

# WORKERS' FIGHT

No. 21

Jan. 6 - 19th 1973

4p

## 19th Jan: Merseyside takes lead FOR A NATIONAL A.U.E.W. STRIKE



WOMEN SOLDIERS OF THE N.I.F.

### Opposition to U.S. barbarism grows

Every day in Bangladesh more people die — mainly through starvation — than the total toll of the Nicaraguan earthquake. Why? Basically, because Bangladesh is part of the 'underdeveloped' two thirds of the world which has been relentlessly plundered and exploited, and had its economic development mutilated by the minority of rich advanced capitalist countries.

**DEMONSTRATE!**  
**VICTORY TO N.I.F.**  
**assemble charing x**  
**2.30pm 20th JAN**

In their fight against this oppression, the workers and peasants of the 'Third World' have shown qualities of heroism, determination and organisation which should be sufficient to nail all the lies about **CONTD. Back Page**

The Merseyside Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has called for a COMPLETE stoppage throughout the whole of Merseyside on 19th January against the fining of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. The Liverpool Trades Council, which has a very great authority in the area, has supported the call.

It is certain that there will be a local general strike against the Industrial Relations Act.

Merseyside has given a fighting lead — unlike the leaders of the AUEW.

Scanlon and the AUEW leadership have opposed the Industrial Relations Act. They have refused to cooperate with the National Industrial Relations Court. So far, so good! But such questions must be accompanied by decisive action to back them up — or they are worse than useless.

Now the ball is firmly at the feet of the AUEW leaders. They must take up the challenge from Merseyside. If their anti-NIRC talk is worth anything they must campaign for an all-out national AUEW strike. — from 19 January at least until the Tories relinquish their loot. And if they really want to put the Tory robber barons of the NIRC who are looting the union's treasury completely out of business — until the Act is smashed.

Redcar no. 2 AUEW has sent a resolution to the executive calling on them to hold an emergency National Conference and mobilise their forces nationally for an all-out strike.

By Tony Duffy.

Dozens of other branches have sent in similar resolutions. Many districts have shown in action their will to fight the fines and the Act.

Without national leadership the AUEW militants have so far reacted to the fines with a rash of local one day strikes. But there is little tradition in the relatively democratic AUEW of coordinated rank and file action that bypasses the leadership, except on local, factory level.

This means that the action or lack of action of the national leaders is decisive if the engineers are to strike back at the Tories with a clenched fist, using all their coordinated strength. Scanlon has not yet given a lead in national action, nor so far heeded attempts by local district committees to spur him into organised, coordinated national action.

Militants should respond to the lead of Merseyside by making 19 January a national stoppage — if necessary without the support of the leadership.

## Tories to set up a new Stormont?

There are repeated rumours that Whitelaw is considering setting up a "representative" assembly for Northern Ireland. This assembly, it is believed, would be elected under proportional representation, but with limited powers. Westminster would retain control over internal security. And there would be a declaration guaranteeing that the Border would stay for a generation at least, possibly longer.

This is a massive concession to the hard-line Orangemen, and will

be received as such by the Catholics. It is probable that a definite decision on this question would have to be accompanied by the Army to force them to accept it.

A representative assembly would contain many hardline Orangemen who would gain politically from being elected to it. The Assembly would be a rallying point for the Orange bigots who would see it as the first step towards restoring all their old political dictatorship, removed with the suspension

of the Stormont Parliament less than a year ago.

In opposition to such a Six County assembly the left should insist that any such decision is the business of the Irish people as a whole, all 32 Counties.

British imperialism has no rights in Ireland. Democracy must be democracy for the whole people of Ireland. Majority rule within an artificially cut off British puppet area is not democracy but a violation of the democratic rights of the

real majority of the Irish people.

Meanwhile in the 26 Counties both Sean MacStiofain and Ruairi O Bredaigh are now behind bars, and also the Derry Provost's leader Martin McGuinness. Despite active campaigning by Republicans, the wave of protests over arrests of suspected IRA men seems to have died down. Evidently a more comprehensive attack on Lynch's Green Tory government by the Irish Labour Movement is needed before it can be toppled. **CHRIS GRAY**



# WORKERS FIGHT—ONE YEAR ON

With this issue of WORKERS' FIGHT, no. 21, WF (new series) is a year old, having appeared on average once every 2½ weeks since 14 January 1972. In addition we produced a supplement on the miners' strike and two tenants' supplements, together with a number of industrial fraction papers written by supporters of Workers' Fight in the docks, the machine tool industry, the steel industry, and the hospitals. We produced a pamphlet analysing the role of the left in the Pentonville Five crisis, and shortly there will appear no. 1 of a new Workers' Fight discussion journal, called *Permanent Revolution*, to be quarterly.

For three years we were members of the International Socialists, as an organised tendency grouped around a nucleus of the hard core members of the old Workers' Fight group which fused with IS in 1968. In December 1971 we were abruptly expelled.

In fact, far from disintegrating, the group around Workers' Fight has expanded into six new areas, and developed two new industrial fractions (steel and machine tools). We have managed to operate a complete printing plant of our own. The transformation from the loose political tendency which we formed inside IS to a stable, structured, active Trotskyist organisation has not been without problems and difficulties. But we have carried out that transformation to enable us to function in the major class battles of the last year.

## MINERS' VICTORY

"It's cold outside" was one of IS leader Tony Cliff's rallying cries to mobilise his supporters to push us "outside" IS, where, it was expected, we would subsequently "freeze". But actually, in expelling WF when they did and in the way they did, they rendered us the greatest favour they could do for us. They ensured we were out of IS just in time for the events of the most exhilarating year of working class activity in Britain for many decades, and that it was in this bracing, cleansing atmosphere, sustaining and stimulating at the same time, that we tackled the problems of independent existence.

The miners' victory; the battles of June and July about the threatened jailing, and the brief jailing, of the dockers; the continuing aggressive war of British imperialism in Ireland; the battle against redundancies; the eruption of racialism; the tenants' drive to organise in self-defence: these were the events which shook Britain in the past year and to which Workers' Fight responded.

## INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

In doing so we had to fight to clarify and re-clarify ourselves politically. To analyse concretely the relation between the economic struggle of the labour movement and politics. To clarify the question of the general strike and to focus the energies of those opposed to and determined to fight against the Tory government, but impatient with Parliament and the Labour Party. To explain the need to come out unconditionally in support of those fighting the army of British imperialism in Ireland — and in Britain. (Workers' Fight, in no. 3, was, with the IMG, alone on the British left in explicitly supporting the IRA's attack on the officers' mess at Aldershot). To insist that it is an urgent requirement of working class self-defence, that we treat racism of any kind as a lethal poison for the labour movement. To expose the role of the Trade Union and Labour bureaucracies whose actions ensured that we did not smash the Industrial Relations Act (and prob-

ably the Tory government with it) in 1972. These were the political questions pushed imperiously into the forefront of working class consciousness and therefore also of Workers' Fight's concerns.

Few organisations have had to learn so much so quickly — but there are no better conditions for learning than the conditions of working class mobilisation and upsurge. We feel that the group has learned — and continues to learn — from the working class. Both directly, and indirectly too, as living experience rounds out and gives body to ideas and concepts from "the books" — as, for example, the role and significance of the mass strike.

We set out to create a workers' paper, that would both reflect and interact with the current struggles of the class, and also relate those experiences to the historical experience of the international working class. We wanted to learn from the journalistic flair and readability of *Socialist Worker* (often brilliant) and also learn to avoid its vulgar shallowness. We agreed with the need for the attempt at serious analysis typical of the *Red Mole*. But we have aimed to avoid their typical pretentious, smug, self-satisfied, indeed quite snobbish, disdain for the task of making Marxist ideas accessible to the working class. Workers' Fight was to be a workers' paper in its politics — and also, in the conditions of today, in its form and presentation.

The model we adopted, in line with our puny resources, was that of J P Cannon, one of the founders of the Trotskyist movement; that the paper should be a combination tool, structured to contain both the simple expression of basic socialist ideas on the issues of the moment and deeper explanation of those issues. It should allow the voice of militants engaged in struggle to be heard in their own true tones and accents, and simultaneously allow other voices, authoritative voices from the past, to be heard; voices such as that of Rosa Luxemburg on the General Strike.

## EXPANSION OF THE PAPER

On the negative side the paper has suffered from a frequently inadequate coverage of international news. Our industrial coverage has suffered not only from the limitations of our industrial base, but also from inadequate integration of the paper with the day-to-day struggles which our members take part in. Our allocation of space to student questions has been less than it should be. Our coverage on the Labour Party has been scanty.

In addition, the paper has often been heavily crammed with as much type as we could force in, in an effort not to miss anything. The language has sometimes been avoidably turgid and needlessly difficult.

We have been criticised for too much attention to Ireland. But we feel we have done no more than is necessary. A paper which fails to explain the issues involved in the Irish struggle may indeed reflect the indifference, or worse, of most British workers now. It will not be a paper which serves their interests.

Finally: last June a national meeting of supporters of the paper decided, by a small majority, to aim for a weekly Workers' Fight by January 1973. We are all now convinced that this was in fact a false perspective, a failure to get the priorities right. Not to strain, as we have done, to meet the demands of the period we live in, would be unserious. A concentration of our resources on a more frequent paper, to the detriment of developing industrial fractions and deeper political education around the paper, would indicate a failure to understand the necessary preconditions for the expansion of the paper in terms of the development of the group of supporters round it.

That development is the primary task of Workers' Fight in 1973.

## WORKERS FIGHT AND THE I.M.G. A STATEMENT BY THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF WF

AS READERS CAN SEE FROM OUR REGULAR "WHERE WE STAND" slot, WORKERS' FIGHT gives *critical* support to the Fourth International (United Secretariat). Yet we have differences with the International Marxist Group, the British Section of the Fourth International, differences serious enough to necessitate us being organisationally separate from them.

We have outlined some of those differences in articles in WORKERS' FIGHT No.7 and No.15, and in our pamphlet "The Left and the Crisis". Naturally, these differences do not stop us engaging in joint action with the IMG where a political basis exists for that joint action. We have worked with them in the Irish Solidarity Campaign, in the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Student Unions, and in the Indochina Solidarity Conference. We look forward to further joint action in future.

Recently, however, a spate of rumours about relations between the two groups have been spread about by the IMG: that we are about to unite with them; that we broke off 'negotiations' with them; that we have "simply dismissed" the question of the International; that we have been "sectarian" in attacking them politically.

We feel that it is necessary to make a public statement to nail these rumours.

Firstly, it was the IMG which broke off 'negotiations'. Secondly, WORKERS' FIGHT has not "simply dismissed" the question of the International, but, as the IMG know full well, we are engaged in a serious discussion of the question leading up to a special conference. Thirdly, what Trotskyists — as opposed to centrists — understand by sectarianism is not factional hostility, but "abstract propagandist passivity of the Bordigist type". The one group on the British left most marked by this sectarianism is the IMG.

Open, honest political debate does not seem to us to be sectarian. What is sectarian is the IMG's attitude to us — the rumours they have spread about and, above all, their publication during our fight against expulsion from I.S. of a report of "negotiations" between us and them, a report which was a major weapon in the hands of the anti-Trotskyist I.S. leadership against us.

Finally, WORKERS' FIGHT has not made any decision to unite with the IMG. If we look at the major issues of the class struggle over the past year, there is one on which the IMG comes out with some credit: the struggle in Ireland. We do have criticisms of their approach to that struggle; but

we will give them credit for their principled stand against chauvinism.

On every other major issue, however, the IMG has been seriously, and sometimes grossly, wrong.

1. Common Market entry. The IMG joined in the chauvinist anti-entry bandwagon.

2. The engineers' sit-in strikes in Manchester. The IMG confined themselves to servicing the struggle through Claimants' Union work and distributing informative leaflets. They combined with the Stalinist union leadership to attack I.S. as "splitters".

3. The Industrial Relations Act. When the T&GWU was fined, the IMG confined themselves to echoing the bankrupt TUC line of "no Recognition". They rejected the call for a general strike.

4. The Housing Finance Act. The IMG, apparently, are simply not interested in this.

5. The Uganda Asians. The IMG proclaimed, in the face of the biggest upsurge of racialism for years, "Asians: Big Chance for the Left."

6. The Vietnam peace negotiations. The IMG's headline "Indochina: victory in sight" looks pretty sick now.

7. Worst of all, in the greatest test for British revolutionaries since World War 2 — Pentonville Five week — the IMG failed completely to relate to the working class in agitation, confining itself to abstract propaganda for "the socialist revolution". (See "The Left and the Crisis").

The IMG has also, during the last year, developed "new thinking" on a number of basic questions of Marxist theory: the imperialist epoch; the revolutionary party; the united front; the fight against reformism; the Transitional Programme; agitation and propaganda; workers' control; and governmental slogans. On every one of those questions their ideas are, in our opinion, fundamentally wrong.

And the IMG has gone through the biggest workers' upsurge in decades without even producing a workers' paper! Their lack of a close relation to the labour movement is shown by the fact that their paper managed to simply 'forget' the latest big issue in the industrial struggle, the fines on the AUEW.

If we had general political agreement with the IMG, it would indeed be politically unprincipled to refuse unity with them. Unfortunately, that general agreement does not exist.



# AUEW & THE NIRC

The response so far of the rank and file members of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers to the National Industrial Relations Court fines, and the refusal so far of the union leadership to do anything more than endorse this response, once again puts the spotlight on the central problem facing trade unionists today.

For many years in the past, this "leave it to local level" policy actually brought results, in terms of substantial improvements in workers' wages and conditions. Today, however, the post-war economic boom is ending and the struggle is becoming sharper. There is a class-wide employers' offensive, with the Industrial Relations Act at its centre. It demands a class-wide response — a general strike to smash the Act. Concretely, here and now, the responsibility rests on the leadership of the AUEW to abandon its out-dated "neither co-operation, nor counterattack" policy, and to take the lead with a national strike call.

## INDIVIDUAL

On 15 December engineers struck in Letchworth, Stevenage, Andover, Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City, and Erith. On 18 December 54 000 more were out, mainly in London and Sheffield. 20 December was the biggest protest, involving 165 000. North Gloucestershire shop stewards and Leeds district committee called men out on 1 January. Swansea and Preston district committees were out on 5 January; BLMC Bathgate and Llantrisant district have made a call for 8 January. In Luton the district committee has called a stoppage for 14 January. Merseyside will be out on 19 January. In Blackwood (Monmouthshire) the district committee put out a strike call — but left it up to each individual factory to choose their own day!

These actions could serve to build up militancy for decisive action — or they could simply serve to waste militancy in dribs and drabs. If the National Executive does not take a lead, then it will be a case of wasted militancy. We are not unrealistic. We are not saying there are no difficulties in

mobilising the AUEW nationally. We are not saying there are no backward sections. We are not saying that every single member of the AUEW is straining at the leash to get at the Tories.

We are saying that an official strike call, backed up by an intensive campaign of education and mobilisation and a National Conference, would rally the great majority of AUEW members.

Engineering workers do not, partly because of the less undemocratic nature of their union, have the same tradition of rank and file action, independent of and even against the official leadership as, for example, dockers do. The other side of that coin is that an official initiative would bring a solid response.

The rash of one-day guerrilla strikes are both a call for a centralised national offensive action — and an indictment of the feet-dragging of the union leaders.

If the leadership doesn't act, it could end up strengthening those same non-militant tendencies which today it uses to justify inaction. The right wing will take advantage of workers' disillusionment with ineffective protest action to turn them against militancy altogether.

Look at the experience with the pay claim. The miners used national action, smashed the government's "7% norm", and got 20%. The AUEW left it up to each local section to fight on its own; and weaker factories (and some not so weak) ended up with minimal increases of £2 to £3 and no reduction in hours. The result has been a definite setback for the union in some areas.

## TOKEN STRIKES

An official strike call from the AUEW would also mobilise members of other unions, some of whom have already acted — notably dockers in London and Liverpool. Socialists and militants could and would fight to extend it through such tactics as flying pickets to a general strike to smash the Industrial Relations Act.



John Tocher, Chairman of the Manchester district of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, is reported to have said that repeated token strikes will cost the engineering employers much more than they can recoup in fines, and that that will stop them in their tracks.

If these reports are true, we are bound to say that this is nonsense — and dangerous nonsense. For a start, the engineering employers are not identical to the state. If they are stung hard enough and often enough they will put pressure on the government — but they are only one section of the whole emp-

loying class. And the demoralising effect on the working class of such tactics, so gentle in the circumstances of a legal halter being placed firmly round the neck of the trade unions, is liable to wear out the engineering workers faster than the engineering employers wear out the government.

The main aim that the Tories have pursued for several months is to make the Industrial Relations Act law in fact as well as law in the books. They have not been able to implement the 'spectacular' parts of the Act, jailing trade unionists — but they did get the T&GWU to recognise the NIRC and the rail union to accept the NIRC-imposed ballot. If the NIRC wins over the Goad case, the real point will not be how much money it gets out of the AUEW, but the fact that the chief remaining firm opponent of the NIRC will have bowed the knee.

## GENERAL STRIKE

There are two alternative perspectives. One leading towards the AUEW accepting the Industrial Relations Act in fact, if not in words (and the acceptance in words, after the model of the T&G would probably soon follow).

And another leading towards a general strike, a class-wide mobilisation in which the normal functions of society are paralysed and the question of workers' power is raised (though almost certainly the Tories would step in with concessions to stop the movement developing its full logic in that direction).

Which will Scanlon choose?

## ON THE GENERAL STRIKE a letter....

Dear comrades,

In your last issue (no. 20) you called for a national strike, presumably of the AUEW, against "further seizure of union funds". Now, as I understand it, this is a step back from your previous position of calling for a general strike to smash the Act.

You have argued that it is necessary to pose the immediate problem of smashing the Act to avoid playing the Grand Old Duke of York and calling on the working class to fight this decision of the NIRC and then that decision, and causing nothing but fatigue.

The call for a general strike may be less 'credible' now than it was in July, but that does not make it any less valid. So why was your only mention of the general strike in the form "we have another chance ... to go forward from protest action against the fine to a general strike to smash the Act"? Why have you dropped the call for Councils of Action? Have you dropped the agitational use of the general strike slogan?

Paul Reed, Nottingham.

## in reply....

WORKERS' FIGHT stands for a general strike to smash the Act. But that doesn't mean, of course, that "general strike to smash the Act" is the headline of every issue of our paper.

The call for a general strike becomes a live slogan, a real weapon for militants to mobilise the mass of the working class, only from time to time. Thus, when the Pentonville Five were jailed, we called for a general strike as our main slogan. Over the AUEW fine, we have placed the main stress on the responsibility of the AUEW leadership to take action.

For the fact is that the response of the working class to the AUEW fine has been different from the response to the jailing of the Five. And the Goad case means something different to the ruling class from the Pentonville Five.

To place the main stress now on the major, class-wide weapon of the general strike could in fact be a let-out for the weak-kneed, especially the AUEW executive. There is no point in us taking action on our own, they will say, what we really

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need is a general strike.

The main risk is not the 'Grand Old Duke of York' situation. If the heat is put on the Tories, they will almost certainly find a new 'Official Solicitor'-type trick to settle the Goad case well before action reaches general strike proportions. The main risk is passive acceptance of the fine, aided by the fact that the T&GWU has already knuckled under when fined by the NIRC.

We have stopped stressing the call for Councils of Action because in the actual conditions of today, with the class struggle having (temporarily) cooled slightly since July, an organised Council of Action is likely to be little more than various left-wing grouplets holding hands, a sterile discussion circle. There are exceptions, for example Coventry, where a Council of Action plays a useful role. But that is the general situation.

Paul Reed has a case for criticising us for not, in the last few

months, having explained the value of Councils of Action as a perspective (as distinct from calling for their immediate organisation).

It has also been possible and useful for socialists to argue in Trades Councils for these official bodies to set up Councils of Action (which would obviously include more than the small left groups), and to argue for local Liaison Committees for the Defence of Trade Unions to take on the functions of Councils of Action.

The functioning of such Councils of Action from day to day will in fact be limited. But they can do useful work (as, for example, the Coventry Council of Action has helped to mobilise solidarity for the Mansfield Hosiery strike); and, above all, they can help to prepare the necessary forms of rank and file organisation which the working class will need in the major struggles ahead.







# 43 Children Die But 'No Inquiry'

Report by  
Marion Kavanagh

June 1970:

"So I took the opportunity to walk into the hall to try to find Lee's bedroom. Mrs Paget and Mr Paget heard me and rushed into the hall and pushed me back into the waiting room and locked the door .... I thought if they could act with so much aggression and unreason to me, a person who could leave the home and go away to tell what had happened, what on earth they could do under provocation to a child who could not tell ... I had to wait for an hour before he (Lee, my son) was brought to me and although he appeared clean and dry I would judge he had just had a bath; this would account for the hours delay. He was also very

These are all extracts from complaints made by parents about the care of their handicapped children in 'The Beeches', Ixworth, West Suffolk, a private home run by Mr & Mrs Paget until June 30th 1972 when the home was closed.

All of these complaints were known to the licensing authority responsible for the home's supervision at the time they were made.

In fact, within a period of 18 years 43 children died at the home.

One of these was an 8 year old East London girl, Tara Naiker. Despite constant efforts by her mother to get the child moved from the home, Tara was allowed to remain there. In the opinion of the pathologist who carried out the post-mortem examination, "the cause of death was bronchopneumonia from hypothermia".

When the child was admitted to hospital just before her death her temperature was only 29 degrees Centigrade (84.2 F), and a Sunday Times investigation found that the temperature in her room at the home could not have been more than the lower or mid forties Fahrenheit.

## HYPOTHERMIA

Eight months later another child Anthony Staines died in the West Suffolk Hospital after being taken there from the 'Beeches'. On admission to the hospital his temperature was only 34 degrees C. (94 F). This is within the range of hypothermia.

From the observation of the parents themselves, the following facts emerge:

1. Parents were discouraged from visiting and were turned away if they came without notice. They were also discouraged from taking

lethargic but obviously over-drugged".

Mrs B A Steffert.

November 1970:

"When we had Tara out we noticed red marks on her hands and the backs of her legs like burns. We brought Tara to a field nearby as we had everything needed for a picnic. Tara seemed starved and ate everything she could lay her hands on. She stuffed things in her mouth one after the other".

March 14th 1972:

"Tara had been admitted to the West Suffolk Hospital 'following a fit'. I phoned the hospital straight away ... I asked the hospital to ring back which they did at about 6.20 and said that Tara was dead ... I was quite shocked when I saw Tara, but I did notice she was full of large red spots on her face. I also noticed some marks on the left side of her face which looked like bruises. Tara's lips looked very swollen and her mouth was

partly open. I saw what looked like blood inside her mouth".

Mrs Patricia Naiker.

April 1972:

"I have Katherine at home with me at present while she waits for a bed at Great Ormond Street. She is very weak, unable to crawl or sit up for any length of time, and becomes exhausted at the slightest effort. She is extremely thin and there seems to be some wasting of the limbs. The deep sores on her nappy area are responding to treatment and regular changing; she has sores or marks of previous sores on other parts of her body where pressure might result from being in one position for a long time. During the first two days she was at home she ate ravenously and indiscriminately; she is suffering from severe diarrhoea ... She is very subdued, less responsive to affection and to people playing with her ...."

Mrs P A Fitton.



Kathy at home before she was sent to The Beeches.

the children out.

2. Parents had to wait to see their children in reception rooms, they were not allowed to see where their children slept, and never saw other parents or children.

3. Handling of children was discouraged. Children were sometimes tied in chairs during visits, and two mothers were actually forbidden to pick up their children while visiting.

4. Mrs. Paget, who ran the home, abused parents for putting their children in it and suggested to them that they had lost their rights over their children.

## "VEGETABLE"

5. She seemed to consider that the children required little of the attention and pleasures which are considered a child's right, instead treating the children in her care as vegetables. In fact she told Mrs. Naiker that her child was little more than a vegetable and was better off dead!

The parents concluded that the children were probably kept in cots most of the time, not taken out of doors, poorly fed, not changed regularly or kept clean, heavily sedated and strapped down when convenient.

None of the parents ever saw more than one member of staff other than the Pagets, although at the inquest on Tara Naiker Mrs. Paget said there were seven staff including part timers. The parents compared this to the ratio in NHS homes, and concluded that such a small staff could not possibly be adequate to feed, wash, dress and generally care for 26 subnormal children.

The sum total of allegations of

neglect and ill-treatment of children in this home (and complaints about the standards of supervision of the licensing authority, West Suffolk) led the parents to demand an inquiry. They were supported by a number of MPs.

Nearly six months later, they were told that the Home Secretary has "NO POWER TO INQUIRE INTO ANY MATTER RELATING TO THE TREATMENT OF CHILDREN IN THIS HOME". Having 'carefully examined the documents' the DHSS concluded that THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT GROUNDS FOR INSTITUTING AN INQUIRY.

The care of children whose mental and physical handicap necessitates constant residential care is the responsibility of local authority Social Services departments. At present, however, the local authorities do not have the necessary places in residential homes where these children could be cared for. The result is that children are either placed by the local authorities in subnormality units in the NHS sector, or in voluntary homes, or in private Homes which the authority finds and pays for, but which are licensed by and under the supervision of their local authority.

In fact, a child can be sent to one of these Homes which is as far as 200 miles from its parents,

## INADEQUATE

And example of the totally inadequate provisions made for these children can be seen in the case of Islington. Having no provisions at all for these children, there has been a proposal of a Home for 20 children. This will meet at most HALF the need within the borough.

The result is that children will

go on being placed in privately run Homes, although it has been the experience of parents that private homes often afford poor standards of care and that the criteria used by supervising authorities are often inadequate.

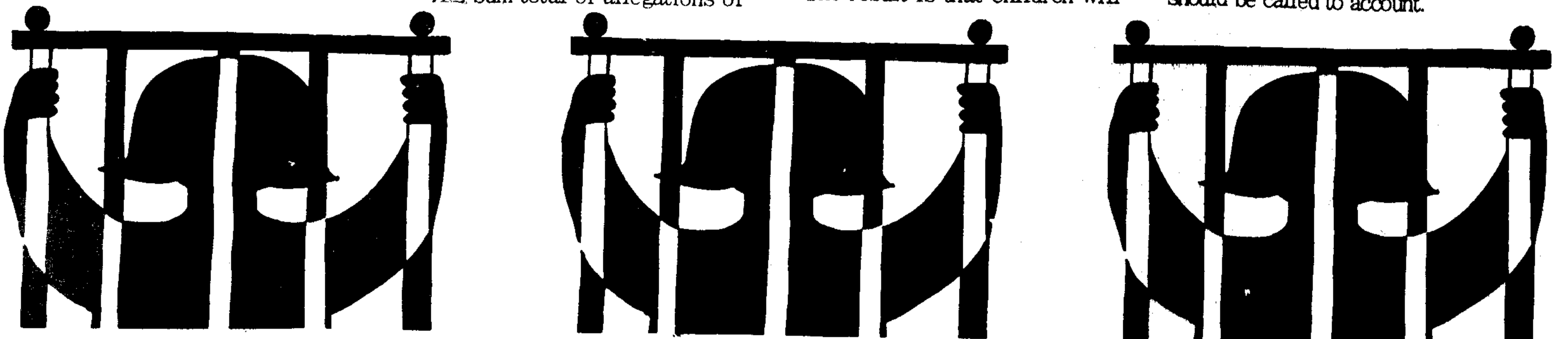
## COMPASSION

A group of parents have now come together to fight for legislation on this question. They are based in London, and call themselves 'COMPASSION'. They are having to finance their campaign completely out of their own pockets, and they are all far from wealthy families. For them to carry on fighting on behalf of these helpless children against a callous system has already involved endless work and personal sacrifice to scrape up the money needed to publicise the case.

At present the burden of these children's plight is falling entirely on their parents. Meanwhile the professional 'welfare' industry hives off the children into privately run Homes that make a profit out of their misery. And the Government shrugs off any responsibility, saying it is up to the local authorities.

There is no existing legislation which adequately covers these children.

But the responsibility for caring for these children lies with the governments that present themselves as the custodians of the welfare of the population. In refusing to provide funds sufficient to the task, in refusing an inquiry and in consistently passing the buck, it is they who are responsible for the death of these children. It is they who should be called to account.





# Appeal

by  
**BERNADETTE DEVLIN**

Sunday, 28 January 1973, will be the anniversary of Derry's Bloody Sunday.

On January 30th last, British para-commandos murdered thirteen peaceful demonstrators during an attack on a mass civil rights procession in Derry.

The murder of this thirteen, and of all those victims of the British Crown Forces who have died before or since, is part of a calculated policy of the British government to destroy the combativity and confidence of the nationalist population in the North of Ireland. Specifically, it was a last desperate attempt to shore up the corrupt Tory-Unionist regime at Stormont.

It failed. Stormont has been suspended.

But British aggression in Ireland continues. Since the abolition of Stormont, the British propaganda service has attempted to give the impression to the world that Britain is playing the role of arbitrator between two warring Irish tribes. Whitelaw, the British Gauleiter, is depicted as a gentle and impartial referee.

## DIPLOCK COMMISSION:

# MORE POLICE POWER IN N. IRELAND

THE PAST FOUR YEARS IN IRELAND HAVE LED TO A RAPID GROWTH in the "official reports" industry — Cameron, Scarman, Hunt, Widgery and now Diplock. Despite their pretensions at being "exhaustive and objective" inquiries, each report has been a political document, designed to help the British Government in its war against the Irish people. Widgery "inquired" into Derry's Bloody Sunday in order to deny the widely known fact that the British Army murdered 13 unarmed civilians and innocent demonstrators.

Diplock is just another in an ever increasing list of 'legal prostitutes' — those 'learned and respectable' judges who use their reputations and supposed belief in "justice" to give moral support to proposals such as the above, which seriously restrict the individual's judicial rights.

When Direct Rule was imposed last March, Whitelaw then promised the "speedy ending of internment" — a promise he made, based on the assumption that the IRA would be defeated in a matter of months, if not weeks.

But even with 20,000 troops and

The reality is very different. The essential conflict in Ireland is between the Irish people and British imperialism, supported by native reaction. The specific form it takes is an attempt by Britain to suppress the struggle of the nationalist population, and to crush its vanguard, the Irish Republican Army.

What this means is the continuation of concentration camps, the imprisonment and torture of thousands of political prisoners, daily harassment and mass intimidation of the total Catholic population — highlighted by the situation in West Belfast, where over half of the total male population has been arrested, questioned, or had their homes raided by the British army. When people in this area talk of

the British Army of Occupation, it is no idle slogan. It is the literal truth. Andersonstown today is as brutally and effectively occupied as Warsaw was under the Nazis.

But the people have not been cowed. By demonstrations, by armed struggle, by rent and rates strikes they display their continued combativity.

They must not fight alone. The international anti-imperialist movement must rally to the defence of the heroic people of Ireland.

The week-end of 27-28 January 1973 provides an opportunity for a world-wide week-end of activity to focus world attention on this struggle. I appeal to all revolutionary groups, to the student movement and to the workers' movement throughout the world to organise on

that week-end, in every major city in Europe, America, Australia, Asia, and Africa, demonstrations, protest meetings, pickets, and other activities, to demand the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, self-determination for the Irish people, the ending of internment and release of all Irish political prisoners, and to show solidarity with those socialist and republican forces struggling against British imperialism in Ireland.

## DEMONSTRATE

Sunday, 28th Jan

Assemble St Paul's 2.30



**Bloody Sunday**  
3.55pm Derry

IRA, the government cannot afford to have any qualms about civil rights and legal and judicial processes. So Diplock was chosen by Heath and Whitelaw to solve the problem of how to maintain internment when the Government had promised its speedy ending. He did a good job.

In the Report he produces "arguments" (albeit contradictory ones) justifying in the nicest possible manner the continuation of internment and the strengthening of powers to deal with the IRA.

But any even slightly careful reading of the Report reveals the shoddiness of this piece of window dressing.

## JURIES

These new "extra judicial processes" are necessary, says Diplock, because of the "intimidation of juries". But since the measures are almost solely for use against Republicans — a fact the Commission let slip amid the padding of generalities — the assertion he is making is that the IRA indulges in fairly widespread intimidation of juries.

But, as anyone living here knows the IRA still adhere to the tradition of "non-recognition" of both Northern and Southern courts, one the grounds that these are not "republican" institutions. This is a major aspect of the Republicans' political thinking and part of the "code" that Republicans can be disciplined for infringing.

Republicans refuse to defend themselves in Court Realising that they can expect little justice in the courts they resign themselves to continuing the fight in prison by attempting to escape. And, given the history of the use of internment in Ireland, it is not surprising that this attitude has survived for so long.

Since members make no effort to defend themselves in Court, even when the police evidence is extremely flimsy (if not a downright lie), it is most unlikely that the IRA would attempt to free its members by intimidating juries.

The truth (though it is so unpalatable that Diplock cannot say it in black and white) is that without any intimidation whatever, Catholics will freely acquit republicans who appear in Court, because of their hostility to the Orange state that oppresses them, and their distrust of police evidence.

So much for intimidated juries!

Diplock also finds himself in a bit of a mess when he attempts to decide whether or not the proposals go against the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

"None of the proposed changes" he claims, "run contrary to the requirement of the European Convention".

But, perhaps just to be on the safe side, he then goes on to state that the Convention was drawn up on the assumption that "witnesses to a crime will be able to give evidence ... without risk to their lives, families, or their property."

Now, the only possible reason he can be mentioning this fact is to justify not adhering to the Convention on the grounds that Northern Ireland is a 'special case' — something he claims they are not doing and therefore have no need to justify!

This Report proves exactly what the Tories' use of the law to bludgeon the trade unions in Britain proves — that the "law", supposedly above politics and social struggles, is no more than a tool in the hands of the ruling class. And they will bend it, twist it, reshape it or simply ignore it when and how it suits them to.

## by AUSTEN MORGAN

the enthusiastic support of the judges and magistrates who daily sentence young men to 10 to 15 years' imprisonment on the flimsiest of evidence, the IRA has not been defeated.

The army's chief theorist and tactician, Frank Kitson, has repeatedly expressed the view that if the British army is to defeat the

## THE DIPLOCK COMMISSION, WHOSE REPORT WAS RECENTLY ACCEPTED BY THE HEATH GOVERNMENT, RECOMMENDS:-

1. The continuation of internment in Northern Ireland.
2. The ending of trial by jury.
3. Stronger powers of arrest. (Anybody can now be held for up to four hours "in order to establish their identity".)
4. Restrictions on bail, which can now only be granted by High Court Judges.
5. The abolition of two "technical rules" on evidence admissible in Court. According to the Commission's Report: "The onus of proof of possession and the inadmissibility of confessions — are not essential for the protection of the innocent."
6. The onus of proof in cases involving arms and explosives is to be shifted to the defendant. Defendants will therefore be guilty until they prove themselves innocent — a complete reversal of what is supposed to be a fundamental principle of "British justice".



# EUROPE: THE NEW ARENA FOR WORKING CLASS STRUGGLE

by Dave Spencer & Colin Oliver

A QUICK GLANCE AT THE table shows how strong in numbers the British trade union movement is compared to our brothers in the EEC. Another thing that's giving EEC governments a dose of the diarrhoea right now is our strong shop floor organisation.

Here we are used to a straightforward confrontation at the point of

production, bringing in officials as a last resort. The Common Market moguls, agents of the multi-national companies, are trying desperately to break the independence of the trade unions and make negotiations and agreements subject to the law.

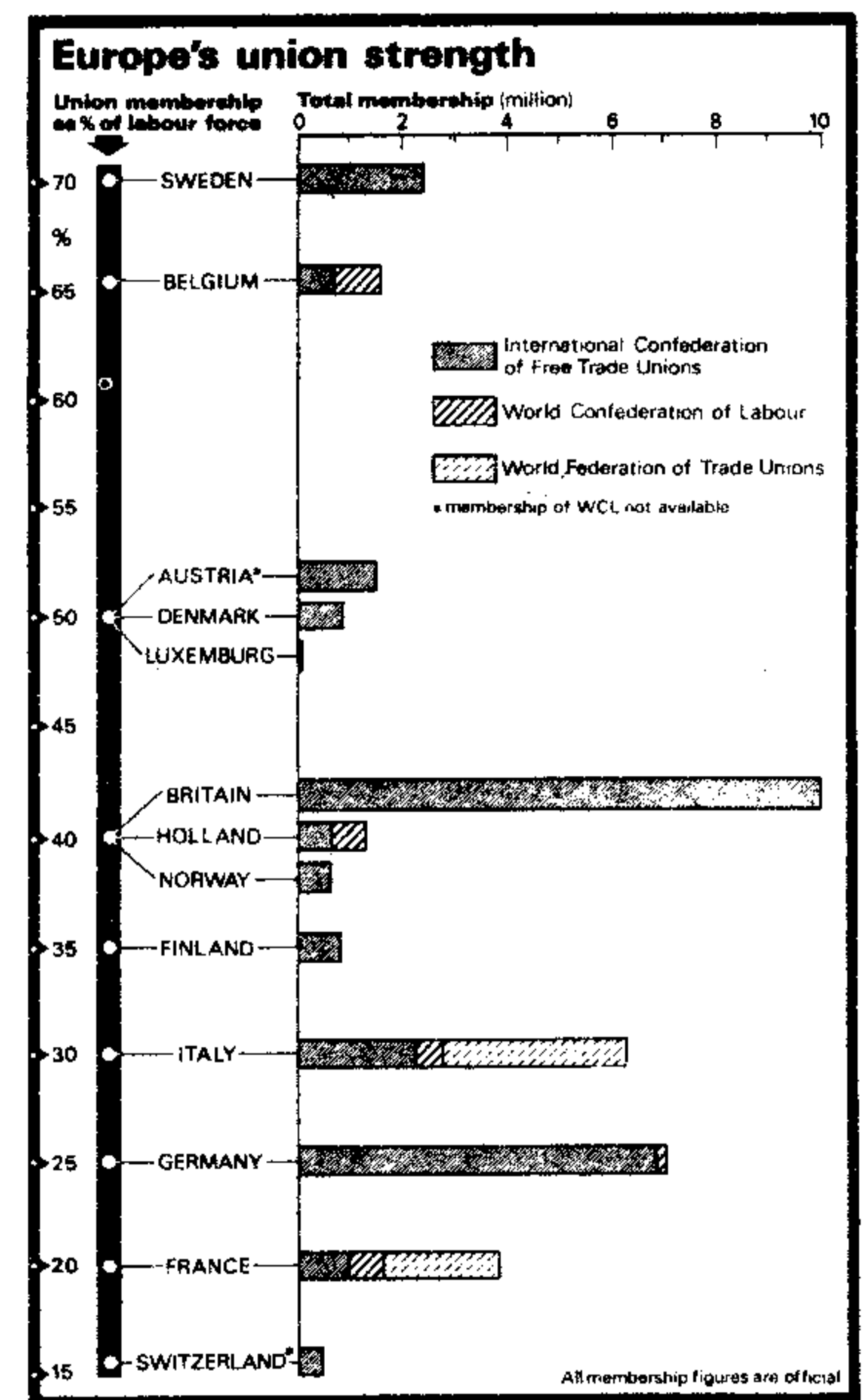
It is for this reason that severe pressure has been put on Heath and co. to introduce the Industrial Relations Act to break shop floor militancy before it can have any marked influence on the continent.

Unfortunately, as Roy Ratcliffe pointed out in WF20, the immense power and organisation of the British trade union movement has gone along traditionally without a real socialist understanding. Thus, one of the main attacks of the Industrial Relations Act is to **play on the minds of workers**, to persuade us that our best interests are served

by working with management and not against them, that high wages cause inflation — all these putrid lies churned out daily by the 'popular' press and the gogglebox.

Entertaining us with Brian Rix type farces like Goad, Langston and no doubt scores of others yet to come, they hope to divert our attention from the main problem facing trade unionists over the next period, which is **the forging of real links at rank and file level with our brothers abroad against the multi-national companies.**

And this cannot be done without a political, socialist, working class counter attack against the stream of propaganda coming from the employers and their Tory and Labour side-kicks, which will undoubtedly increase in volume now that we are 'in'.



## INTERNATIONAL STRIKE ACTION

1. In 1967 metalworkers at Philips (Holland) forced the company to recognise the metalworkers' Union at its plant in Chile.
2. Ford workers in Germany, Belgium, Holland and the U.K. acted together in the 1968 Ford Belgium strike and 1971 Ford Dagenham strike when work was blacked and overtime banned.
3. In 1969 workers in all Saint Gobain Co. (French glassmakers) plants in France, Italy and the USA, struck to raise wages in the lower paid plants.
4. On June 9th 1972 workers at Dunlop-Pirelli plants struck in protest against redundancies resulting from the merger. In October (see WF 18) support was given to the sit-in at Pirelli's Milan Bicocca plant protesting against threatened redundancies.
5. Workers in the Akzo combine (Dutch chemicals and synthetic fibre manufacturers) forced the company to withdraw their proposed restructuring scheme — involving the closure of 5 plants in 3 countries and the sacking of 5,000 workers. A Common Market inquiry following the affair in fact went so far as to criticise the "social implications of closures" and suggested that workers' interests be put first! (see WF 17).
6. Workers at Zanussi, Italy's largest domestic and electrical appliances manufacturers, visited West Germany for talks with workers from AEG-Telefunken (based in Frankfurt) which is rumoured to be ready to take over Zanussi. The discussion ranged over possible action in face of closures, sackings, etc if the two companies merged. So far, Zanussi and AEG are keeping quiet!

## SOCIALISTS & EUROPE

Most so called revolutionary socialist groups have not helped in this matter. By opposing Britain's entry into the Common Market (without, incidentally, trying to build up a fierce campaign based on their views) they have pandered to the racialism and chauvinism ingrained over the years in many British workers.

In this way workers' militancy is channelled into opposing entry — which means, in fact, supporting the alternative of 'national sovereignty'. It is channelled into accepting the propaganda of 'national interest' and diverted from the necessary task of building up working class internationalism, effective resistance to international capitalist attacks. We are told that the EEC is a capitalist conspiracy, with the implication (intended or not) that Britain is somehow less capitalist and that British bosses are a 'lesser evil'.

WORKERS' FIGHT has always insisted that the real question for workers is not whether to go in or stay out of the Common Market.

## SOLIDARITY

Either way we live in a world dominated by international capitalism. It is not the job of socialists to advise the bosses on alternative policies. Britain as part of the EEC — Britain as the 51st state of the USA — Britain as an isolated capitalist backwater — there's nothing in the choice for us.

Entry into the Common Market will bring with it a serious attack on the working class, through rising prices, mergers, closures, and redundancies, Value Added Tax. Staying out would not have stopped these attacks — they would simply have happened at a different tempo and in a different form. What will serve to fight this attack is international working class solidarity.

Solidarity action has taken place. But, as yet, international working

class cooperation is far less developed than international capitalist cooperation.

There are international trade union organisations, but they are usually ineffective. And the reason why they are ineffective is that they operate entirely on the bureaucratic, official level. Each bureaucrat is only really concerned with his own 'gate-receipts', his own dues, his own membership, his own comfortable offices. International solidarity is all right for him as a pious wish — but no more!

## INTERNATIONAL

So the responsibility for looking further than our own backyards comes down to the rank and file. Links must be forged on a rank and file level — not just national, but international combine committees. We must demand international negot-

iations and international parity of wages and conditions (French family allowances, Italian holidays, German wages) — to prevent the employers taking advantage of the weakness of organisation in one country to undermine the well-organised plants.

The call for international solidarity is dictated by the immediate defensive needs of the working class. But international solidarity, once formed, can and will be turned to the purpose of an offensive against the bosses. The ruling classes of Europe are so closely interlinked in their military, economic, and political organisation that 'national roads to socialism' are a utopian dream.

Even if the working class action against the bosses' system in the French May events of 1968 had won workers' power, it would have had to spread internationally — or the French workers would have been defeated. For socialists, the immediate fight against the effects of Common Market entry must be linked to the perspective of the **United Socialist States of Europe.**

## CUTS IN STEEL

ON DECEMBER 21st, PETER WALKER ANNOUNCED IN THE COMMON the Government's intention to spend £3,000 million over the next ten years in an effort to bring British steel up to European and Japanese competitive standards

Having sabotaged previous production targets for the early '70s of 42 million tonnes, the new investment is still only expected to go towards producing 33 million tonnes by 1980. And it is not expected that 38 million tonnes will be reached until at least the end of the 1980s.

Production is to be concentrated in five main centres (Ravenscraig, Llanwern, Port Talbot, Scunthorpe and Teesside), using the latest Basic Oxygen techniques and the economies derived from mass imports of iron ore in bulk carriers.

In order to do this, massive redundancies are planned for the next ten years. Walker has added an extra 30,000 to the 20,000 previously announced, admitting that these will take place mainly in the next

5 years. However, even these figures are likely to be underestimates. An additional 4,600 lay-offs have been declared at Cardiff.

If the Scottish figures for redundancy projections are anything to go by, the overall figure will be nearer 100,000. And if BSC is to have similar manning rates to Nippon Steel, the largest Japanese steel producer, which has a roughly equivalent capacity, then again 100,000 would be nearer.

In any case, whether the figure is to be 50,000, 70,000, or 100,000, steelworkers must prepare an offensive strategy against the capitalist state

So far the government have laid off, and plan to lay off, workers in





by Jim Webb

British industrial supremacy in the 19th century was built on the basic industries of iron, coal, and cotton. As British trade expanded all over the world, bringing with it massive investment and super-profits from colonial labour, the iron steel, and heavy engineering sectors were no exception. Profits overseas were superab-

undant; investment at home was relatively low.

By 1900 US and German steel had surpassed British production. Yet, the enormous overseas and colonial market, whole areas dominated by British imperialism, assured a continued massive profit for the British steel bosses.

In 1900 the British employers exported about 3½ million

FOR A  
30 HR.  
WEEK!



dribs and drabs. Thus Irlam, River Don, Stanton, Teesside, Shelton, Ebbw Vale, etc have fought their battles, if at all, ineffectively, in a sectional way, sometimes advancing their claims for employment on the 'viability' of 'their' plant, as against others. We must call a halt to this and hit back in a united way.

No one is against modernisation as such. What we demand is that modernisation should benefit, not harm, the steelworkers who produce all the wealth. For us, the welfare of workers is a higher priority than the yardstick of profitability.

In particular situations, steelworkers may accept compromises. They may accept that a works should be run down in return for alternative employment being provided under equivalent wages and conditions. But the basic axiom we must start from is that the bosses got the steel industry into the mess it's in; it's their responsibility; they have no right to chop

steelworkers' jobs.

All the way along, the official union leaderships in steel, without exception, have led no fight against redundancies, simply accepting them passively. It therefore falls to the rank and file in all unions in the steel industry to unite in a national action committee to fight redundancies.

The steelworkers' paper *Real Steel News* has campaigned for this national action committee, and proposed the following programme:

- \* No redundancies, no job loss, no redeployment.
- \* An immediate 30 hour week with no lay-offs and no loss of pay.
- \* No productivity deals — they mean fewer jobs for the same, or increased, production. Straight wage rises with no strings attached.
- \* No inquiries into the 'viability' of this or that works. Instead, an inquiry by trade unionists into the whole of BSC's

ingot-tons — over half the total world-market. This figure was not to be reached again until 1971 when it represented just 5% of the market.

The post-world-war-I period saw Britain ousted as the main exporter of steel. New technologies were already underway amongst the European and American competitors, while the British steelowners relied on their colonial investment and colonial profits.

In 1913, Britain was still the no. 2 exporter of semi-finished and finished steel products, behind Germany. By 1938, the US, Germany, and Belgium had surpassed the British steelowners and France was very close behind. British exports had slumped by 50% in absolute terms.

## WORLD WAR II

The second world war and its aftermath only accelerated the relative decline of the British steel industry. The employers in the war-torn European countries and in Japan re-equipped their steel industry with the most up-to-date equipment.

It was not until 1948 that the 1937 production figures were reached in Britain. In spite of demand exceeding world supply in the '50s, with high profits to be made, British production virtually stagnated.

So that, by the end of the '50s the British employers had the slowest rate of growth (barring the US) of any major steel producing country.

British exports of semi-finished and finished steel products rose by only 20% between 1950 and 1959. In comparison, the Belgian, French, and Canadian steelowners nearly doubled theirs, the Germans and Japanese trebled theirs, the Swedes increased their exports fourfold, the Dutch fivefold, the Italians sevenfold.

At the same time, British investment rates generally stagnated.

## JAPANESE

The 1960s saw a further drop in the British steel industry. New processes have revolutionised steel production, mainly Basic Oxygen Plants (BOS). Also, the Japanese employers led the way with the mass sea

affairs, the history of the industry, and the sums paid off to moneylenders and to former owners.

\* Not just nationalisation, but workers' control. Workers should fight for the right to control details of their daily work, modernisations, safety provisions, and so on. Let the workers run the plant, let the government foot the bill.

Action Committees should also fight to put pressure on the union leaderships to support this programme. And in areas like Stanton and Ebbw Vale local Labour MPs have declared themselves against the cuts. The local Action Committees should demand that these MPs commit themselves to a firm position of no loss of jobs, and use their influence to campaign nationally for solidarity and for a National Action Committee.

transportation of iron ore. In spite of having no iron ore resources themselves, they have built massive plants on the coast with harbours that could take carriers containing 100 000 tons or more. The Europeans followed, so that by 1971 there were six giant plants operating on the coast of Europe. Three more are currently being built in Spain, France, and Greece. At present, Port Talbot is the only British plant where 100 000 tonners can land.

## NATIONALISED

At the time steel was nationalised, at the end of 1967, investment rates had slumped dramatically and profits had declined practically to nothing, in 1966, having been at an all time high of 15% return on capital at the end of the 1950s. In fact, if the old junk that was handed over had been written off to the extent that it was by the British Steel Corporation in 1967, there would have been an overall loss of £50 million.

The steel industry was nationalised in order to bail out its former owners; in order to carry out rationalisations which the old individual owners didn't have the resources to manage themselves; and to provide a cheap basic service to private industry.

The steel bosses were given £800 million for their rubbish; BSC has had its steel prices maintained at an artificially low level by the government; and immediately the state started to 'nationalise' — at the expense of the workers.

The Labour government were the initial overseers of large scale redundancies. The Tories have only taken up where Labour began. In fact, in the last five years about 30,000 redundancies have taken place; 20,000 in Port Talbot and Teesside in the last two years alone

## CUT-BACKS

The decline of the British steel industry represents the meeting point of two factors. First, the historical decline of Britain from its position as the first capitalist and imperialist power in the world (a decline described by Roy Ratcliff in WF 20). Secondly, a general world crisis in steel, part of the present overall collapse of the post-war boom.

The decline of the British steel industry is not due to the supposed inbuilt 'inefficiency' of nationalised industry, or to the supposed 'laziness' of British workers. It does not mean that steel production cannot help to fill human needs today — far from it. The decline is an organic product of the capitalist system of production for profit. The decline points to the need to smash that system, not to a need for workers to accept hardships.

To accept the 'inevitability' of cutbacks in the steel industry, or to accept lack of 'viability' (ie profitability) as a valid reason for cutbacks, is to put the 'rights' of profit above the right of steelworkers and their families to a livelihood.



# ROSA LUXEMBURG

## ON TERRORISM

FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATION by Andrew Hornung

### 1916 — A CLARION CALL

On 21st October the Prime Minister of Austria fell victim to a bullet from the gun of Friedrich Adler. We should be surprised more than anything at the fact that it didn't happen earlier than it did.

Austria — half oriental despotism, half Prussian military, police and money rule; Austria — the cradle of World War; this Austria has become a hell. Its real rulers are dungeons, rifles and gallows. And everywhere the cry of the oppressed is stifled by the stranglehold of tyranny. Even the Duma in Russia was not completely liquidated — but in Austria there is only the stillness of the grave. Even the Tisza Parliament in Hungary convened, while in Austria ... just a cemetery-silence.

And no fresh breeze to relieve this suffocating stench. The Social Democracy nowhere to be seen; that "liberator of nations" nowhere so putrescent as in Austria. Whereas the official leaders of the Austrian labour movement could not plumb the depths of renegacy of the official German Mamelukes, there has been in Austria no dynamic and conscious opposition to the false leaders by the working class. There is still not so much as the beginning of a mass movement against the war and the government. As far as the eye can see stretches the unbroken shadow of suffering and hopelessness.

Like the famous assassinations in Russia at the beginning of the '60s of the last century it was this "semi-Asiatic" atmosphere created by the betrayal of the working class and the leaden immobility of the masses, that gave rise to Friedrich Adler's action. While millions of innocents were going to the slaughter for the sake of foreign debts and other allied interests, he shot down the representative of an accursed regime.

Friedrich Adler's hand was that of the avenger and the judge; of he who admonishes and he who warns. The flashes from his revolver lit up the abyss of horror of the Austrian people for the whole world to see. It was not an attempt to wake up the Austrian Parliament, that cheap imitation of the servants' quarters of some Reichstag representative. It was a cry to the people, the long-awaited clarion call to the Austrian proletariat summoning it to independent initiative, to decisive action, to socialist struggle.

For this hallowed purpose he knowingly laid down his life.

The moral nobility of the deed implicitly condemns the baseness that gave rise to it. The hacks scribble away in an attempt to label Adler a madman. The gaggle of journalists around the governmental socialists stick to the line, fearing more than anything the awakening of the working class for which Friedrich Adler laid down his life.

We bow our heads, honouring him and seeing in the deed the ineluctable law of cause and effect. But we also see a renewed confirmation of the correctness of our policies, the policies which see that *only* conscious socialist action by the masses can achieve and assure the liberation of the working class and a solution for all those who smart under the yoke of political and social injustice.

### 1905 — TERRORISM

The killing of Sergius Romanov, the Vampire of Moscow, has been followed by political reverberations the like of which have not been seen since the assassination of Czar Alexander II. Every decent and right-thinking person will feel a real moral satisfaction at this act of liberation. From this point of view, the assassination of Grand Duke Sergius is of the same order as last year's assassination of Plehwe. It is literally easier to breathe now. The air seems less polluted now that one of the most repugnant and offensive beasts of Czarism has met his dismal end and been shot down in the street like a mad dog.

These responses are so natural to any civilised person that our press generally and un-



animously saw this deed as a fitting act of vengeance, a settling of accounts. But in expressing this obvious response of moral satisfaction we have not exhausted commenting on the significance of this important incident in Russia's revolutionary struggle. We must go further and come to a **political judgment** of this most recent of terrorist acts — one that is independent of our immediate impressions and emotions.

Seen **politically**, terror must receive a qualitatively different appraisal in the present situation from before. The terrorist movement as such, which propagated and practised terror as a systematic method of political struggle, was the historical product of **pessimism**. It grew out of a disbelief in the **possibility** of a mass political movement and a real revolution of the masses in Russia.

Terror as a system, which is directed against certain individuals responsible for the absolutist regime and which thus involves certain individuals from amongst the ranks of the revolutionaries, was considered to be the **opposite** of the mass action of the working class by its very nature. Whether the terrorists knew it or not, whether they admitted it or were deluded on this point, this was the case.

From this standpoint and for this reason the Social Democracy has for some time and particularly in recent years fought against terrorist tactics. Because for all the deep moral satisfaction we feel every time we hear of such an incident, the result of this strategy as far as the working class was concerned was always that of inducing passivity and paralysis rather than rousing people to action. In fact, terrorist activities properly carried out inevitably had the effect of awaking vague expectations and hopes for the miraculous unseen hand of the terrorist "avenger", particularly for the unclear and unstable elements in the movement. It therefore undermined the



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vital understanding that mass participation by the revolutionary proletariat is both absolutely necessary and the sole decisively significant factor.

The incidents of 22nd January and the following weeks have radically altered the situation. The proletariat has already stepped on to the battlefield and the whole world can see revealed before them the mass armies of the revolution. And no amount of terrorism can minimise their success.

Of course, it will be quite possible to find those political weather-cocks whose whole enthusiasm and expectations once again turn towards the loud, laconic language of the bomb imagining perhaps that mass action has already played out its role in Russia and that the **culmination** and **disappearance** of the revolutionary period is approaching, when the terrorists will fight it out with the tottering remnants of absolutism.

On the whole, however, it would be reasonable to expect such perverse views to remain isolated and the Social Democracy in Russia as elsewhere to be able to profit not only temporarily but **permanently** from last January's lessons. Above all the lesson is that mass revolutionary action and only that is the right weapon to defeat Czarism with and realise bourgeois democracy in Russia.

The struggle in Ireland set the cat of reality among the complacent pigeons of the revolutionary movement. For a long time they had got along with statements of sympathy for various forms of armed struggle — so long as they were a long way off. Suddenly the British revolutionary movement showed it was "British" first and "revolutionary" second. And nothing showed it as well as their reaction to the bombing of the Aldershot barracks last March.

All at once the theoretical paralytics of the Socialist Labour League, the International Socialists, and the 'Militant' rooted about for excuses to condemn the action. Their united cry: it was terrorism, and terrorism is opposed to Marxism and therefore Marxists opposed terrorism.

## ALDERSHOT

Not only was this an absurd blanket statement and an illogical one at that, but it did not tackle the real matter at hand. What we were witnessing in the case of Aldershot was not terrorism at all — it was an episode in a war between one community with its militia and imperialism. To confuse this with terrorism is to miss the whole point — the political point of the matter. War is a systematic use of terror by the army of one nation, class, or community against another. Systematic terrorism is a line of struggle of oppressed within a society against the oppressor members of that society or their agents. Marxists believe that **effective** struggle against oppression must always depend on the activity and consciousness of the masses, and consequently are opposed to terrorism if it substitutes for mass action.

To confuse war, simply because it is of an urban or rural guerrilla type, with terrorism is to lapse into identifying the character of political strategy by the techniques involved. But if this confusion is serious — and it is — it is nothing to the confusion of the position of groups like IS on Aldershot. This group, always eager to "free Marxism from sterile dogmatism", end up freeing reportage from all truth. The Aldershot bombing was described by them as "individual assassination" (in a reply to a critical letter to their paper).

More like collective assinnity — on IS's leaders' part! How can the attack by a detachment of one

Today no amount of successful assassinations like this one can possibly change this fact. This doesn't mean of course that individual acts of terror are neither useful nor significant any more. It is neither a matter of praising terror to the skies nor of denouncing it. Rather the point is to understand its rightful role and its concrete function in the present situation.

Once the masses have begun to participate in the revolutionary process, terror is — and today can only be — a subordinate moment in the struggle. This is true from two points of view: **geographically** it is the lightning flash of a single though brilliant sabre of the vast battlefield of the proletarian revolution; **historically** it is an episode that is by its very nature bound to one specific **phase** of the revolution.

Terrorist acts make sense politically so long as absolutism has made no decisive move towards concessions, and will only find a sympathetic response in the broad layers of society on this basis. As an answer to brutal attempts to quell the revolution by means of force, terrorist acts have an uplifting effect on the mood of the masses. However, when absolutism realises the impotence of the cudgel and begins to make constitutional concessions, even if they are weak and ambiguous ones — to that degree will terror inevit-

ably lose both its base and its favourable response.

Its role will be played out as this second phase of the revolution develops, whether this happens quickly or not.

The revolution, on the other hand, as an uprising of the masses, will not be over then. No! It is at that point that we will see the ever more exclusively proletarian battle developing further along the road towards the liquidation of absolutism, and in so doing bring about as broad a participation by the working class as possible so as to be able to react against the inevitable ebb-tide and reversion to reaction on the part of the bourgeois democratic and liberal elements after the first victory of the movement for freedom. In short, between the future proletarian revolution in Russia and the present lie all the battles and phases of a **class uprising** leading to the final battle for the proletariat's own class interests.

On the basis of this great revolution by the masses and within this framework individual acts of terror are like individual blazes of brushwood in a forest fire. The avenging hand of the terrorist can speed up the disorganisation and demoralisation of the absolutist regime here and there. But to overthrow absolutism and establish freedom is the task solely — whether one uses terror or not — of the masses of the revolutionary working class in Russia.

# TERRORISM & THE LEFT IN BRITAIN

army on the barracks of another in a war be thought of as "individual assassination"?

The translation of these articles by Rosa Luxemburg (which will appear shortly as a pamphlet together with her writings on terrorism in Russia) should help to set the record straight on the question of terrorism — particularly for the self-proclaimed disciples of Rosa Luxemburg in IS.

## PESSIMISM

On 21st October 1916, Friedrich Adler, son of Victor Adler, the leader of the Austrian Labour Party, and himself a prominent member, assassinated the Prime Minister of Austria. In her brilliant article on this event, Rosa Luxemburg looks at what she calls "the ineluctable law of cause and effect". The assassination could not, she argues, be seen outside of the context of "the unbroken shadow of suffering and hopelessness"... and that "everywhere the cry of the oppressed is stifled by the stranglehold of tyranny" "It was this semi-Asiatic atmosphere" with the utter betrayal of the workers by their leaders that caused the event.

Similarly, in her two articles on the Russian terrorist movement, "Terror" and "On the question of terrorism" she points out that once the mass movement has got underway — the second of these articles was written immediately after the great march on the Winter Palace of 1905 that marked the beginning of the revolutionary wave in Russia — the matter must be considered differently.

As "terror as a systematic method of political struggle was the historical product of pessimism", and there were no longer grounds for any pessimism, it was at best an anachronistic method — one no longer suited to the situation and the times. But this understanding

did not lead her to condemn terror even at that period in the blanket ignorant way of our comrades on the left. "This doesn't mean that individual acts of terror are neither useful nor significant any more" she says. The point is that they are part not of systematic terrorism but of systematic mass action. They can be a part of this, though always a subordinate part.

Let us take an example from our times, the so-called Munich massacre. This was carried out by the "Black September" movement which draws its very name from the date of the pulverising defeat sustained by the Palestinian fedayeen at the hands of Britain's dainty butcher, the Jordanian King Hussein. Its name is its essence: pessimism.

## BLACK SEPTEMBER

With that we make an observation but not a judgment. Of course, for those with their snouts in the trough of the welfare state and broad civil rights, pessimism, the endless arctic midnight of despair that comes from a defeat like that of September 1970 is unknown. When we point out then that the Black September movement was born out of pessimism we do not presume to scoff at this or the weaknesses of the Palestinian Liberation Movement. On the contrary, these observations must serve to make us all the more determined to fight for their cause, to strengthen their movement as much as we can and to resist all the more any concessions to Zionism.

## note

1. 'A Clarion Call' — Spartacus 2. 5 November 1916.
2. 'Terror' — Saechsische Arbeiter-Zeitung (Dresden), no. 42, 20 February 1905.

Marxist support of the line of mass struggle is no excuse for any ignorant ultimatum on this question. We cannot say that we only support when it is mass struggle, or even that we always criticise when it isn't. After all, after the defeat of September what mass struggle could there be? Making it an absolute condition of support shows a total indifference to and an essentially imperialist disdain of the difficulties of struggle in the context of bloody reaction.

And the well-circulated argument that Marxists should oppose terrorism because it gives the ruling class an opportunity to justify repression is nonsense. Do its advocates suppose that the ruling class is incapable of organising agents provocateurs?

## RESPONSE

The second element in this relationship of the development of the mass movement to terrorism is in the question of response. In November 1963 someone, probably Lee Harvey Oswald, shot President Kennedy of the USA. Now no one can doubt that Kennedy's well-manicured hands were in fact indelibly stained with the blood of millions of Indo-Chinese people; no one who is willing to open his eyes can fail to see in Kennedy imperialism's number one butcher.

The fact that butchers don't wear their blood-stained aprons to cocktail parties doesn't hide their true profession. So killing him might be compared to the assassination of Sergius Romanov by the Socialist-Revolutionary Kaliaiev in February 1905. The movement in Russia was of course massively more developed as a truly mass affair than in the America of 1963.

The essential difference lies in the response.

Although Kennedy was guilty of far more heinous crimes than "the vampire of Moscow", the action of his assassination had the effect of outraging the sympathies of the working class. In other words, if terrorism is systematic and therefore to be judged as a tactic, then the act must speak for itself. If an action is to be its own advocate it must fall on receptive ears. We can be sure that Sergius Romanov's killing did that! As Rosa Luxemburg says "these responses are so natural to any civilised person."

The military action of the IRA, which we support, needs to have a "base and favourable response"





workers  
fight

# WHERE WE STAND

□ CAPITALISM is inseparable from the exploitation by the bourgeoisie of the working class 'at home' and (since 'advanced' capitalism became imperialist) of the workers and peasants in the colonies and neo-colonies abroad.

It is a vicious system geared to buttressing the strong against the weak, to serving the handful of capitalists against the millions of workers, and to keeping many millions in poverty so that a few may prosper. Capitalism exalts property and degrades life. It is at the root of the racialism which poisons and divides worker against worker. It is a system of massive waste and social disorganisation, at the same time as it forces the working class to fight every inch of the way to better or even maintain its wages and conditions.

Having once been progressive, in that it at least developed, in the only way then possible, the productive resources of mankind, it is now a totally reactionary force in history. Its expansion after World War 2 gave it merely the appearance of health: in reality the boom was like the flush on a sick man's face. And already economic expansion has given way to creeping stagnation.

□ TODAY the ruling class can keep their system going only at the cost of large scale unemployment and attempts to cut the living standards of workers in the 'rich' parts of the world, of massive starvation and bloodshed in the 'poor' two thirds of the world, and of the ever-present threat of the destruction of humanity through nuclear war.

□ THE ONLY WAY OUT is for the working class to take power and to bring the resources of the modern economy under a rational working class plan, in place of the present unplanned and blind private-profit system. Having overthrown capitalism and established social ownership of the means of production, the working class will build towards a truly communist society, in which at last the principle will be "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

□ The working class has created political parties for this purpose — LABOUR PARTIES, COMMUNIST PARTIES, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. — But in country after country these parties have joined capitalist governments and managed capitalism. They have betrayed the socialist aspirations of their working class supporters, tied the labour movement to the bosses' state, interest and ideology, and destroyed the political independence of the working class.

□ The task is therefore to build a socialist party which will stand firmly for the interests of the working class. WORKERS' FIGHT is a group of revolutionary socialists, aiming to build that party: a party which is democratically controlled by an active working class membership, which preserves its political independence and fights the ideological domination of the ruling class.

□ The basis of our activity is the scientific theory of MARXISM, the only theory which gives a clear understanding of present day society and of the necessity of revolutionary change.

□ Although they cannot organise the struggle for workers' power, the TRADE UNIONS are indispensable for the defence of workers' interests. We fight for the independence of the unions from all state control, and within the unions for militant policies and for democracy. We see the trade union bureaucracy as a distinct stratum which acts as a broker between workers and bosses. Its life and work-situation is quite different from that of the working class. Lacking a direct, necessary allegiance to working class interests, or any fundamental historical interests of its own, its general tendency is to work with the bosses and their state against the working class.

Only a mass national rank and file movement, linking up the different industries and guided by the ideas of revolutionary Marxism can, in this period, turn the trade unions into reliable instruments of working class interests, independent of the bosses' state.

□ We fight against the INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT, against any incomes policy under capitalism, and against any legal restrictions on trade unionism.

□ We fight against UNEMPLOYMENT; for a national minimum wage; for work or full pay; against productivity bargaining.

□ We fight to extend the power of workers to control the details of their own lives in industry here and now. We stand for the fight for WORKERS' CONTROL with the understanding that it can be made a serious reality only in a workers' state. We are against any workers' 'participation' in managing their own exploitation under capitalism.

□ We believe that the "PARLIAMENTARY ROAD TO SOCIALISM" is a crippling illusion. The capitalist class will not leave the stage peacefully; no ruling class ever has. Socialism can be built only by smashing the capitalist state machine (army, police, civil service) which is the ultimate defence of the bosses' power in society, and replacing it with a state based on democratic workers' councils.

□ The LABOUR PARTY is a capitalist party in its ideas, its policies, and in its record in government. At the same time, the bedrock organisations of the working class, the trade unions, support and finance the Labour Party. There is an open valve connection between the Labour Party and the unions, allowing the possibility of large-scale active working class participation in the party.

We relate to the Labour Party, therefore, not by simply denouncing it, but by attempting to advance the working class towards outgrowing and breaking through the stage in its own development — ideological, political and organisational — represented by Labourism.

□ We fight for full and equal rights for WOMEN, for female emancipation from the male domination which has co-existed throughout history with class society and which has its roots in such society. We fight, in particular, for the emancipation of women of our own class, suffering a double and triple exploitation, who have been most accurately described as the "slaves of the slaves."

□ We fight against RACIALISM and against immigration controls. We fight for the integration of immigrant workers into the labour movement and for a united fight against capitalism, whilst supporting the right of black minorities in Britain to form defence leagues or independent political organisations.

□ We give unconditional support to the struggles of oppressed peoples everywhere fighting against IMPERIALISM, and to their organisations leading the fight.

□ British workers have — fundamentally — more in common with every single worker throughout the globe, irrespective of race, religion, nationality or colour, than with the whole of the British ruling class. We see the fight for socialism as a world wide struggle, necessitating the creation of a world revolutionary party. We give critical support to the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL.

□ We stand for a political revolution of the working class against the bureaucracies of THE U.S.S.R. and the other countries called 'communist', which we consider to be degenerated and deformed workers' states. The social regime of the different Bureaucracies has nothing in common with socialism, let alone with real communism. At the same time we defend the nationalised economy in these countries against capitalism and imperialism, unconditionally: that is, irrespective of the selfish, usually anti-working class and anti-revolutionary policies of the ruling bureaucrats, and against those policies.

□ There are OTHER POLITICAL GROUPS (including the official British section of the Fourth International) which have generally similar aims but methods differing from ours, or differing conceptions about what needs to be done here and now. We consider all these groups to be seriously — sometimes grossly — inadequate in theory and practice. We favour unity in action with these groups where possible, and a serious dialogue about our differences.

## TERROURISM

From Previous Page

within the Catholic/Nationalist population, rather than the British working class. This is fundamental. When one nation oppresses another, as Britain oppresses Ireland, as the French oppressed Algeria, as the "Israelis" oppress the Palestinians, the oppressed are not required to scruple over the sensibilities of the oppressor nation. After all, are the Vietnamese to scruple over whether they offend American sensibilities in their inspiring heroic struggle? Were the tortured and maimed Algerians to take care not to outrage the "civilised" standards of the French? No! Of course not!

If you confuse terrorism within a single community and warfare, between communities or nations then it follows that you will confuse precisely whose response it is that is being sought. If it is an act of terrorism it must relate to the sensibilities of the oppressed of that community.

One hardly asks for acts of warfare to be sympathetically received by the enemy army or the citizens of the opposing state. The mind boggles at such a concept of war!

And yet . . . Socialist Worker on March 11th 1972 writes: "We have to be critical of (the IRA's tactics) when they attempt to substitute individual assassinations (!) for the building of a mass movement in Britain" (our emphasis). Truly a gem of confused idiocy!

## MILITIA

In a frenetic attempt to treat the event as "individual assassination" IS went on to say "For every army officer killed in Britain, the Tories have a thousand replacements." Well one might equally write "for all the army officers killed anywhere in the world..." Why Britain? For the same reason that the first condemnation of "terrorism" appeared when that "terrorism" crossed the Irish Sea and had the audacity to intrude on I.S.'s peaceful preserve.

But what of the general sentiment? It is a sentence taken out of the vocabulary of terrorist attacks on selected persons — politicians and the like — not out of the vocabulary of descriptions of war against oppressor armies.

The true faith of the revolutionary has always been expressed in the line "If I die, a thousand will spring up to take my place." IS, having stood theory and reality on their heads, now proceeds to do the same with sentiment: totally inverting it, Socialist Worker gives us the very essence of pathetic, demoralised defeatism.

Where forces of occupation, or, even more, settler-societies are involved there does seem at an extremely superficial view to be a coincidence of terrorism and war — Lock at a case like Cyprus.

There the British press was full of cries about the "terrorists". In fact, there was simply a war going on between the force of occupation and the popular militia of "irregulars". What was being attempted was not the overthrow of a state but the ousting of a force of occupation. If servicing units of the army, like teachers at the army schools, or the families of servicemen, get killed, it is because they are a part of the garrison of occupation in a war.

In Algeria and Kenya we saw wars of liberation against a garrisoned army plus a local settler class. This settler class in each

case was organically tied to imperialism as a "community" and was opposed by "the people" demanding freedom.

In the case of Israel we see a society which for all its class divisions etc. still forms, in relation to the Palestinians, a distinct and organic community. Of course there are a courageous few revolutionary activists sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, but the central determining reality is that of a united Zionism against the Palestinian forces and not the divisions within Israel.

The tactics of the warfare used by the Palestinian refugees and their armed forces against Israel may have appeared to be technically similar to terrorism between the periods of full-scale conventional war, as in June 1967, but were in fact episodes in an ongoing guerrilla-type war.

## LUNACY

After September 1970, however, such was the decimation of the Palestinian forces at the hands of Hussein that the subsequent armed actions were no longer in the context of a war. They became courageous but futile acts of desperation in the main.

The clearest of these was the sheer lunacy of the Lodd airport massacre. Only the blackest dependency could give rise to an event of such irrational and aimless fury. Indeed the fact that it was a group of Japanese "revolutionaries" that carried it out was perhaps the most convincing sign of the totality of the defeat suffered by the Palestinians and the radical moral and political degeneration that prevailed in a part of a once vigorous movement.

In contrast to this there have been hi-jackings and incidents like the Munich massacre which are tactics devoted to a definite end: usually the freeing of prisoners held by the oppressor. There have been many successes for this tactic which is valuable given its limited aims. It has not been put forward as either a tactic to win a war or overthrow a government.

Many of the reports of the activity of the "guerrilla" groups in South America, however, show a strange interpretation of the idea of popular response and mass participation.

## ORIENTATION

An Argentinian group, for instance, recently kidnapped the executive of a meatpacking factory, agreeing to free him if they were given money and meat for the people.

Ironically, it is precisely this final touch, this "orientation to the workers" which is wrong. The whole action smacks of the "benefactor" approach. The response of the workers is seen to be their passive applauding of the act, and their participation is limited to the receipt of meat parcels.

It is precisely such acts which induce passivity in the masses. The workers and peasants learn to await the "avenging hand" of the "deliverer". This is the basic danger of terrorism as a strategy: despite (usually) the intentions of the terrorists, it effectively sees the revolution taking place with the participation of no-one but the elite of the terrorist group, who like Robin Hoods now give the poor the state (rather than meat parcels) they have stolen from the rich.



# Tenants' Candidates

## the way forward?

On 25 August, there were 42 councils, all of them Labour controlled, pledged to defy the Government and refuse to put the rents up. At the beginning of January there are scarcely half a dozen in the whole of England, Scotland, and Wales. Most of the 'No Surrender' councils collapsed so fast it looks like someone opened a trapdoor under them! In a number of cases rent strikes have collapsed or are down to a small hard core. The potentially very effective weapon of attachment of the wages of rent strikers is being brought into the struggle in Merseyside, posing new problems for the movement.

The brave demonstrations of workers in places like Glasgow and Merseyside before October and the pledges of support from Union dist-

inct committees and branches have led to no effective action. And the collapse of the puffed-up little Labour councillors has caused great bitterness and some confusion. As a result of this sell-out, the idea of go-it-alone tenants' candidates has gained ground. Liverpool's Scotland Road area is likely to see a challenge to right wing

## IRISH REVOLUTIONARIES SLANDERED BY PRESS

Having recently completed a witch-hunting series of articles 'exposing' various left-wing organisations as being responsible for industrial strife in Britain, the *News of the World* on December 10th launched a new series. This time the message is that the real cause of the 'trouble' in Northern Ireland is not that the Catholics are being repressed. No, it's all produced by the intervention of ... yes, Russian and East European agents!

Both series can be seen by anyone with even a slight knowledge of either the British trade union movement or Irish revolutionary politics, as a tissue of misinformed nonsense, a rehash of news cuttings served up in a sauce of speculation and innuendo. Everything is grist to their mill.

One 'item' on this poisonous menu concerns three comrades of ours who all died tragically within three months of each other, between October 1971 and January 1972, Peter Graham, Mairin Keegan, and Liam Daltun. Peter Graham was assassinated in Dublin, and his killers are unknown. Mairin Keegan died of cancer. Liam Daltun committed suicide.

According to the *News of the World* these three were each successively 'heads' of the Fourth International in Ireland. Presenting it as a 'rumour' they allege that Peter Graham was killed because he was a paid police informer against Republicans. As for Mairin Keegan, "revolutionary circles" are alleged to be "wondering" "whether her death is linked with the theory that carcinomous substances can be associated with the manufacture of bombs". Daltun is alleged to have claimed that suicide was the only escape (!) from ... a horrible death!

### HACKS

Thus the diseased minds of the *News of the World* hacks find employment in this season of short-time working for journalistic peeping toms in slandering and maligning the dead who cannot speak for themselves. They also join in the current game of branding the Fourth International (an international organisation of revolutionary socialists) as the "terrorist international".

The simple counterposing of facts to fantasies and speculations will do to start with, because most of their facts, even the minor, easily checked ones, are false.

Peter Graham died in October 1971, not November 1971. Far from Republicans shooting him, both Officials and Provisionals issued statements condemning the murder, and the Provisionals were represented at his funeral, as was Saor Eire (a small Guevarist group). There is no Irish 'head' of the Fourth International, because there is no Irish section, only a small (about 10

members), very young group, which certainly supports the Republican struggle in Northern Ireland, but functions as a study circle publishing a duplicated theoretical journal. No one on the left or in the Republican movement in Ireland or in England who knew Peter Graham believed or has ever supposed that Peter was other than a revolutionary.

Mairin Keegan was not in her 20s (as the *News of the World* states) but in her 40s. She fought a ten-year battle against the disease which killed her. She was in Derry, we believe, but the fighting was in August 1969, not 1968, as the *News of the World* states. They are right only in describing the comrade as a serious revolutionary dedicated to, as they put it, "urging rebellion" against the system of which the *News of the World* is one of the ornaments.

### IDIOCY

There is no other connection between these two deaths than that both people were human beings with vulnerable bodies. There is a connection between Mairin Keegan's death and Liam Daltun's in that her death, and the funeral he attended, seem to have been the final blow which turned Liam Daltun's mind. No more than that. The *News of the World* presents his suicide as a rational choice, having "fled" from Dublin in fear! He had lived in London permanently since 1957. He was also a man remarkable for his courage which was nothing less than extravagant.

At his death (less than two weeks after Mairin Keegan's death) he was certainly not in full political agreement with the other two comrades he is alleged to have "succeeded" as "head" of the Irish section of the Fourth International.

Only an amoral cretin, a lying hack low enough to merit a job with the *News of the World* and light years away from the ideas and battles in which these comrades spent their lives could produce such scurrilous rubbish. The most charitable thing that can be said about the sewer-bred creep who, quite casually, brands Peter Graham as a police informer, is that this *News of the World* tout probably sees police informing as all in a day's work. The same moral idiocy is necessary to both the police informer and the *News of the World* 'journalist'.

The memories of these three comrades are as far from the possibility of being tarnished by this paper, the most foul and disease-ridden rag in Fleet Street, as their lives were distant from the condition of moral imbecility natural to its paid slanderers  
Sean Matgamna.

Labour from tenants candidates is this now the way forward for the tenants movement?

## SINGLE ISSUE

Because many tenants' activists are new to politics of even trade union activity - particularly housewives - it often appears that a campaign on the single issue of the Housing Finance Act is likely to be most effective. In actual fact, the great weakness so far of the fight back against the Rent Act has been the failure to fuse with the other major battles of the working class in practical action against the Tories.

At the beginning of the campaign trade unionists marched as trade unionists against the Act - but they have not acted as trade unionists to strike against it. The struggles against the Industrial Relations Act and against the Housing Finance Act are parallel but have remained separate.

And an election is something different from a single issue campaign. A tenants' candidate directs effort towards activity which at best would place an entirely powerless individual on a council, where non-elected officials usually have more power than the councillors.

Tenants would have no possibility of recalling 'their' councillors, so they would not have the slightest guarantee that once there he would serve their interests on any question, even the housing question. Even if a tenants' candidate seems now to be more militant than his Labour opponent, the biggest probability is that in office he will be just as bad.

## INDUSTRIAL

The willingness of many tenants to mobilise and fight back themselves, without waiting for the traditional 'leaders' to do something 'for them' is part of the new militancy of the British working class. There is increasingly explicit revolt against the stodgy, gutless accommodating approach of the Labour councillors.

But the fact is that the one time that tenants acting as tenants have won a major victory was in Clyde-side, in 1915 - when their action

was linked with industrial action. This is not to write off rent strikes, 'no-go areas', and so on. It is to recognise that we need to have, and do have, one more weapon in our armoury.

The way forward is not through a "tenants will go it alone" attitude, but through a campaign to mobilise the organised labour movement. Tenants' candidates cut across this perspective. They are inevitably opposed to the candidates of the Labour Party, which Labour militants - particularly in a city like Liverpool - regard, for better or for worse, as their party.

Tenants' should campaign to get shop stewards' committees to discuss industrial action, against evictions, against attachment orders, against the next round of increases in April. The elections can be used to advance the struggle against the Housing Finance Act, through demonstrations of various sorts at Labour election meetings, but the main stress should be on links with the industrial labour movement.

## EXCEPTION

In fact, tenants candidates can not only divert, but split, and set back the movement. They can split tenants activists from militants loyal to the Labour Party; and set the movement back politically by focusing on local, single-issue politics rather than on the nation-wide, class-wide bosses' offensive. Putting up tenants' candidates does not lead tenants from lack of confidence in Labour beyond Labour's 'fo genuine socialist politics, it leads them backwards to considering the rents issue in isolation from other issues, as somehow 'non-political'.

Obviously this approach does not totally exclude support for all independent candidates. In Lewisham a Labour councillor has resigned in disgust at the cave-in of the Labour Party locally. He will have the full support of Lewisham Trades Council against his official Labour opponent, and deserves it. But he is the exception, not the rule.

We would welcome letters, comments, criticisms, and contributions on the question of tenants' candidates and policy for the tenants' movement. Write in to *Workers' Fight*, 98 Gifford St, London N1

## Glasgow & Clay Cross

With the collapse of Glasgow Corporation on 21 December in the face of a Government ultimatum, the main threat to the Tories is the continuing mass action, most strongly based in Merseyside, and the few intransigent 'rebel' councils. Camden council meets again on 10 January, and the Camden Action Committee against the Housing Finance Act is organising a demonstration on 7 January (2 pm from Camden Town Hall) to ensure that the council maintains its no-implementation stand. Merthyr Action Committee have a demonstration scheduled for 13 January, against the imposition of a Housing Commissioner in Merthyr.

Soon council tenants will be joined by 25 student unions who are pledged to rent strikes in line with the general NUS campaign on grants. In Newcastle, Staffs, the (Labour) council plans to use the law to evict hundreds of rent strikers, and there are plans to mobilise students from nearby Keele University to prevent them.

Once again Clay Cross council tenants and other local people packed the council chamber during the district auditor's visit. The government have instructed the auditor to examine the accounts because Clay Cross councillors are still refusing to raise rents in line with the Housing Finance Act. After long arguments between the auditor and the Council's representative, the meeting ended with the auditor's statement that he would make a decision within the next 10 or 14 days.

If the auditor decides that the council is "in default" because they have failed to collect extra rent, there are several things the government might do. They might

bar the councillors from office, thus forcing a local election. The local Labour Party, however, which holds all the seats on the council, has already chosen replacements who would, if elected, refuse to implement. According to the Act, the government can take various other measures.

Whatever happens, it is important that Clay Cross tenants organise now, so that information can be passed on quickly and so that the necessary action may be taken if the government acts against councillors or tenants.

HILARY CAVE

SEE MERSEYSIDE REPORT  
PAGE 12



# NEW THREAT TO RENT STRIKERS

The two areas on total rent and rates strike — Tower Hill and Over the Bridge — are still very solid. Kirkby Council, however, is posing a serious threat to Tower Hill. The last council meeting voted to approve **attachment of earnings** orders. The council probably hope that the threat will serve to crack the tenants' solidarity — but if it doesn't they will go ahead with the attachment orders.

This tactic by the council will be more difficult to deal with than the evictions they tried previously, which were stopped by the simple weapon of a mass picket. The crucial, necessary weapon now will be **support through industrial action.**

Meanwhile, the movement has been weakened by the fact that the 21 councillors who resigned from the Labour (majority) group on Liverpool council have returned without their demands being satisfied. The main protest of the 21, originally, was against the Council's action in delegat-

ing powers on matters relating to the Housing Finance Act to the chairman and vice-chairman of the housing committee, so that they would not be discussed in open Council. They also pressured the Council leader (though not publicly) to pledge no evictions. Some of the 21 — Eddie Loyden, particularly — have a good record of working to help tenants' organisation.

Now they have returned to the Labour group, though the only concession granted is that the

sub-committee to which powers are delegated will be extended to six members rather than two.

Why? The only explanation can be that the 21 are worried about their selection as official Labour candidates in the upcoming May elections. They fear the fate of Coventry rebel councillor Joan Shortland (see WF 20). And, apparently, when it came down to a sharp choice between position and principle, they preferred to keep their positions.

JOHN BLOXAM

## N.U.P.E. BALLOTS ON NEW CLAIM



BY JACK SUTTON

The National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) has just sent round to all its branches ballot forms to find out what action the membership want to take in support of their present claim.

The claim on behalf of National Health ancillary staff was put in nearly six months ago, on 28 July. The unions, NUPE, the Transport and General, the General and Municipal, and COHSE (Confederation of Health Service Employees) put in a claim for £4 a week for men and women; 35 hour week without loss of pay; four weeks' holiday after 12 months' service; an unconditional lead-in payment of £1 per week for all those staff not on bonus schemes; and a 'threshold clause'. Militants in these unions complained that the claim should be for £8 and no lead-in or threshold agreements.

Still, this Tory government can't see its way through the mists of crocodile tears for the 'lower paid' to settling even for the unions' official claim.

The ballot, however, will solve nothing — neither was it intended to. The purposes of the ballot are: firstly, to buy time; secondly, to fog the issue with false alternatives; thirdly, to up-stage the other three unions; and fourthly, to cop-out of doing anything.

The real point of the ballot, though, is not the choices of action — full strike being the only realistic one — but the timing of the action. The union says the members should vote on the form of action should no "satisfactory" agreement be forthcoming. But, you may ask, what is a satisfactory agreement? According to the leaders of the council workers (who got a meagre £2.40) about

50% of what you ask for — and the least stable 50% at that, the half most vulnerable to inflation — is "satisfactory".

NUPE members should demand a full official national strike until the demands are met. If the membership are to be consulted on the methods of the strike, they should be consulted on the contents too. Don't let the leadership call off any action until mass meetings of members have approved the settlement.

### "BREAK-AWAY"

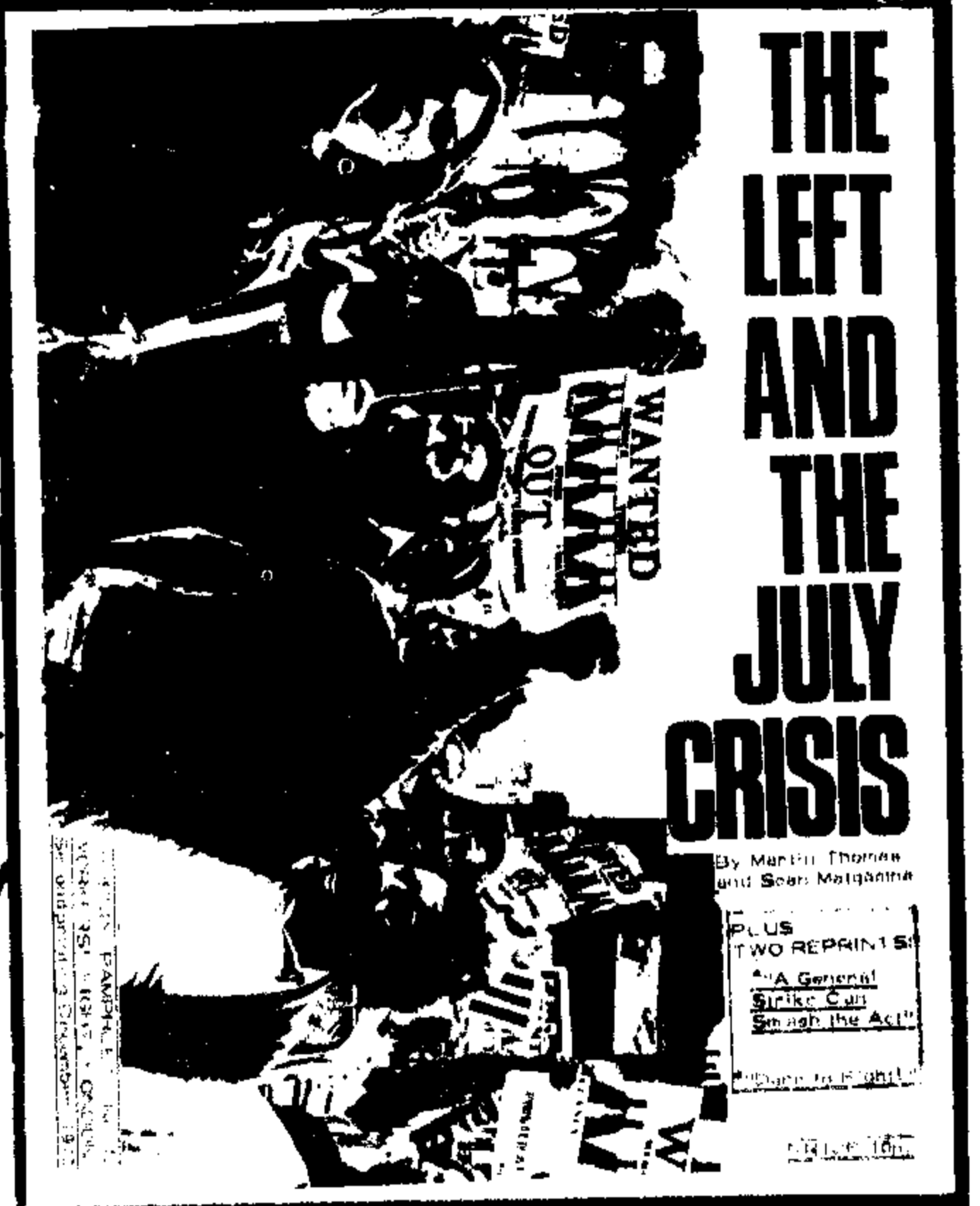
An example of this should be set right now. Just as mass meetings should decide the final outcome, they should also decide the methods. No secret ballots, but mass meetings in work time with voting by a show of hands.

NUPE has been partly forced into into this gesture of the ballot by the mass pressure from below, expressed in the big half and one-day strikes on December 13th.

The development of the London Alliance of Stewards in Health (LASH) and its help in organising the National Alliance of Stewards in Health (NASH) and local Alliances has been the most significant development in the growth of militancy within the health unions.

The Union leaderships are doing everything they can to blacken the name of these groups by spreading stories that they are a "breakaway" group, "counterposing itself to the union". The fact is that union bureaucrats always identify the union with themselves. LASH identifies itself with the members and the members with the unions. Its opposition is to whatever is against the members' interests, even if that means — and it almost always does mean this — opposing the officials.

## A NEW PAMPHLET from Workers Fight



## Goad, mk.2

THE LATEST GOADLIKE RAT-bag to be backed up by the Tories' scab' charter the Industrial Relations Act and the NIRC is Mr. Joseph Langston.

This headline hunter has been suspended since October 30th on full pay (£44.77 a week) after his workmates refused to work with him when he resigned from the Union (the AUEW). On Thursday December 28th, the industrial tribunal in Birmingham ruled that he had a right under the Industrial Relations Act not to belong to the AUEW since the AUEW is not a "registered union".

Langston says he objects to the closed shop system which operates in all Coventry car factories. To nearly all workers, however, there is a simple and clear connection between 100% trade unionism and the £44.77 Langston collects every week!

It is for this reason that, when he turned up at 10.30 on Friday morning (Dec. 29th), together with attendant camera crews, pressmen, make-up girls and the like for his weekly company pay-out, he was met by a spontaneous demonstration of Chrysler Ryton workers who left their machines to show him what they thought of him.

The Ryton workers are of course right to be very angry — a threat to the closed shop is a threat to their living standards built up over years of struggle and sacrifice. And other workers must support them because these carworkers set the pace for the rest of industry.

Notice, incidentally, that Langston keeps to where the "good" money is, accepting the result of the Union's fight without wanting to sacrifice anything in return. If he hated it so much he could always have gone welding in the back street shops where no Union membership is required. But Joseph Langston wouldn't have been too popular there either: there is nothing the backstreet workers would like more than a closed shop and £44.77 a week.

The cases of Goad and Langston must show trade unionists the nature of the Industrial Relations Act and the NIRC. They are attempts to destroy shop floor organisation and militancy and the very principles and traditions of the trade union movement.

Goad claims the right to Union membership. Langston repudiates his membership. What is crucial is that trade unionists themselves should decide democratically who should be a member and whether they will work with a Goad or a Langston.

## Vietnam, from p.1

them being naturally 'backward'. In China, Cuba and half of Vietnam, they have won victories and driven out imperialism. Today they continue the same struggle in the southern half of Vietnam.

And what is the response of the heroes of democracy and progress in the 'advanced countries'? It is the most vicious, murderous, intensive war in human history.

In November Nixon pulled in an extra big election majority on the promise of 'peace in sight'. The promise was just another example of the sick hypocrisy of dirty capitalist politics. The USA — aided by pressures on the Vietnamese from Moscow and Peking — forced the NLF into accepting terms which basically mean that the capitalist dictatorship in South Vietnam would remain intact; that no definite victory had been won; and that, therefore, peace was no more assured than it was by the 1954 Geneva Agreement.

Having pushed the NLF that far, however, the US and the South Vietnamese dictator Thieu have kept on pushing, for more and more concessions. This has been covered up with the usual lies, to the point where a journalist of the US millionaire press declared after an official press conference "we'll have to carry on getting our information from Radio Hanoi."

If it was just a military struggle the Vietnamese would face certain defeat. The fight, however, is also political. Nixon may gain militarily from his devastation of North Vietnam, but he will lose politically. Among the South Vietnamese army — where the desertion rate is already massive; among the US army — already disillusioned and cynical; among ordinary people everywhere, the forces of his opponents will grow.

Dockers in Genoa, Copenhagen and Sydney — where the new Australian Labour government has withdrawn aid to the Thieu regime — have all blacked US ships in protest. We too must play our part