first, Roy Jenkins second?

One thing is certain. Some very definitely non-Irish hands have been very busy recently in connection with bombs.

### 'RED FLAG 74'

On 15 October, a man with 'a clear voice and educated accent' telephoned Yorkshire TV to say that the Guildford bombings were the work of the 'International Marxists and the IRA'. The 'International Marxists' it was claimed in a subsequent call, were dissidents from the IMG who had formed their own group - 'Red Flag 74'.

This was news to the IMG, whose strenuous denials however were treated with little interest by editors gleefully reporting every claim made by the 'well spoken' caller from 'Red Flag 74', despite the fact that 'Red Flag 74' always rang up after a bomb had exploded and never before.

This 'organisation' had some remarkable features. Its growth-rate was stunning: it grew from '40 in London mainly' (*The Guardian*, 25 October) to '500 in Manchester alone' (*The Guardian*, 22 November). Its ignorance of Irish politics must have embarrassed its members, for at one stage it claimed it would be holding a demonstration in which both UDA and IRA would take part! As early as February, an 'organisation' called the 'Red Brigade' was alleged to have carried out the M62 bombing. With the appearance of 'Red Flag 74', press speculation concerning the 'active involvement' of the far-left in the 'Provisional's

bombing campaign' reached new heights. In solemn seriousness *The Times* of 25 October was explaining to us that the left was 'providing safe houses and strategical advice, including the detailed geographical planning needed for making attacks in the heart of London'. (Paddies are too ignorant to read maps.)

While we were following the adventures of 'Red Flag 74', 14 pacifists were arrested for handing out leaflets to British soldiers, and the police were doing everything their power to obstruct the planning of the 27 October Troops Out demonstration, which they also physically attacked.

Is there a connection between all these events? The telephone calls, the arrests and the harassment are all very convenient for the ruling class, and especially the Government. The Labour Cabinet has no policy for Ireland other than handing out one concession after another to the Loyalists, giving rise to a growing working class unease over what Britain is actually up to in Ireland. By painting the left - the most active in favour of pulling out British troops - as dangerous bombers, this unease might be prevented from developing into a mass movement for troop withdrawal.

### PRESS HYSTERIA

The Birmingham bomb has the same 'timeliness' about it as the campaign against the left. For weeks before, the national press had treated us to lurid accounts of 'IRA fanatic' Judith Ward, now serving a life sentence in jail for the M62 bombing in February. From the jumble of weird and wonderful 'confessions', none of which showed more than a semblance to reality, the Crown presented a

hodge-podge of extracts, and called it a case. Interwoven with these reports were the prosecutions of Republicans for 'wearing uniforms' and widespread dawn raids in many of which 'documents were taken away'.

The press reached fever pitch when David O'Connell made his speech on TV and Patrick McDade was given a ceremony which was 'an insult to the British people'. A few hours later....

Jenkins has his excuse for 'draconian legislation', under which the police anti-IRA squads can move into top gear with widespread approval. For the moment the growing unease about Britain's Irish policy seems to have been drowned by calls for sterner measures against the 'terrorists'. Perhaps things aren't so bad for the ruling class after all?

A. Jennings



# linen



## LABOUR'S WHITEWASH

During the last election campaign Harold Wilson, in an interview with David Frost, complacently maintained that nothing like Watergate could ever happen in this country.

He ignored, of course, the whitewashing of the Lennon killing and the Littlejohn affair by the Labour Government itself to help the 'security forces' cover up the crimes committed daily against the Irish people.

### UNDER THE CARPET

There was no real inquiry into the Littlejohn affair, though it was publicly admitted that a member of the last Tory Government had been directly involved in interviewing the Littlejohn brothers and supervising their assignment: to infiltrate the IRA and act as agent provocateurs in the South of Ireland.

While in opposition, the Labour Party demanded an inquiry into the whole affair. Once in office, everything was brushed under the carpet. No doubt British intelligence informed the Labour ministers that they were still engaged in carrying out similar acts to discredit and isolate the IRA, and that any inquiry would damage their present activities and discourage potential recruits and informers.

As always, the Labour leaders succumbed. There wasn't a whisper of protest in the Parliamentary Labour Party. The stalwarts of the *Tribune* group closed ranks, no doubt boasting of their sensitivity in appreciating the burdens imposed by the 'responsibility of office'.

### MORE SINISTER

The Lennon affair is even more sinister. As we reported in these pages two weeks ago, the only thing remaining to complete the cover-up was the Home Office report. To no one's surprise, the Starritt Report released last week totally clears the Special Branch from any responsibility and has been accepted as such by the entire establishment. The leader writer in *The Guardian* merely wondered why Lennon was not protected by the Special Branch from the IRA assassins who obviously gunned him down.

Matters are as simple as that for *The Guardian*. They proclaim that the IRA killed Lennon. They offer no proof, and since the IRA is banned they need not fear any court actions for libel. The self-styled conscience of liberal England is not unduly worried by what has happened.

The National Council for Civil

Liberties has to its credit denounced the report as a 'whitewash on the Special Branch' and demanded an 'independent inquiry'. As its acting general secretary, Patricia Hewitt, pointed out: 'The major questions raised by the Lennon stroy about the work of the Special Branch are left unanswered by the Starritt report.'

We should, of course, add that even an 'independent inquiry' headed by some old judge would, in the present political situation, have produced a similar result. After all, it was Judge Widgery who baldly stated that in a nasty world the police had to do nasty jobs. Starritt is more crude and denies that anything nasty was done at all.

The Labour Attorney General Sam Silkin has stated his complete satisfaction with the handling of the Lennon case. There was 'no impropriety' as far as he was concerned, and that for the Parliamentary Labour Party will be that. The case is buried, and all good Labour MPs can sleep in peace.

### WORKERS' TRIBUNAL

We do not need to stress again in these pages the enormity of the cover-up operation carried out by Jenkins with the approval of the Cabinet. In the present atmosphere of hysteria and anti-Irish witch-hunts, the Labour leaders might hope that they will get away with it—and, indeed, for a period they might. But the Irish war still goes on, and before its end it will claim many more political casualties, amongst whom will be the whitewashers in this Labour Government.

But for the workers' movement it is vital that these issues are taken up. We are in favour of an independent workers' tribunal to investigate the role of the Special Branch and the intelligence services. The Bertrand Russell Foundation, which has investigated crimes in Vietnam and Latin America and is now engaged in the praiseworthy task of defending the victims of the bureaucracy in the USSR and Eastern Europe, should also turn its attention to matters nearer home and set up such an enquiry.

After all, the men leading the security forces are the enemies of both the Irish and the British working people. As such they have to be fought, exposed and defeated in the labour movement. The blanket support given to the Jenkins measures by the Labour Party conference last week shows that this task confronting socialists will not be an easy one.

C. Howard

# IN FOCUS

## THE IRA - WHERE WE STAND

No one with even the slightest acquaintance of Irish history can accept the absurd story of the British press that the IRA is a tiny group of blood-thirsty maniacs who somehow have imposed themselves on the Irish people. The IRA has deep roots in the whole development of Irish history. In 800 years of British rule, British bloodshed and British massacres, the Irish people have never been crushed.

On innumerable occasions the Irish people have risen, weapons in hand, to attack their oppressor. The IRA grew out of this long history following the most glorious of all these struggles—the Dublin Easter Rising of 1916. It was the struggle of the IRA which finally expelled direct British rule from 26 of the 32 counties in Ireland, and it was only traitors to the cause of Irish freedom which prevented the final expulsion of British political rule from the North.

Since the formation of the sectarian Northern state it is the IRA which has defended the Catholic population against the attacks of the British army and the Loyalist thugs. It is the armed self-defence force of the Republican population. The IRA is the product of a profound social process—not of some backdoor conspiracy.

But the IRA, to its everlasting glory, has gone further. It has recognised, not clearly, not with a socialist understanding, but with far better sense of reality than many so-called Marxists, that the cause of the oppression of the people of the North, the cause of the domination of the Protestant workers by reaction, the cause of the bloodbath in the North of Ireland is British rule. The IRA has set itself the target of freeing Ireland from that domination. For that reason it has waged war, and continues to wage war, against British Imperialism.

In the course of the struggle the IRA has made many mistakes—both political and military. Politically it has never understood that Ireland can only be freed from British rule by destroying capitalism in Ireland. It has never understood that to wage a real war against Britain it must simultaneously wage a war against the Irish capitalist class. Finally it has never understood how to organise the people of Ireland into real mass organisations of struggle. Militarily it has not seen that armed struggle cannot be an end in itself, but has to be directed by a political strategy and a political understanding.

For this reason the IRA has made terrible and tragic errors which only set back its own cause. If any of its supporters were associated with the Birmingham bombings these were the latest example of such a tragic error.

But let there be no doubt as to where the responsibility for such violence really lies. It lies not with the IRA but first and above all with British imperialism. Britain has murdered, starved, and massacred in Ireland on a scale of violence the IRA could never match in a thousand years. It is not the IRA but British imperialism which is responsible for every single one of the 1200 deaths in the North

of Ireland in the last years. British imperialism had no hesitation in arranging bombings in Dublin when it wanted anti-IRA legislation passed. British imperialism had no compunction in ruthlessly murdering its dupes such as Kenneth Lennon. British imperialism would be quite capable of killing not 19 but tens of thousands in this country if it suited its interests.

British imperialism is the most bloodstained monster the world has ever seen. It maintained its 'peace' in Britain on the bones and blood of Arabs, Indians, Jews, Latin Americans and the Irish. British imperialism supported the destruction of whole cities in Dresden, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Wilson, through his support of the Americans in Vietnam, is an accomplice in mass murder on a scale even Hitler would have admired and which the forces of the IRA could never even conceive of, let alone carry out.

But the second responsibility for those deaths in Birmingham lies with the leaders of the working class in Britain who have refused to struggle to end Britain's iron grip on Ireland. If the IRA makes errors it is above all in an attempt to cut through the wall of silence the working class movement has allowed to exist on the horrors of the North of Ireland. If one millionth of the effort put into condemning the IRA had been put into getting Britain out of Ireland there would be no Birmingham, no Guildfords, and none of the far vaster horrors perpetrated by the British in Belfast and Derry.

As for the gentlemen of the law, let us make one thing clear for them. The IMG has never, and does not now, support the IRA by material, financial or by any other such means. We don't have the ability to, even if we wanted. Neither do we support them politically. We seek to build a Trotskyist organisation, the Revolutionary Marxist Group, in Ireland. We do, however, know one thing. We do not and never will mistake the violence of the slave for the violence of the slaveowner. You gentlemen of British Imperialism, you are responsible for every single one of the 19 deaths in Birmingham and in every other place where British imperialism befools the face of the earth.

Any errors which may be committed by the IRA are the result of an oppressed people striking against their master. Your violence is an unspeakable crime for which you will be condemned through the whole of human history.

When revolutionaries score the final victory in Ireland and in Britain they will learn from the errors of the IRA, but they will be proud to stand in its traditions as the vanguard of an oppressed people. You, the Jenkins and Wilsons of this world, will be remembered only with disgust and loathing as the accomplices of some of the most fearful crimes of human history. The IRA will be remembered with pride when your names have fallen from all human recollection.



A rare occasion: platform at a united front meeting in April 1973 to protest against police repression, with (l to r): Duncan Hymas (IS), Gerry Lawless (chair), Gerry Healy ISLL—now WRP), and Tariq Ali (IMG)

PHOTO: EZRA NATHAN

## IMG puts out call to revolutionary left.....

Parliament has voted unprecedented powers to the police and the capitalist state.

The cowardice of the Labour MPs—particularly those on the 'left'—in refusing to fight against the appalling consequences of the Jenkins' Bill will rebound on the entire labour movement.

As the Tories, the media and the racist organisations like the National Front have fanned the flames of chauvinism the majority of even the 'left' MPs have stood idly by, impotent in the face of nationalist hysteria.

The police have been given sweeping new powers. The right to hold without charging for seven days is a step towards internment.

Organisations can be proscribed on the flimsiest of reasons and anyone who thinks that will just be restricted to the IRA or Irish immigrant organisations is supremely naive.

The Act is designed to smash any opposition in Britain to imperialism's war in the six Counties. But it will do more than that. If not resisted it will create a climate of opinion where internment becomes 'normal' and the proscribing of left-wing groups becomes 'acceptable.'

The Labour 'lefts' and the 'progressive' leaders of the trade unions in their great majority have opted out of fighting the Bill. This places an enormous responsibility on the shoulders of the revolutionary

left who have to take the fight against the Bill into the labour movement.

In the summer of 1973 the Workers Revolutionary Party, the International Socialists and the IMG signed a joint declaration in defence of basic democratic rights. The IMG considers that the time was never more appropriate than now to put that declaration into practice.

We have therefore written to the IS and the WRP asking for a meeting of the three organisations to discuss a national campaign to fight the Bill. In our opinion unless the full forces of the revolutionary left, the Communist Party and all independent militants opposed to Jenkins's measures are united in a struggle against the Bill the only people to gain will be the ruling class.

## Racists wriggle

WHEN 1974 OPENED, a continuous belt of mineral-rich territory along the African coast—from Angola in the west, via the Republic of South Africa at the tip of the continent, through to Mozambique in the east—lay firmly in the hands of colonialism and white racism.

But now, before the year is even out, the scene has changed dramatically. The collapse of the old dictatorship in Portugal—brought about in large measure by the 'bottomless pit' of Portugal's African wars—has brought the liberation forces important new gains.

Already Mozambique is governed by the FRELIMO liberation movement and is well on the road to independence. Frantic manoeuvres are taking place in Angola to protect imperialist interests there, but even the most die-hard reactionaries realise this can only be done by making concessions to the black nationalist movements.

### TREMORS

The tremors are beginning to reach the bastions of 'white power'—South Africa and Rhodesia. Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith has started to complain about FRELIMO support for liberation movement guerrillas in Rhodesia, and South Africa is now frantically tossing political crumbs to the black African states.

Immediately after the Lusaka agreement that set up the FRELIMO Government in Mozambique, promises of 'continued collaboration and co-operation' flowed from the mouths of South African spokesmen. A number of key economic factors lay behind this attitude.

About 50% of South Africa's trade is done through the port of Lourenço Marques, which is the nearest outlet for the Republic's industrial heartland. Moreover, the gold mines of South Africa are now almost totally dependent on imported labour from surrounding countries. For the mine managements this is superior because they come for limited periods of time—a maximum of 12 months—and do not bring their families. This reduces the threat of trades unionisation and strikes, and the management undoubtedly exploits the ethnic and language differences between different groups in the work force.

The result is that mine wages are depressed way below the average for blacks in South Africa which enables, for instance, the working of seams whose equivalent in mineral content were closed down as uneconomic in the USA 30 years ago.

Of this contract labour, 100,000 per annum or approximately 25% of the labour force comes from Mozambique. In a situation where Malawi, the source of another 28%, has cut off further recruitment, it is vital for the mining industry that the Mozambique quota be maintained, if not increased, in the future.

Finally, the Cabora Bassa dam project on the Zambesi River in Mozambique is nearing completion of its first stage. The massive hydro-electric station is linked by overhead cables with the Transvaal, to which it is planned the overwhelming majority of power produced will be exported.

These three factors explain the attitudes taken up by the South African Government, the acid test of which came when white racists in Lourenço Marques staged their protest against the Lusaka agreement, resulting in bloody clashes in the streets. The obligatory 'horror stories' were published in the South African press, but South Africa's Foreign Minister, Hilgard Muller, took a very cool attitude towards the rebels. He announced that South African mercenaries would not be allowed into Mozambique under any circumstances, that South Africa would not interfere in the situation, and even offered co-operation with the Mozambique authorities.



Ian Smith—described by *Johannesburg Star* as 'embarrassing bit of surplus baggage'.

### HYPOCRISY

This jumble of hypocrisy and offerings of goodwill was clearly designed for consumption by the FRELIMO leadership and the people of Mozambique, as well as the leadership of certain other black African states.

The success of these manoeuvres is far from certain, but there are some

ominous signs. Mozambique's Prime Minister, Joaquim Chissano, has several times affirmed his Government's desire for collaboration with all neighbouring territories, and there have been unconfirmed press reports that secret clauses in the Lusaka pact guarantee the continuation of the Cabora Bassa agreement. This is borne out by a recent speech of South African Prime Minister Vorster, when he referred to 'certain guarantees' he had received from Mozambique concerning access to its ports, the supply of migrant labour, and the sale of electric power.

South Africa's line towards Rhodesia has headed in the opposite direction. The Vorster Government has never been a fervent supporter of Smith's positions because Rhodesia has no economic importance for South Africa. Indeed it is actually an economic burden, because South Africa must make up for many of the shortages produced by the international economic sanctions against Rhodesia. For example, many of Rhodesia's imports and exports (e.g. chrome) have to pass through South Africa in order to appear as such on shipping documentation and 'bust' the sanctions. This places a big strain on South Africa's transportation system. Should the new Mozambique Government cut the crucial rail link with the port of Beira which carries 80% of Rhodesia's trade, the pressure on the hard pressed rail network would become intolerable.

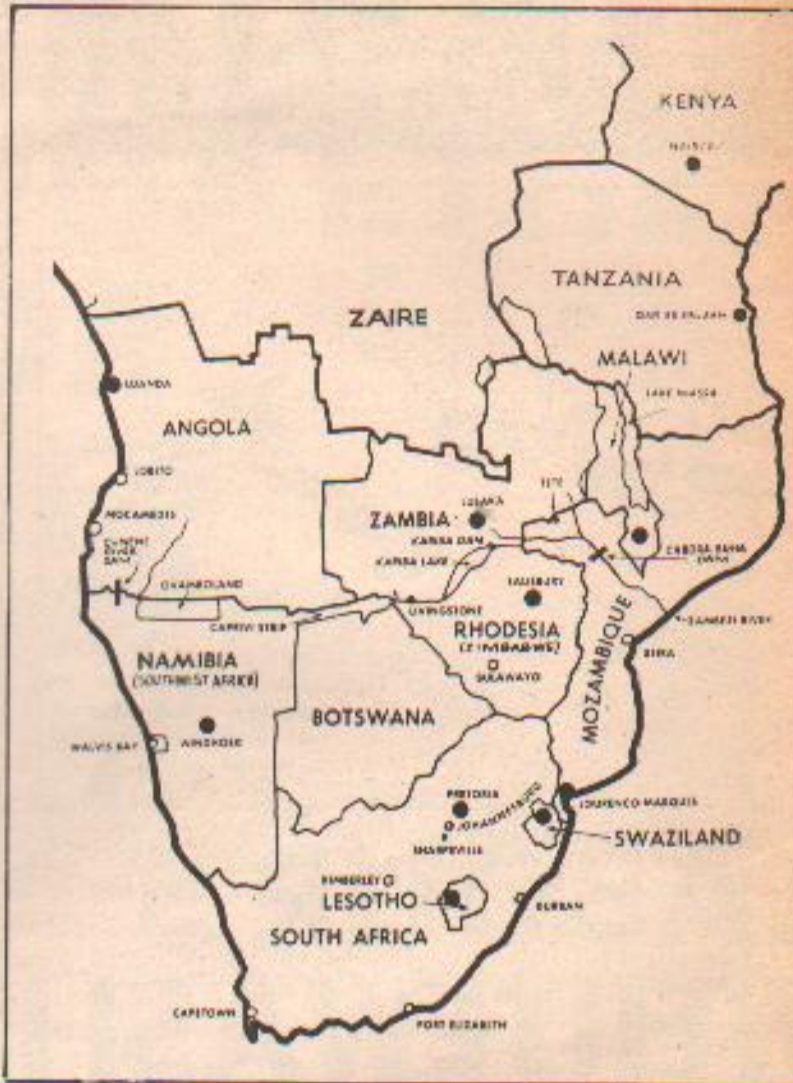
### BOTTOMLESS PIT

South Africa's involvement in the war against the ZANU guerrillas in Rhodesia has perhaps provided Vorster's police with some valuable training, but the renewed upsurge in the fighting is a signal that in the long term this war would be a bottomless pit for South African men, military resources and finance. Finally, there have been clear signs that the issue of Rhodesia is the biggest current obstruction to 'normalisation' of South Africa's relations with the black states to the north.

So far there has been no decision to end support for Rhodesia, although this has been advocated in the press. The *Johannesburg Star* of 18 October, for instance, declared 'black rule in Mozambique makes the Rhodesian "white buffer" less important to us strategically. Economically she is largely a burden. And politically we have plenty of our own crosses to bear without that embarrassing bit of surplus baggage to the north. At the United Nations we have been having our roughest ride yet: and on top of that Britain, which generally leaves us alone there, has criticised South Africa in unusually specific terms as the chief breaker of economic sanctions against Rhodesia...we suggest Mr. Vorster use his position of unique influence with Mr. Smith to force the pace of constructive change there. He must spell out that the fantasy of indefinite white supremacy has a very limited tenure indeed...'

Another area where South African policy has undergone change is Namibia, the former German colony of South West Africa, which was handed over to South Africa to administer by the League of Nations in 1919. This has long been a bone of contention between South Africa, which continues to assert her 'rights' in the territory, and the United Nations (which inherited responsibility from the League of Nations).

Namibia is important to South Africa as a source of labour for her mines, a source of valuable mineral wealth (especially diamonds), and as a 'buffer' to protect South African borders from hostile forces. But there is also strong opposition to South African rule inside Namibia. The South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) was able to organise



an effective boycott of the 1973 elections held to set up a phony 'puppet government', and Namibian workers—particularly in the key area of Ovamboland—have organised militant opposition to the migrant labour system.

Vorster has recently been saying that the people of Namibia should be given an opportunity to decide their own future. Namibia is adjacent to Angola, which (whatever the current manoeuvres of the Portuguese and imperialism), threatens to become independent in the not too distant future. Ovamboland itself straddles the border and the continual two-way movement of population poses a threat to the security of racist rule there. Vorster is obviously thinking about ridding himself of this potentially troublesome and continually embarrassing possession in order to be able to concentrate his defences in the heartland of South Africa.



Zambian President, Kenneth Kaunda—hails Vorster's 'voice of reason'

His aim will be to try to produce a solution which would bow to the notion of formal independence but keep the area in reality totally tied to South Africa.

One aim of these changes in policy may be to consolidate the white racist stronghold on a smaller and more defensible basis around the heartland of the South African state. But Vorster's other goal (at least of equal importance) is to 'normalise' relations with black Africa.

As the most economically developed power on the continent, South Africa sees itself as the potential creator of a 'sub-imperialism' with interests and influence extending far to its north. Steps in this direction have already been taken, particularly through the close relationships built up with Malawi and the Ivory Coast. But Vorster is after much bigger fish and on 26 October it looked as if he had indeed caught the biggest one of all.

In a speech on that day Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia, had this to say about Vorster's speech: 'He declared his faith in the future and expressed his optimism about future developments in southern Africa. This is the voice of reason for which the world has waited for many years'. Setting out his conditions for improved relations Kaunda said: 'Rhodesia and Namibia, after the end of the war in Mozambique, are the major obstacles to peace and co-operation between the people of South Africa and the people of the rest of Africa. Unless these obstacles are removed than the basic causes of conflict will remain'.

### REVOLUTION

It is noteworthy that until Rhodesia's closure of the border in January 1973 Zambia had done a very extensive trade with South Africa, while half of its copper mines remained up until this year under the management of Oppenheimer's Anglo-American Corporation, which still holds 49% of the shares in the major copper mines.

But above and beyond such considerations the desire of the leaders of black Africa to 'normalise' relationships with South Africa has even deeper roots. The eruption of the revolution of the black South African masses against the apartheid system will be entirely different from any other liberation struggle which has taken place on the continent. In this industrially developed country all the key imperialist states are fast increasing their stake in the profits to be derived from the cheap labour force guaranteed by the racist laws, and the country has a large black working class. The revolution which ultimately arises against this system cannot fail to pose from its earliest stages the socialist tasks of totally destroying the imperialist stake and South African capitalism. The effects of such a development would not stop at the borders of South Africa but would send ripples throughout the continent to shake the foundations of regimes as seemingly solidly entrenched as that of Kaunda and other leaders of 'independent' states that continue to allow imperialist interests to operate within their borders.

If Vorster's present moves are being welcomed as opening the way to a 'new order in Southern Africa' it is because the governments of 'neo-colonial' Africa have just as much interest in the preservation of 'stability' and the present set up.



Racist justice in Rhodesian court—major obstacle to 'normalisation' of South Africa's relations with black states to the North

# Rough three years in Bangladesh

Bangladesh will observe three years of independence next month. They have been a rough three years for the large bulk of the population. Natural disasters have combined with man-made ones to make the life of the Bengali masses a veritable hell.

The 'golden Bengal' promised by Mujibur Rehman and the Awami League leadership in the pre-independence period has not materialised except for the smugglers, black-marketeers, Awami League politicians, civil servants and the like, who are all engaged in a rat race to become bigger and better capitalists than the ones they have replaced.

The condition of the Bengali workers and peasants is worse than it has ever been since the communal carnage and famines that took the lives of millions in 1946-47. In other words, the ramshackle structures which comprise the Bangladesh state machine appear to be on the verge of collapse.

## AWAMI LEAGUE

The development of Bangladesh since its independence in 1971 has been determined to a large extent by the conditions of its birth: a caesarian operation carried out by the Indian army.

Before the various organisations leading the liberation struggle against the Pakistani occupation army could develop along clearly anti-imperialist lines, the Indian army ensured that it was the Awami League's 'government-in-exile' which was transported from Calcutta to Dacca. As the only significant political force in the country which had opposed the Pakistanis, the League continued to command the support of an overwhelming majority of the masses.

Since it came to power, however—and despite the return of its leader, Mujibur Rehman, from a Pakistani prison—the disillusionment with its policies has become widespread. Unable to offer the masses any real solutions, the Awami League leadership excelled themselves in demagoguery and rhetoric. Mujibur Rehman openly wept before millions of people when referring to the sufferings of 'my people'.

But rhetoric and tears are no substitute for food, clothing, shelter and freedom. Soon the patience of the masses began to run out. The Awami League resorted to repression using legislation inherited from British imperialism. The honeymoon was over.

## ARMED STRUGGLE

Repression came so swiftly mainly because the Bengali masses, unlike those in the rest of the subcontinent, have acquired a new tradition: that of armed struggle.

Hundreds of thousands of workers, peasants and students received training in how to use arms, and they fought heroically against the shock troops of Pakistani reaction. After independence many of them retained their weapons and even those who surrendered their weapons still retained the memory of the recent struggle.

Thus when a number of guerrilla fighters associated with the Awami League left in disgust and formed their own organisation, Jatiya Samajshakti Dal (JSD—National Socialist Party), which stated its aim as being the achievement of socialism, the government panicked.

The young leaders of the JSD had a mass following. In March of this year they launched a massive *gherao* (a combination between a strike and a siege) movement against the Awami League. The President of the JSD, M.A. Jalil, its General Secretary, A. Rab, and the secretary of the women's branch of the party, Mumtaz Begum, as well as hundreds

of other party activists were arrested.

Their popular appeal made them dangerous alternatives. A massive campaign of repression was launched against the JSD, and a number of its militants were killed by Awami League gangsters dressed up in the legal guise of the Rakhi Bahini (the private army of the Awami League, given legal sanction by a special Act of Parliament and responsible to no judicial authority).

## LEFT IN DISARRAY

The JSD is a newcomer to the ranks of the Bangladesh left. While it suffers from certain weaknesses not unrelated to its origins, it also has certain advantages. It has not developed within the Stalinist tradition but within a mass movement and it is open to discuss with all Marxist currents.

The rest of the left has failed to provide a credible alternative to the Awami League. The Maoist groups are still addicted to a version of the armed struggle which proved disastrous in West Bengal. As for the pro-Moscow currents they simply provide the tail for the Awami League dog.

Despite the weaknesses of the left, however, the extent of the social and economic crisis in Bangladesh today is such that the Awami League is not

prepared to tolerate even these feeble alternatives. The army and police have been used to hunt down the Maoists. There are now over 30,000 political prisoners in Mujibur Rehman's jails. Those who collaborated with Pakistan were released to make way for the new prisoners.

## WEAK LINK

Thus Bangladesh remains the weakest link in the South Asian subcontinent. Its state apparatus lacks a strong material base—the Bangladesh capitalists are extremely weak, unlike their Pakistani and Indian counterparts. The army is not reliable, and Awami League thugs are no substitute for a strong army.

Furthermore, the recent struggle against the Pakistani ruling class armed the masses in a number of ways. If a revolutionary organisation existed today, it could finish the job interrupted by the entrance of the Indian army in December 1971. But until it does, the misery will continue.

C. Howard

For more detailed information on Bangladesh see: *INPRECOR* Nos. 5, 6, and 8. Available from Red Books, 97 Caledonian Road, N.1—price 20p



Liberation war against Pakistan gave Bengali masses a new tradition of armed struggle

# MASS UPHEAVAL ROCKS THIEU



Anti-Thieu demonstrator in Saigon protests as police move in to break up a recent rally organised by the Buddhist National Reconciliation Forces

**THE GROWING RESENTMENT** in the Saigon-controlled areas of Vietnam against the regime of President Thieu has now exploded into mass opposition.

Over 2,000 people demonstrated against him in Saigon on 31 October; 500 attended the funeral on 11 November of a 17-year-old killed at a previous rally; journalists have demonstrated against the Press Laws; in the coastal provinces the lawyers simply refuse to prosecute under the repressive legislation; even in the rigged National Assembly, 50 deputies have signed a petition calling for Thieu's resignation. Almost every day now there is a rally or mass meeting somewhere in South Vietnam in opposition to the regime.

## SOCIAL CRISIS

The opposition still concentrates on

the question of corruption; but the underlying causes of the present mobilisation are to be found in the deep social crisis of the regime—reflected in massive unemployment, chronic sickness and malnutrition, increasing repression and, of course, the continuing toll of the war. To many, the comparison between their situation and that of their compatriots in North Vietnam is becoming increasingly relevant.

On top of this, the plight of Thieu's armed forces is well known. The South Vietnamese army (ARVN) have been steadily beaten back from many of their bases until they are now incapable of even keeping the roads open. Ten bomber squadrons are now permanently grounded because of lack of fuel and technicians. On the ground the artillery corps now have only 3 to 1 superiority in weapons over the NLF (it was 10 to 1 a year ago)—and the NLF gunners are more accurate.

In an average week, 2,000 ARVN troops are killed or captured and 4,000 desert to the NLF. This continuing toll has had a

deep impact in the cities; and the widely held opinion that the NLF would easily win in a straight military fight has played a large part in galvanising the opposition into action—both from the right and the left.

## TWO GROUPS

It is very important to be clear about the nature of the urban opposition. Leaving aside the vacillating opposition from right-wing bureaucrats and army officers, the mass movement is organised in two groupings: the People's Anti-Corruption Movement, and the National Reconciliation Forces.

The PACM is predominantly Catholic, although it also has the support of the Cao Dai (a military-religious sect which in earlier days acted as a mercenary army for the French). Its leader, Tran Huu Thanh, is openly anti-communist: his line is that Thieu should be replaced by someone better able to deal with the communist threat from the NLF.

The NRF, on the other hand, is organised around the militant Buddhist An Quang Pagoda, which played a large part in the mobilisations against President Diem in the early 1960s. Although it takes a 'neutral' position towards the NLF, it is explicitly opposed to imperialist intervention in Vietnam, and has also largely absorbed the programme of the Committee for the Implementation of the Paris Accords.

## TENSIONS

The PACM and NRF work closely together, but grave tensions have already emerged reflecting their different social and class bases. While the PACM is firmly rooted in the privileged Catholic hierarchy and the bureaucracy—layers which until recently constituted Thieu's main base—the NRF is based on the predominantly Buddhist working class of Saigon.

This latter has strong traditions of trade union organisation, militancy, and anti-imperialist struggle. Furthermore, it is the section of the urban population which has the strongest links with the NLF (both traditionally and at the present). Thus these two organisations, although both contain left and right wing elements, are gradually crystallising the opposition along class lines.

Both organisations will ultimately have to choose between allying themselves with the imperialists or with the NLF—no middle way is possible. Given the dramatic leftward shift of the urban masses the fears of the Buddhist leadership that the PACM would prefer to ally itself with Thieu

rather than see the NRF grow are probably quite justified.

## THIEU'S RESPONSE

Because of the confused nature of the opposition, Thieu's response to it has been very mixed. At first he went very gently, afraid of alienating his base among the Catholics even more. A number of concessions were made, including the removal of 400 army officers and several Government Ministers.

However it soon became clear that this would not satisfy the opposition, and so a new wave of repression was launched. The Saigon demonstration of 31 October was viciously attacked by riot police, sparking off a battle which lasted for more than three hours. Journalists' clubs were raided, and Buddhist rallies broken up. But this simply added fuel to the flames, so now Thieu has turned back once more to a policy of restraint. Although all rallies are covered by armed police there have been fewer attempts to stop them taking place.

## ACUTE PROBLEMS

The problem for imperialism is still more acute. Many of the imperialists (including *The Times*) would like to see Thieu replaced by someone more pliable, presentable, and 'reasonable'. However there is no one person who could replace Thieu and still be strong enough to hold South Vietnam safe for imperialism.

It is quite clear that if Thieu is deposed, his removal will give the urban masses added confidence in their own strength—which can only lead to a direct link-up between the NLF and the urban struggle, with disastrous results for imperialism. On the other hand, if Thieu is kept in power then the opposition will probably continue to grow, and the masses will begin to look more and more to the NLF for leadership—particularly if the NLF continues to gain in strength as it has been doing recently.

The growing pace of developments in South Vietnam makes it all the more important for militants in this country to add their weight to the international demand for the overthrow of Thieu and at the same time strengthen the position of the NLF by demanding that the Labour Government recognises the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam.

**David Johnson**

## Students oppose Act, hedge on troops

THE DELEGATES at the National Union of Students' Conference at Margate last weekend bore a heavy responsibility.

Ninety colleges had called for an emergency debate on the passing of Jenkins's anti-terrorist laws and the Irish crisis in the wake of the Birmingham bombings. The Margate conference, coming so soon after Birmingham, had the chance to give a real lead to the working class movement against the Jenkins laws.

As conference debated the emergency Irish resolutions, security tightened around the hall. The press were excluded. All bags were checked on the doors. All visitors were excluded - well, nearly all, as apparently the Special Branch managed to worm their way into the hall.

The right wing, hoping to ride a wave of emotion, were in for a rude awakening. Their condemnation of indiscriminate terrorism for political ends and the demand for the closure of student union facilities to those who support such violence were crushed. The students at Margate were looking for a way in which they could contribute positively to solving the crisis in Ireland.

The motion that was finally passed, backed by the Communist Party, had a few good points and several bad ones. Its clear opposition to the Jenkins anti-terrorist provisions as a further move to weaken civil rights and liberties in Britain is to be welcomed.

The passing of this statement makes the NUS the first mass organisation to voice its unequivocal opposition to the repressive Jenkins laws and demand their repeal. Hopefully it will not be the last.

### GREY LINING

However, in every silver cloud there is a grey lining. What did they propose that students should be doing to rid Ireland of British imperialism? Did they support the call for the immediate withdrawal of British troops, or for the backing of student unions and the NUS for the Troops Out Movement, or for a massive demonstration on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday? Although the IMG and IS were fighting for

these things at the conference, the CP-backed motion included none of them.

For the CP the Irish crisis, created and fostered by British imperialism, can be solved with a few pious words and platitudes. They suggest the introduction of a Bill of Rights into a country which was purposely divided by the British ruling class to maintain its rule. A Bill of Rights will be destined for the waste paper bins as long as the Orange state, built upon the foundations of protestant privilege remains.

While it is important that the NUS took up a position on the need to withdraw the British troops, the CP are hedging their bets by saying that the troops should first be withdrawn to barracks and then eventually, in the near distant future, out altogether. To accept this means to agree that the troops had the right to be there in the first place. It also discounts the likelihood that they might not just stay in their barracks, but could well be sent back to oppress the nationalist population yet again.

It was for these reasons that at Margate the IMG and IS called for abstention on the main motion because of its omissions and inadequacies. About a quarter of the delegates agreed.

Still the passage of the CP motion is a step forward, though a small one. Students now have to go back to the colleges to build a real movement to force the troops out and get a huge turnout on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday. Having done that, we will be in a better position when the next NUS conference meets to win the NUS to the demands of self determination for the Irish people and the immediate withdrawal of troops.

Delegates at NUS conference stand for one minute's silence in memory of murdered anti-fascist student Kevin Gately

## No lead on grants campaign

The other main issue facing the NUS conference was how to fight the continued erosion of students' living standards as a result of inflation and the education cut-backs.

It was good to see that now both the IS and the CP agree on the merging of the two campaigns, something which the IMG has consistently argued for two years.

But the only coherent strategy put forward at Margate to combat the decline in student living standards on all levels came from those colleges backing the IMG line. This amendment called for a sliding scale of grants, tied to a student cost of living index; for £850 for all; for the abolition of all the anomalies in the grants system; and for the Labour Government to reverse all the cutbacks.

### SLIDING SCALE

The demand for a sliding scale, to give students immediate compensation for inflation, came under heavy attack from all sides. Not only did John Randall attack the sliding scale in his introduction to the debate, but he was promptly followed by two other prominent members of the executive - Al Stewart of the CP-dominated Broad Left, and Terry Povey of IS.

For once the executive stood as one, to make sure that the membership who elected them would have no compensation for inflation. Since they themselves had no proposals for making sure that students do not have to continually chase after the effects of inflation, they have in practice committed students to accepting a real drop in their living standards.

Povey even went so far as to call the sliding scale 'reactionary'. How is it reactionary to make it clear that students have no responsibility for the present inflationary crisis and do not intend to be made to pay for it? Perhaps Povey could explain whether the 'automatic cost of living regulator' put forward for white collar workers in a recent issue of IS journal is reactionary?

### NEAR VICTORY?

Al Stewart, in an inspired moment, claimed that students were on 'the threshold of total victory'. Nothing could be further from the truth. One delegate was heard to shout 'sit down Kitchener'. Victory for Stewart can only mean rent and price increases of 30% and more; the chopping of money from the discretionary award budget; and the loss of over one fifth of students' income due to inflation. Some threshold that is!

With victory apparently so close at hand, it is hardly surprising that the Broad Left put forward no militant campaign of direct action, on

a local, area and national basis, linking up with those equally affected by the cuts such as teachers, school students, porters and building workers. In fact the Broad Left seemed so confident of total victory that they did not even see the need to call for a national rent strike.

As one speaker described the executive's campaign, it's like a balloon. Full of hot air, nothing in it, drifting aimlessly and then bursting in your face.

### HARD LINE

The motion which was passed will yet again leave students leaderless at the start of next term. But just as over the past two months, the authorities can be expected to take a hard line in pressing through the cutbacks to shift the onus of paying for the cash crisis onto students and college workers.

The executive showed this term their inability to lead the campaign. Now it is up to the militants in the colleges to ensure that next term sees an extension of the 150 colleges which have already seen direct action this term.

If the executive fails to provide an effective leadership then those fighting at the base will have to take this job on themselves. The IMG students, as they have shown in all the struggles this term, will not shirk that task.

## CALL FOR ALL-OUT TEACHERS STRIKE IN SCOTLAND

The East of Scotland Teachers' Action Group has called for all-out, five-day a week strike action to begin from Monday, 2 December.

The Educational Institute of Scotland Teachers' union, has also called for a total Scottish stoppage from Tuesday to Thursday, 3-5 December.

The Scottish Secondary School Teachers' Association has also called its members out on Wednesday, 4 December.

Teachers are incensed at the derisory offer from the Houghton Committee of a £100 interim payment. This is being capitalised on by the Scottish Nationalist Party and has caused consternation in Labour Party ranks in Scotland.

In Edinburgh local councillors are pressing for the Education Committee to pay out an extra month's salary to local teachers to save Labour's bacon.

The East of Scotland Action Committee has demanded the reinstatement of last year's education cuts and called for a fight by all teachers to make the British State pay the full cost of running the education system.

Militancy still remains high but the refusal of the unions to make an all-out strike call is failing to take advantage of that.

Meanwhile, the State is trying to move in on the dispute. Members of the press told teachers at a lobby of the Scottish Teachers' Salary Committee that the Special Branch were present. The Special Branch had turned up as bogus press men.



Part of last Saturday's demonstration organised by Brunel University Students Union in solidarity with the Kurdish struggle for self-determination. Despite harassment from agents of the repressive Iraqi Ba'ath regime, the demo marched from Speakers' Corner to the Iraqi and Soviet embassies without incident.

A street theatre performed outside the Iraqi embassy highlighted the disgusting involvement of the Soviet bureaucracy in genocide against the Kurds, while speakers at the rally emphasised the failure of the CP-dominated Broad Left leadership of the National Union of Students to take the issue up.

One of the main slogans taken up by the demonstrators was 'Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Iran—Self-determination for all of Kurdistan.' A leaflet distributed by the IMG also pointed out that this struggle must go hand in hand with the struggle against imperialism, and warned against the danger that sections of the Kurdish leadership—partly in reaction to the Soviet betrayal of their cause—will begin to make deals with imperialism, Iranian reaction and Zionism.

Hopefully this will be but the first of many, increasingly large demonstrations of socialist support for the Kurdish struggle!

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