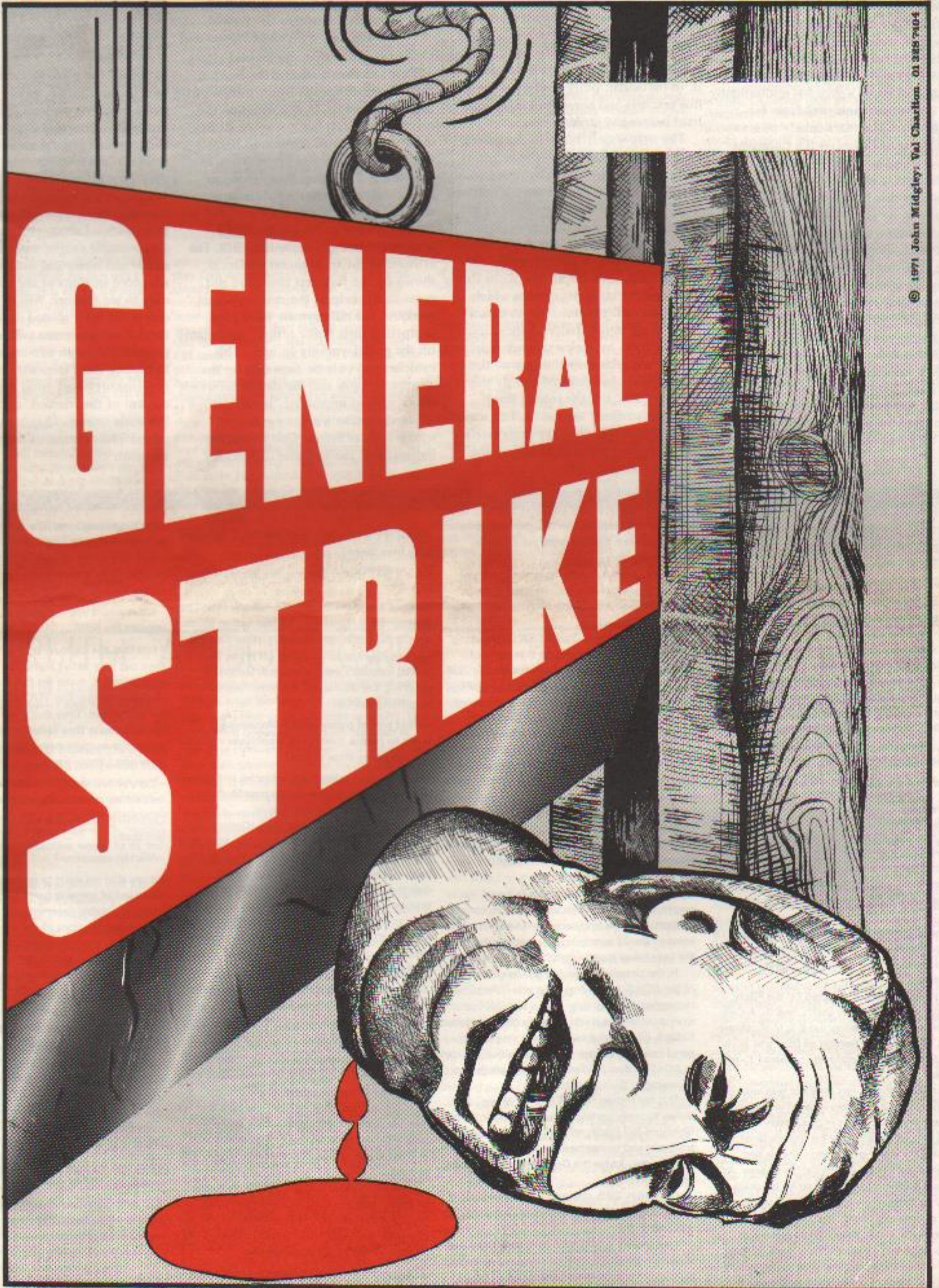


The Red Mole



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labour & social inequality / rolls royce / post office / fords
the peasant struggle in bengal

FOR A MASS GENERAL STRIKE

The collapse of the firm of Rolls Royce reveals two things very clearly: first that even the aristocracy of British capitalism is not safe in this era of decline and secondly that piece-meal nationalisation is totally irrelevant as far as socialists are concerned, and can be used even by the Tories when they see the interests of British capitalism threatened. The disintegration of Rolls Royce has undoubtedly been a grave psychological blow for British capitalism, particularly now as Britain is trying to enter the Common Market on some of its own terms.

While every new blow that demoralises the bourgeoisie brings nothing but joy to our hearts, we should remain alert and conscious regarding the effects of capitalism's debacle on the working class movement. The threat of redundancies and increasing levels of unemployment could begin to play a part in dampening down the existing militancy. The Tories could well try, in collaboration with Vic Feather and the Labour front bench, to create a semi-hysterical atmosphere where the "national interest" is at stake and the future of the "entire nation" is threatened unless the workers start to pull back and help the "country". In

simpler language the workers are being told that the mess in which British capitalism finds itself is *their* fault and that they should start to behave themselves or else . . . Given the present leadership of the working-class movement, there can be no doubt that the propaganda about a serious crisis, etc., will be taken at face value and many workers will fall prey to it. In particular, petty bourgeois layers like teachers and nurses will now think hard before any strike action.

The only way to reply to the British ruling class is by an aggressive counter-strategy which makes it absolutely plain to the Tories and the Labour opposition that the workers are in no mood to be trifled with and that their struggle will continue despite the scabs charter which Carr will succeed in putting on the statute book, and despite the Rolls Royce crash and other similar crashes which will occur in the future. The so-called "left" trade union leaders, Jones, Scanlon and Daly, by their existence represent the fact that the consciousness of the working class has changed greatly since the early '60s, but the role of these leaders is to divert the revolt. Too scared to act themselves, they try desperately to convert the whole fight against the

scabs' charter into a campaign to bring back Wilson and Barbara Castle to power. They seem to think that it is better to put the working class on a comfortable electric chair rather than to let it be tortured rather crudely. The sophisticated anti-working class policies of Wilson and Castle are *better* than the blatant attack of Carr and Heath. That is the logic of the policies which the triumvirate is putting into practice. In this situation the revolutionary left is confronted all the more urgently with the task of helping in the creation of Action Committees on the rank and file level in order to cut across various barriers which have been erected by the trade union bureaucracies themselves and to lay the basis of a generalised struggle against the Bill. The attitude of the trade union leaders is shown by the fact that they have not come to the help of the striking postal workers. The railwaymen have even postponed their strike action, presumably till the postal workers go back. This cynicism can only be answered by the creation of rank and file structures which are capable of organising "unofficial" solidarity action with any group of workers under attack. One would have thought that the Institute of Workers'

Control could have played a vital role in this respect, but, alas, no initiative has been taken. Perhaps its leaders are worried that they might lose all influence with Scanlon and Jones, which brings to the fore the role played by the Institute in giving the "left" leaders a left cover.

The only way to defeat the Tories and to defend the working class movement is by a General Strike, but by a mass general strike in which workers themselves are involved in directing day to day events and in which general assemblies of workers decide the policies which affect their own future. That is why *The Red Mole* does not support the slogan of throwing the Tories out and replacing them with a Labour government elected on a socialist programme. To raise this sterile and hoary old slogan when the advanced sections of the class are beginning to see through Wilson & Co. is to create the most absurd illusions within the Labour movement. That is why we project the slogan of a mass general strike to replace the Tories with a workers' government based upon the democratic control of the workers' organisations—the trade unions. That is the only meaningful demand at the present moment.

DISPUTE AT HEATHROW AIRPORT—INTERVIEW WITH SHOP STEWARD TERRY LOMAX

Terry Lomax is a T&GWU shop steward in the BEA Electrical Stores at Heathrow Airport who was sacked on 26th January for "being in breach of contract" and subsequently reinstated on 29th January following a walkout by BEA Engineers. What emerges very clearly from some of his remarks is the definite feeling among conscious workers for a real revolutionary party. On certain points (e.g. a general strike) *The Red Mole* would disagree with his assessment, but his remarks represent a feeling which is becoming generalised.

—What was the dispute about and how did you come to be sacked?

Union representatives for all employees at Heathrow had asked for a £6-a-week increase for everybody whatever their work: they could be, for example, pilots, clerical staff, engineers, canteen staff, etc. Such an increase would, of course, benefit the lower paid workers particularly.

The Management said they were paying 4% and no more, so the national union officials called for an official go-slow in support of the pay claim.

This was, however, rejected by the Pilots, Clerical and Supervisory Staffs, and BUA-Caledonian employees leaving the E & M (Engineering & Maintenance) Section of BEA and BOAC who were the only employees prepared to take action.

On 25th January one engineer was sacked in the Electrical Shop because he refused to do preparatory work on an engine which was going to be sent to Rolls Royce for maintenance because the effect of the work-to-rule had depleted their stock of serviceable engines. As this was a BEA management strike-breaking tactic to defeat the work-to-rule, all work on such engines was black. The following day all the workers in that shop walked out. I was asked to go and do some of the work in that shop which, naturally, I refused to do, as such work was black. Consequently half-an-hour later I was taken upstairs to the Supervisor's office where I was informed I was in breach of

contract and I had terminated my own contract. The Supervisor then escorted me from the Engineering Base.

Besides myself, everyone in the Electrical Shop who walked out were deemed to be in breach of contract making twenty-five in all who had been sacked.

A mass meeting of 2,500 BEA Engineering Workers (that is, everyone on that particular shift) was held on Tuesday afternoon, the 26th January, and a decision taken to strike until the 25 of us were reinstated. This was carried by a 75% majority. There was dissent from people at the rear of the hangar where the meeting was held and I have learnt since that this was due to the amplifying equipment not being powerful enough for them to hear what had happened.

The second part of the motion to strike until the pay claim was settled was rejected by a 60-70% majority despite the fact that the National Officials of the Unions involved were prepared to back the strike.

On Thursday 28th January Engineers employed by BOAC rejected a motion, to support the BEA Engineers' strike for reinstatement of the 25 members, by a narrow majority, the vote being approximately 2,000 each way.

In the circumstances, Bill Benson, Chairman of the BOAC Joint Shop Stewards Committee, recommended that they return to work and work normally as it was clear that, if they failed to back BEA workers in trouble, they would very likely fail to back their own fellow workers in BOAC if they fell foul of their management in operating their work-to-rule.

It is my feeling that BEA management are trying to apply certain sections of the Industrial Relations Bill (those relating to legally binding contracts and sympathetic action) in advance because they know the Government are solidly behind them.

On Friday 29th January, BEA management agreed to reinstate us provided the work-to-rule was called off.

I personally would have preferred a decision to remain on strike until we obtained at least a substantial proportion of the £6 asked for as well as the reinstatement of myself and my colleagues, but in the event the management offer was accepted.

—What is the situation now that these decisions have been taken?

I don't see how we can possibly get more than 4% now. We are in a position of being unable to wrest any more from them because it will be difficult for our members to take action following the BEA management stipulation that the work-to-rule had to be called off if the 25 sacked members were reinstated. Generally speaking, the unions are in a much weaker bargaining position.

—What sort of policy is BEA Management likely to pursue towards its employees at Heathrow following these events?

There has been talk of redundancies and unwelcome shift changes and we are now likely to experience this in the near future.

There is now doubt that GAS (General Airline Services) will now be able to step in without any trouble, not that BEA would want this to happen, but due to pressures from other quarters and the weakness displayed by our members such a move is inevitable.

It is, furthermore, unlikely that the membership has the will to resist takeover by private companies of some of the profitable BEA and BOAC routes.

—You mentioned the Industrial Relations Bill just now. How do you feel about it?

Really anti. Strongly. I resent the Government interference with unions by legislation. If anyone is going to change the unions, it should be ourselves. The Government in introducing this Bill is weakening the power of the unions.

If it becomes law it will put the rank and file members in the hands of the trade union full-time officials, with the result that strikes will become longer and settlements will take longer to reach.

It would follow that the American pattern of strikes lasting a couple of months would prevail. Whereas now, by immediate action, we can settle a dispute fairly quickly, this will not be possible if the Bill becomes law.

—Do you think calling a General Strike is the best tactic for combatting the Bill?

I'm not really sure, because if the Tories went to the country they would go back with an

even bigger majority. The public have become so inundated with anti-strike propaganda and see strikes as the cause of our problems as distinct from one of the symptoms of our problems.

—What would you suggest is the best way to combat the Bill?

I feel that the Labour Party in Parliament could have put up a better fight. The Government are determined to make the Bill law no matter what anybody thinks. The TUC could have given a far better lead. They don't call for a General Strike because they failed in 1926 and have since then become even more involved with the reformist Labour Party.

—Do you feel we have to look outside Parliament if we are to make progress in future?

Definitely, yes. People have got to be educated politically.

—Marxist education?

I'd say that we want to see the emergence of a new kind of socialist party: when I say that I mean as a viable governmental alternative, something along the lines of the New Left.

We need a progressive socialist party, based on Marxist ideas, which can work up to the time when a sufficient number of people are convinced of the need for a different system of society.

—How will the Labour Party be affected?

The New Left will probably turn out to be the dominant party in the Labour Movement in the next few years as many disillusioned with the Labour Party will come over to it. In talking in this way about a new party I am trying to reflect the views of my fellow union members rather than my own.

—But you think the main task at the moment is patient political education?

Yes, definitely, but if we are to see any changes more workers have to become more involved and politically more aware.

Interviewer: A Red Mole supporter

The UPW. copybook leadership!

"It would be very easy for you to get into the frame of mind that nothing's happening, because on the surface nothing seems to be happening."

"And that's just it—nothing seems to be happening, but it is! Under the surface this strike is biting, and it's biting deep."
—UPW Strike Bulletin, Day 21, Feb. 9th.

This particular bulletin goes on to describe the particular effects of the strike such as the failure of the Bank of England to pay out dividends on matured loans and interest payments on other stocks. Tax collections are affected, there is a backlog problem with debits piling up in the clearing banks, money is not circulating properly and of course mail order firms are really feeling the pinch. All this is excellent as far as it goes.

But this bulletin also warns the membership of the UPW that it's obvious that the Confederation of British Industries (CBI) has worked closely with the government to see that as little disruption is dramatised in the press as possible. Now this, coming from the UPW leadership, is something new. How often did we hear again and again that this was not a political strike, the government was not involved; no, this was a strike purely against the Post Office Corporation. Thus do simpletons or charlatans, or both, deceive the workers—or try to.

Now, after over three weeks of strike, they suddenly see that business is connected with government and both with the Post Office. But if this has only just dawned on them, it's been common knowledge amongst the rank and file for some time.

All that the leadership says is "happening" is what is taking place as a result of the strike. Certainly this is a small morale booster; but what they don't say, what they cannot say, is what they, the executive, is doing about it all. For on their side "nothing seems to be happening", and moreover, nothing is.

The only thing they've been doing is reiterating their determination not to budge which, in a 97% solid strike, is about the only thing they could dare to do, and even here, bulldog solidarity sometimes gives way to plaintive whimpers urging Ryland to come and "sit round a table and negotiate." Of course when

a Union Executive heads a 97% solid strike, this sort of stuff isn't difficult at all; indeed any other course of action would be suicidal.

The problem for the executive is that they are caught in a vice. Strike action was forced on them by the intransigence of the Post Office in not being 'decent' enough (as in the balmy class-denying days of Lord Hall) to offer a reasonable wage settlement; this on the one hand, and on the other the loss of prestige, and perhaps (horror of horrors for all bureaucrats) of position too if they had just sat on their hands and done nothing. Up till now, British capitalism, though weakened, has been at least able to play ball with such stalwarts as Jackson. "You keep the issues to a minimum and we won't let you down—we'll throw a sop or two". They may be forced to do it yet, but their present refusal puts Jackson, Chappel etc. up against the wall. *The only way these bureaucrats, and generations of them, have existed is not by fighting the bosses, not by leading the workers except by a few phrases, and not also by outright betrayal in an obvious way; they exist by negotiation, by class collaboration 'round the table' by bringing home not the bacon but the crumbs.*

And the most insidious way they exist is by categorically refusing to politicise the struggles they find themselves at the head of. We have already seen how Jackson & Co. denied the strike was about anything other than wages between the P.O. workers and the P.O. Corporation. But even their belated recognition that the government was colluding with the CBI carried with it not a single change in their policy. Week after week, these complacent bureaucrats have spoken from platforms and stages around the country to assembled ranks of P.O. workers who have expected a lead from them. Living on god knows what, with thousands of them denied social security, they have been cheered by the blithe statement that "we will stay out till 'our' demand is met. And that is all. To be fair, Jackson has attacked the Bill, has even brought in the government on this particular strike, but what he hasn't done, what he is incapable of doing is to concretise his words into a real programme of mass action.

Even the money collected by the trade unions and rank and file workers was forced on them. (See last issue of *The Red Mole* where we described how a London Executive member had refused aid from the Railwaymen.) The most effective aid was collected by rank and

filers and went directly to local strike committees. Of course, the UPW leadership are not solely to blame for the comparative lack of trade union cooperation. £10,000 sounds a lot to an individual worker, but it's just not serious coming from a union with a strike fund of £14 millions.

Then there's the question of the demand itself. Firstly, 15% is no great shakes—this is not at all to advocate that revolutionaries show their revolutionary ability by simply upping the demand made by the union. What is true is that many P.O. rank and filers express the opinion that each day they were out the demand should be increased. The whole nub of the UPW argument has centred around the fact (true enough, of course) that the Post Office workers will fall behind other workers if they don't get the 15%. What they fail to add is that P.O. workers are already behind other workers. And even this is no argument. The demand to remove the incremental scales is a good one. But the most important thing is not to use the capitalists' way of thinking—workers in competition with each other—but to talk firstly about what is a real living wage today and secondly, in the context of the Post Office, to point out what a massive layer of loafers in the middle and upper echelons of the Corporation the workers are having to support anyway.

At a strike meeting in Oxford, Mr. Meaney, an Executive member, was told that if the Supervisory Staff's Union gave the call, the supervisors would be out. Mr. Meaney was dead scared. He tried to scoff at the idea but when one woman said, "Well, why haven't you asked them to call their members out?", he just didn't reply. You see, they are a separate union and will themselves decide whether to come out in solidarity. The idea that one can give them a good kick in that direction is very scary to these arch-splitters of the working class who only cry "Unity at all costs" when their own position is in danger, or when they are jostling each other for the seat "round the negotiating table". This same Mr. Meaney refused to allow a rank and filer from the International Telephone Complex to state his case to the Oxford strikers, even though he'd come all the way from London especially to do so.

Jackson and his mates amongst whom incidentally are three C.P. members, are guilty of a twofold betrayal, a continuous betrayal which is applicable to the trade union leadership as a whole.

They refuse to transcend the limits of separate trade unions carrying out economic struggles within their particular field. They project every struggle as being a partial struggle, not important to other sectors, certainly not important enough for them to come and help, to crash through the artificial boundaries of craft and industry, to the reality of the working class acting as a class in defence of its own. The P.O. Engineers led by Lord Delacourt-Smith (!) are not P.O. workers. The fact that a strike by them could really paralyse the telephones and (incidentally) win the wage demand just like that, is not important. They are engineers, sorry!

They rigidly separate politics from T.U. activity. Of course these people are not revolutionaries. If there were political unions in Britain—as there are in France—the most we would see would be the politics of reformism. The C.P. too subscribes to this rigid division—see for instance Maurice Styles, C.P. member and Chairman of the UPW in the *Morning Star*, Feb. 6th.

The defence of the trade union is the battle order of the day. But this cannot be done by abstracting each strike from the generalised class struggle, by running away from the reality of the Tories' strategy against the British working class, and, most important of all, by shying away from the fact that the working class is more and more looking towards the trade union leadership for political guidance.

The UPW leadership when talking to the membership have concentrated on such things as how solid the strike is, how great they all are, how nasty Bill Ryland is, how fair their demand is (was there ever a "fair deal" under capitalism?). It has in fact evaded its responsibility to the Post Office workers and to the working class as a whole.

One can go further. The postmen and women, historically one of the least militant sectors of the working class, have shown degrees of solidarity, determination, and self-activity on the picket lines such as no one could have predicted. Least of all the UPW leadership. Any success in the strike will give Jackson and Co. some good standing but only for a very short time. Militancy gets into the blood and flourishes. A fight in the UPW is both inevitable and necessary. Too many full-timers from the Union have welshed on too many picket lines for the rank and file to forget.

John Watts

THE TRUTH ABOUT FORDS

FORDS: A model of de luxe exploitation (Or how to super-exploit and fiddle the books.)

The Transport and General Workers' Union have published details* of the Ford claim which inadvertently prove that the TGWU demand for a 50% increase to produce parity by a once-and-for-all increase is, in fact, a miserably inadequate wage claim, and that a reasonable claim, bearing in mind Ford's profit situation would be of the order of 200%.

The TGWU argument also proves that the 50% demand is in no sense inflationary. It argues that an increase of 50% on the manual wages bill represents 30% on total workers' earnings. As productivity is planned to increase in the next year by at least 10%, actual worker costs would rise by only 18% overall. Related to total expenditure, this produces a figure of 4%. As 1969 Ford prices were jacked up by more than the rise in costs in that year it is argued that current prices need only be affected by a miserable 2%, which cannot possibly be considered inflationary. As prices are rising at the rate of at least 8% generally, it is therefore clear that the TGWU would have to bang in for a 200% increase before any arguments about inflation began to take effect as far as Ford's is concerned. Similarly, had the TGWU asked for less than 25%, it could be argued that this would have a deflationary effect—and this is in fact a conclusion one can draw from the Ford £2 offer. At any rate, full settlement of the claim need only affect the new price vehicle by around £16 on an £800 vehicle. Government-imposed purchase tax is of course a main inflationary factor at work, although here again in the case of Fords at least, the main effect of an increase in prices is an increase in profits. Ford's 1970 retail prices are 9% or 10% above their 1968 level, about 2% of which should be

attributed to purchase tax increases and only 0.5% to wage increases. Of course, all these arguments tend to be unrelated to reality, but if the Ford bosses will use such methods of opposing increases, then they must expect to have their arguments turned against them. In fairness, it could be pointed out that the above arrangement is only valid so long as Ford's bought-in components do not rise in prices dramatically. But even here one can see that if 50% wage increases had a 2% effect on average on component suppliers it would still not wreck the final picture.

But Ford's opposition to the claim is again thoroughly dishonest when their profit record is examined. In fact they are the most profitable of the UK manufacturers and have one of the best profit records for a colonial outpost of the Detroit parent company. In 1968 and 1969 gross trading profits per worker at Fords were in excess of £1,000 whereas the three main British-based rivals averaged around £400. Despite lower profits, these other companies pay between 5/- and 8/- an hour more than Fords. Similarly, whereas, for example, Ford Germany wage rates are 50% of the Detroit level, they are only 33% of that level in the UK. Ford profits after tax for 1968 and 1969 were a cool 15%. Even the Government recommends that industrialists should seek rates of return on new investment of around 6% to 10%. (In 1968, with 61,000 employees, Ford gross trading profits were £75 million. In 1969 with 65,000 employees, they were £70 million. The other three major British motor firms in 1969 had 256,000 employees and trading profits of £106 million). But in fact the true extent of Ford's profits is unknown. The performance of the British company cannot be accurately considered outside the context of the US parent. A large part of the import-export transactions of the Ford group are with other parts of the

international Ford combine. In order to fiddle tax in the company of manufacture, international companies deal with colonial subsidiaries abroad (such as Dagenham) at "transfer prices" within the combine which alters costs and profits within particular companies in arbitrary fashion. Therefore it is impossible to identify accurately the actual true profitability of the British-based part of Ford's world-wide operations. In this connection, Fords have recently taken a contract for engines to be supplied to Ford (USA). So Ford's actual profits may be well ahead of those in the published figures which take no account of these hidden factors. It is worth pointing out here that the profit per vehicle exceeds the manual pay per vehicle. This means that the trading profit on a given car represents a return on the labour employed in that vehicle of over 100%.

One of Ford's biggest fiddles concerns investment. The USA parent gets its UK investment free. Not only does it cost them nothing to invest in this country, but they make a profit on the very act of pretending to invest. It works like this. Between 1967-9 the investment grants handed out by the Government and the tax free allowances for depreciation actually exceeded new capital spending. There was a surplus received in grants and allowances of £6 million. Profit from nowhere, for doing nothing. This position is likely to get more so in the future as it is further aided by the doubling of initial allowances for buildings from 15% to 30% outside development areas and from 15% to 40% inside development areas. In short the US capitalists have their capital provided by the British government out of taxes levied on UK workers, or, if you like, on Ford products. Of course, it remains a fact that Ford's biggest investment in Britain is the cheap labour of its work force. Where wages are higher, investment is higher. The fact that the rates of investment

in Japan, Italy, France and Germany have been rising more rapidly than those of the UK is closely allied to the fact that earnings in those countries have risen very much faster than here. Of course, receipt of all those Government handouts does not only mean free investment capital, the corollary is less tax. Even here, Fords are on the fiddle. They manage to provide themselves with working capital by delaying payments of tax. Tax due in January 1970 had not been paid by the end of the accounting year. It was cheaper to delay tax payments than to increase borrowings.

Devaluation, in the case of Fords, benefited General Motors shareholders rather than the British capitalist economy. Not only did devaluation lead to an increase in the volume of export sales but the exploitation of the home market was increased. Because consumer demand was restricted by credit controls, HP regulations and wage freeze, Fords jacked up their prices and increased profits in that fashion whilst restricting the ability of the British worker to buy their shit hot cars.

Of course, even in the field of exports, the directive comes from Detroit. The parent company takes steps to reduce or eliminate competitive pressures between different Ford companies. It is in this way that the principal export market for UK Ford cars is South Africa. By contrast, the biggest export market for other UK car manufacturers is the USA. And on top of all this is the fact that the cars are not much fucking use when you buy them. As the TGWU pamphlet points out, Ford "are the back street boys, the Hong Kong of the British motor industry..."

GT

*The Ford Wage Claim. Case submitted by Moss Evans, Chairman of the Trade Union Side of the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee. TGWU, Transport House, Smith Square, S.W.1. 5/-

LETTERS

Dear Comrades,

Having read Comrade Landau's article, "Zionism's Red Flags", a number of points for discussion become apparent. Firstly, it is necessary to clear up the basic confusion which exists: Cde. Landau appears to assume that the Zionist left is composed of mainly MAPAM and a spurious collection of Jewish student organisations. While it is true to say that MAPAM has established itself as the "establishment left wing", it is not true to conclude that this is the true representative of the Zionist left. Those of us in the Israel-Palestine Committees in Europe, the Radical Zionists in North America, the Socialist Zionists in Latin America and our comrades from SIACH (Israel New Left Group) in Israel reject MAPAM's clear capitulation to social democracy, the nature of its bureaucracy (in Israel) and the manner in which it collaborates with the bourgeois Zionist Federation which has the audacity to describe itself as "Zionist".

Our ideology is clearly drawn from that of Ber Borochov, the brilliant exponent of Zionism. We adhere to his basic analysis of the Jewish situation in capitalist society. We reaffirm our belief in the existence of an anomalous situation whereby the Jewish people constitute a "people class", where the Jewish working masses are in danger of extinction due to their marginal (economically) position in capitalist society. We reject his notion of building the Jewish state "in stages". At the First Socialist Zionist Congress held in Frankfurt last November we made it clear that we considered the necessity of pursuing both the national and the class struggle at the same time. We believe, as did Borochov, that Jewish emancipation was a meaningless notion without a socialist content. As Fanon said: "Instead of separating one nation from another, the struggle for national liberation leads the nation to the stage of history, through developing national awareness it develops and promotes international awareness." We do not as Cde. Landau states, lock "the red flag in . . . the broom cupboard for the foreseeable future." We say, as Borochov said in 1917: "Our starting point remains . . . the class interests of the Jewish working class, socialism—the purpose of our efforts Zionism—the main platform of our minimum demands, the class struggle—the method for turning our politics into reality." The dialectics of the present situation in West Asia compel us to add, if we truly seek national emancipation, our recognition of the just and progressive struggle for Palestinian national self-determination, in this we concur with the Leninist view that no nation which oppresses another can be free itself.

We reject the pseudo-Zionists who seek to destroy the Jewish State by occupation of areas of heavy Palestinian population. If they keep hold of this area of territory they will create an apartheid society where the Arabs are the workers and the Jews the bourgeoisie, the old anomalous position of a Jewish people-class will reoccur. We aim to strengthen Zionism and by so doing eliminate Israeli chauvinism.

It is incorrect to speak of the "Zionist" bourgeois movement "welcoming us" because they have no idea what a mighty threat they will eventually have to face (meanwhile we are isolated from the main stream of the Jewish Community).

Those groups such as the Bund who have stood on the boundaries of Zionism (Lenin described them as "sea-sick Zionists"), incapable of embracing it to the full have degenerated and fallen apart due to the inconsistencies of their position. The Bund in Russia joined the Mensheviks while Poale Zion (Borochov's "Workers of Zion" Party) allied themselves with the Bolsheviks, forming units in the Red Army to defend the Revolution. At the present time Matzpen in Israel has broken up, the inherent contradictions in its structure have finally broken out, while SIACH continues to grow.

It is the comrades from SIACH who organised the violent protests Cde. Landau writes of and it is with those who have consistently supported the Socialist Zionist position that the future lies. For far too long the revolutionary left has closed its eyes to a serious consideration

of the Jewish question. Now when the forces of chauvinism and expansionism are rampant in the Jewish Community and within Israel itself we require the solidarity of our socialist comrades, it is to be hoped that this will be forthcoming.

Yours fraternally,

Stephen Vines (On behalf of IPSAG),
Israel-Palestine Socialist Action Group, c/o
Sibly Hall, Redhatch Drive, Reading, Berks.

REPLY

The tragedy resumes. This letter from Comrade Vines vindicates the fears outlined in the article on "Zionism's Red Flags" as to the confusions and diversions in the minds of Zionist-influenced Jewish youth.

1. The theory evolved by Borochov applied to the Jewish workers in the conditions of Tsarist Russia. He predicted their extinction as their extremely fragile foothold in the economy was eroded by capitalist competition. In deducing this, he was guilty of the fundamental Zionist assumption that anti-semitism will permanently exclude Jews from normal economic life. The principal Jewish communities in the West today, participating in the different social classes of capitalist states, are not suffering progressive economic exclusion.

2. Again, the crude analogy between Zionist nationalism and modern National Liberation struggles! Frantz Fanon's observations on the viciously oppressed Third World nations are not to be stolen from their context and applied to the Jewish people as a whole as if they were the exploited peasants of Algeria or India. Nationalism amongst the majority peoples of advanced, capitalist states—British, American, German—reinforces imperialist reaction. Chauvinism in the economically advanced Zionist state is no exception.

3. The Bund, so lightly dismissed, mobilised in its time more workers and intellectuals in Eastern Europe than the Zionists ever dreamed of recruiting. Lenin criticised its Jewish separatism within the wider Russian working class movement, but it always remained firmly in the ranks of that movement. As the class swung towards the Bolsheviks, the other parties, including the Bund, declined. The "Left" Zionists, however, only joined the struggles of Russia's workers because the conditions of civil war prevented their long-desired emigration to Palestine. In the circumstances, Borochov was driven to drastically revising his theories in 1917. Faced with the reality of socialist revolution, his previously "brilliant" writings were left to gather dust on the bookshelves.¹

4. The very interesting "SIAH" group in Israel today reflects precisely the bewilderment and confusion of young socialists who refuse to tear themselves away from allegiance to the national collective. Yes, they have demonstrated against the military occupation of Arab territories—recently and bravely on 21st November 1970. But what is their attitude towards the war that caused these very occupations?

"Q. Talking of justice and injustice, was the 1967 war a justified war, for you, for SIAH?"

A. Yes. It was a defensive war.²

And what is the basis of their opposition to Israeli militarism?

"It augurs a vastly increased economic burden and threatens a renewed deterioration of the military situation . . . the peace and security of Israel are at stake."³

Not recognising the exclusive nature of the Zionist State as the problem, they must defend that State and seek to moderate its policies. This is the very essence of social democracy. Sincere and courageous in going into the streets, despite severe repression, to demonstrate and to protest, they represent only one link in a chain of increasing youth rebellion in Israel. SIAH is already divided and split.

In May 1968, the walls of Paris carried a poster—a barbed-wire fence ripped apart, above the words: "THE UNITY OF ALL THE WORKERS WILL BRING DOWN THE FRONTIERS." All of the frontiers, Comrade Vines.

David Landau

NOTES

1. The later changes in Borochov's theories were never to be fully elaborated—he died on 17th December 1917. His major works were published by Mendel Singer, Vienna, 1932.

2. Arik Ben Shaker, a SIAH leader. Interview in the "Liaison and Information Bulletin of the Israel-Palestine Committees", issue no. 2, July/August 1970, in French.

3. Announcement by SIAH in the Israeli daily "Ha'aretz", 14th September 1970.

Dear Sir,

I trust your readers were not over-impressed by the blustering editorial reference to "pathetic liberals" like the NCCL and their failure to secure justice for Paul Hoch. Briefly, the facts are as follows:

NCCL representations on behalf of Hoch's co-defendant Gordon Gillespie were made on August 6th 1970. Further representations were made to the Home Secretary on Paul Hoch's behalf on 6th October. On 22nd October Maurice Orbach M.P. met the Home Secretary to discuss these cases on the basis of a brief provided by the NCCL. Our representations on behalf of Mr. Gillespie were turned down on 13th November and on the same date we received a Home Office letter deferring consideration of the Hoch case until he had completed his sentence. From the time of their arrest to Mr. Gillespie's enforced departure and Dr. Hoch's deportation we were regularly in contact with both the defendants and their solicitors. One of our representatives saw Dr. Hoch in prison and he at least was satisfied that we were doing everything possible on his behalf. The Home Office finally rejected our representations after Dr. Hoch had been deported. As we knew this was likely to happen, we did our best to publicise the case and succeeded in getting the *Guardian* to publish details. Both our Parliamentary briefings and the statement issued for the protest meeting on Dutschke included references to the Hoch case and I myself have spoken publicly about it on several occasions.

If you are accusing us of failure, we can accept the criticism, but to accuse us of not trying is nonsense and hardly helpful to what you describe as the "victims of capitalist repression".

Tony Smythe, National Council for Civil Liberties.



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Whatever happened to Rolls Royce?

To understand the causes of the collapse of the Rolls Royce RB211 project, it is necessary to take a brief look at the condition of the airline and aircraft construction industries. The airline market has been steadily reaching saturation point over the last two or three years. The International Airlines Transport Association has enforced, over the last few years, a ban on price competition on scheduled flights (hence the small boom in non-IATA charter flights). All the large international airlines are forced to put their prices in the hands of the IATA for the same reasons as capitalist corporations in other fields in the era of monopoly capitalism have to avoid price wars. With markets already staked out and limited in their growth, for one corporation to lower its prices in the hope of stealing the market from another corporation in the same field, results in a disastrous price war that wipes out the profits of all concerned. Under these conditions, the airline companies try to capture larger shares of a fixed market by competing technologically.

With a stagnant market, and with the impossibility of price competition, the airline companies demand from the construction companies bigger, better, and faster aircraft—and delivery in a relatively shorter space of time. Under these pressures, Rolls Royce, for example, accepted a delivery date for the RB211 which was insufficient to allow them to develop what was an almost entirely new engine. At the same time, enormous amounts of capital are needed to develop the marginal improvements that will give the purchaser the edge in the market. Hence, when the new carbon-filter fan blades that Rolls had developed failed, it was necessary to substitute titanium and the whole job had to be retooled and the Derby plant almost completely rebuilt. In addition to this, with more planes projected than there is market to absorb them, Lockheed gained far fewer orders for the TriStar than expected, hence the unforeseen development costs incurred for Rolls had to be spread over a smaller number of engines.

Rolls Royce and its national victories

When Rolls took the order from Lockheeds in 1968, it was hailed as a national victory. In fact, the acceptance of the order reflected that the above factors had hit the British aircraft industry earlier and with greater impact than the American industry. Britain has a more backward technical base and less total capital available than American firms in the same field. Rolls had to accept the Lockheed order or no order at all. It was forced to outbid two American firms for the contract—Pratt and Whitney, and General Electric Co.. It could only do this by accepting a price that guaranteed bankruptcy in the event of any development difficulties.

The launching programme for RB211 rose from £65m. in March 1968 (£50m. from the Labour Government), to £135m. in 1970 and still rising. The Ministry of Technology had to be silenced in early 1969 when it discovered the rate of spending. Concorde was embarrassing enough—total cost projection for 1962 was £140m., by 1970 it was £730m. and still rising.

By January of this year, the Tories were faced with a choice. In addition to the £42m. promised last November, Rolls Royce would need an extra £160m. to continue with the project. They would need in addition another £50m. on completion to pay Lockheed compensation for exceeding the time limit. Rolls had no more capital, not even enough cash to pay their wages bill, would have had to pay £300m. in compensation to Lockheed. The Tories had to find £200m. to give Rolls Royce. This first choice was not politically feasible, and in addition to the fact that the figures were open-ended, each of the 540 engines would lose another £110,000 on the selling price. The alternative was simple—liquidate the company. Lockheed can't claim against a company that doesn't exist. Then scrap RB211 and nationalise the remaining plant. The remaining part of the industry makes a steady profit on spares for military and civil aircraft industries all over the capitalist world,



Out of the past: the Canberra



Phantom



Buccaneer



Harrier



Jaguar



and whatever was paid in compensation (estimates vary from £50m. to £100m.) would be recouped over a short period.

Capitalist anarchy

The whole affair is a remarkable example of the anarchy of capitalist production. British and American imperialism can't arrange sufficient flights for their executives to keep the airlines

and aircraft industry solvent; an enormous share of the total capital of a society is invested in a field that is of little or no benefit to the majority of the population, and this share goes on growing to create marginal refinements of greater sophistication in order to maintain flagging profits. The pace gets too hot for the weaker imperialism of the partnership, and so by liquidating a firm on paper it deprives the bigger partner of £300m. overnight and throws its financial superstructure into chaos. The workers, upon whose backs this grandiose edifice of theft and conspicuous consumption of resources has been erected, are the same workers who are to be made to suffer from its internal contradictions.

The number of redundancies expected to follow in Rolls Royce alone is 20,000. An additional 20,000 may follow from Lucas, Shorts of Belfast, Camerons, and British Steel (Sheffield), combined. Shop stewards and Labour M.P.s in the Midlands and in Scotland have launched a campaign to demand total nationalisation of Rolls Royce and continuation of the RB211 project. The first demand has of course been met with the exception of the car division which is being sold off to private enterprise. We should look at the second demand more closely. It has been taken up by the unions, by the rank-and-file of the Labour Party, by the liberal press (*The Guardian*, etc.) and by the C.P. This campaign to lobby Parliament is an instinctive response to the news of the collapse, but it has to be assessed realistically. Having no perspective of industrial action, it is unlikely to impress the Tories, but the final outcome will be determined by other considerations.

A Tory expenditure of £150m. to keep the project going may now be politically viable. This £150m. would be absolutely necessary since it is only the £50m. penalty clause that is negotiable. But the £150m. is of course open-ended and would almost certainly escalate by the time of completion. If we include the £42m. promised in November last year, but never handed out, then the total cost could exceed £250m. It is extremely unlikely that, even on this consideration alone, the Tories would agree to restore the status quo. There are other considerations however. Lockheed were negotiating for a replacement for the RB211 with two American firms two days after the "collapse"—Pratt and Whitney and GEC. They both have engines in a further state of development than the RB211, and to win the contract with Lockheed would be a useful supplement to other orders for the same engines. The cost of the alterations to the TriStar would almost certainly be footed by the Nixon Administration. Lockheed will not be allowed to suffer by a Government that relies on Lockheed for a large proportion of their military requirements; and the construction companies have a powerful lobby in Congress—Senator Proxmire has already protested that Congress must not loan Lockheed the money to cover the losses suffered by renegotiating the penalty clause with Rolls Royce, since this is equivalent to bailing out a foreign competitor. (*Evening Standard*, Feb. 9th). As to compensation, the Tories can safely allow the legal wrangle to spin out for years.

Parliamentary lobbies = no real action

From the point of view of the workers who face redundancy, a reinstatement of the contract would be fine. But this is extremely unlikely to happen, and certainly not through Parliamentary lobbies. For the left to raise this demand is to encourage illusions in the aircraft industry given the state of the market, and to advocate massive expenditure of money on an investment that served even in 1968 to cover up the imminent collapse of contracts in this field. The demand has other dangers, however. It distracts attention away from the forms of effective action that workers can take. The demands that the *Morning Star* have raised are internally contradictory (nationalisation under workers' control—by the Tories?; and continuation of the RB211, would simply mean continuation of the RB211 under a re-privatised Rolls Royce receiving £250m.

gratis from the taxpayer since the only reason for nationalisation was to liquidate Rolls Royce's liabilities and retain the parts militarily necessary). They have opportunistically adopted these demands simply because the workers faced with redundancy have posed them. Far from posing a realistic strategy or offering even a preliminary analysis of the economic contradictions in the industry, they offer only the spectacle of shocked indignation that the Tories would normally use to protect their interests, as "arguments" for their demands.

"For the RB211, despite inevitable development snags, is an assured engineering success, a feature of outstanding engineering skill . . . Power output is increased. There is a fuel consumption saving of 25%, noise level is reduced and smoke emission cut almost to nil. The last two factors are of great importance in addition to the economic advantages [to whom?]. New materials are used [a criterion of value?]. To destroy this would be an act of monumental vandalism that would make the Luddites look like a bunch of creative geniuses. To break up a team of workers, scientists, designers and technicians whose collective skills produced the wartime Merlin engines, the postwar Darts, Avons and Speys [sic], and which are now producing the engine of the future, would be the most wanton destruction of the greatest asset [sic] that any nation has—the skill of its workers . . . The RB211 must continue because it is the future. It can and will be sold—because it is the best in the world—to Lockheed." (*Morning Star*, Tuesday 9th Feb. 1970). One has a feeling that even if the TriStar was to be used for transporting napalm to Vietnam the argument would be the same.

All this is completely irrelevant of course. No matter how good the engine may be, the workers become redundant just the same, those left in the industry work harder than ever, and the only response is a little name-calling. Vic Feather responded immediately: "Short of working for no money at all, the workers would cooperate with management . . . [to improve productivity]." (*Times*, Friday Feb. 5th). A sentiment reflected by Charles Hunt, chairman of the joint staff and manual workers union committee at Derby: "We are backing the company and I have no doubt a lot of voluntary overtime will be worked [sic]. It is up to us to prove that the RB211 is a good engine. We have asked everyone to keep working as normally as possible." (*Times*, Sat. Feb. 10th).

No redundancy

Rather than talk vaguely about workers' control under Tory nationalisation, the demand for "No redundancy" must be raised. This is a fight which can be won by employing the simple tactic of one out—all out. It is a demand that can gain popular support since it 20,000 workers, earning say an average of £30, are paid full wages for a year, and assuming that no new contracts arise in that time, it would cost the Government only £30m. Now, by scrapping RB211 the Tories are saving either £250m. or £300m., depending on which way you look at it. If £42m. can be given gratis to Rolls Royce (and it is still in the Treasury), then £30m. can be "invested" in retaining that valuable "asset" for Britain's "future"—the skills of these highly trained workers. At the same time, the fight for no redundancy can be escalated into a fight for workers' control on the platform that the technology and skills available are "employed" for more useful social purposes. In those subcontracting firms outside of Rolls Royce that are to be affected, the same fight could be undertaken by the unions combined with demands for no short-time working. Only if these fights are won is it feasible to talk of "workers' control".

The fight against redundancy is crucial. Redundancy could be an added advantage for the Tories, flowing from the Rolls Royce liquidation, in their attempts to reduce the living standards of the working class by combined ideological and legal repression. It should be continually pointed out that wage claims have played no part in the affair, and that the collapse stems purely from the contradictions of international capitalism.

LABOUR & SOC

Introduction

At the Albert Hall meeting on January 12th, the TUC decided to have as their main speaker Harold Wilson. This was just one part of a campaign by some T.U. leaders to convince us that most of our problems will be solved if a Labour Government is elected. In order to see just how little truth there is in this argument, it is worth considering just a few parts of the record of the last Labour Government.

At the same time, another wing of the Labour Party is up to different tricks. Sid Bidwell, writing in the Morning Star, attacks those people who go around mouthing "unrealistic", "revolutionary" slogans. By examining the record of the last Labour Government, and the reasons for that record, we can show who is really "reasonable", the Red Mole or Mr. Bidwell.

Housing

The Labour Government's programme on housing was a pack of lies right from the beginning. It made great play during the 1964 election of the Tories' "Rachmanite" Rent Act. But when the Labour Government got round to repealing the Act, they did so in a virtually meaningless way. By failing to extend protection of tenure to furnished property, they created a situation where if a landlord stuck a few old chairs in a room, then he could claim that the property was furnished and therefore the tenant had virtually no security at all. All this was pointed out to Harold Wilson & Co. at the time but they somehow "forgot" to do anything about it.

Due to complete neglect by all governments, the housing situation in Britain is appalling. Even in 1968 it was calculated that an additional three million houses were needed simply to replace those already slums or so old as not to be worth repairing.¹ What is more, the oldest housing falls into those categories where there is least protection for the tenant. For example, 75% of all furnished accommodation is in houses built during or before the First World War.²

The facts on the housing situation were well known to the Labour Government. For example in 1967 an official report came out which found that 1,700,000 houses were unfit for human habitation.³ The report found that of these houses, 79 out of every 100 lacked a hand wash-basin, 77 out of every 100 lacked an inside lavatory, and 72 out of every 100 had no proper bath.

The main speaker at the TUC, Harold Wilson, of course did nothing about the profiteering in human misery which these figures reflect. On the contrary, when it came to, for example, the cuts after devaluation, while absurd contracts like Concorde went ahead, the number of council houses to be built was cut by 15,000.

It is important to realise that despite the very large number of people living in council housing, almost the entire profit from housing goes into the hands of capitalists. To show this, consider the main ways of getting a home.

If you are buying your own house, then you have got to get a mortgage. In that case, at least 100% profit on the deal will be made by the firm lending the money. For example, if you bought a house at £4,000, you would pay back at least £8,000 on a normal mortgage. £4,000 to the money lender.

On council housing, the vast majority of rent payments also goes to money lenders. For example, for the GLC in 1969-70 it was estimated that 18/3 out of every £1 income from rents will go to money lenders.⁴ Under the Labour Government, the proportion going this way went up steadily from 79% of all income from rents to 89% of all such income.

The biggest money-making racket of all is in



Capitalist ideology in a nutshell: the Economist trumpets "Who needs bus conductors?—only their union." It somehow forgets "the rather more important question of who supplies new jobs for redundant bus conductors."

privately rented housing. For a start off, private landlords charge the most. For example, on a house worth £3,750, the average rent charged by a private landlord is three times as much as that charged by a local authority and half as much again per week as it would cost the occupier to buy the house himself.⁵ The housing conditions themselves in privately-rented housing are also the worst. The official survey of 1967 found that 33% of all privately-rented housing was unfit.⁶

The Labour Government did nothing to sort out this situation. On the contrary, it saw housing as something it could cut back on. Thus, for example, as we have seen, it cut 15,000 of the council house building scheme. The general effect of the Labour Government's policies can be seen in the housing records of the following boroughs:

	No. of houses built in:	
	1968	1969
Tower Hamlets	962	669
Barking	720	641
Newham	1393	496
Southwark	3345	430
Gateshead	1317	688
Wallasey	298	18
Jarrow	406	87
Workshop	181	6

A fine record for the last full year of Labour government!

Unemployment

It might appear obvious from the housing figures that terrible shortages exist. In the field of housing, as in every other social service, an enormous increase in production is necessary. In a sensible economic system every single available person would be used to boost production in this and other areas. But such is the economic system of capitalism that at a time when a great increase in effort in these areas is needed, the government is systematically involved in putting people out of work. The Labour Party kicked up a big fuss when it was recently announced that unemployment in January 1971 was 690,000. Quite rightly, they said that unemployment was unacceptable as an economic control. The trouble was that no one could take their objections seriously as the Labour Government itself accepted the dictates of the capitalist economic system and had always created unemployment as a way of controlling the economy when it was in office.

In the first five years of the Labour Government alone, and directly due to the policies of that Government, the number of unemployed rose from 340,000 to 551,000. This increase in unemployment of over 200,000 represented a loss in production of over 45 million working days a year. Yet by October 1968 was Harold Wilson denouncing the lost production which was caused by this deliberately created unemployment? No; instead he was talking of the

"wrecking" activities of the seamen, and the "subversives" in the car industry who were causing losses in production. Never in the entire period Labour were in office did the number of days of production lost through strikes reach even one-tenth of that lost through unemployment. But we never heard anything about the "wreckers" and "subversives" in the government. Not surprising. If you accept the capitalist system, then unemployment is inevitable. After all, what does unemployment matter to the huge firms? Many large firms, for example GEC, AEI, etc., enjoy their greatest prosperity during periods of high unemployment. Their calculation is a simple one. High unemployment means that we can frighten our workers into accepting that there will be no real increase in pay. No increases in pay means higher profits. This particular game needs a front man in government to carry out the dirty work of creating the unemployment in

the first place. Harold Wilson and the Labour Party were ideally suited for that role.

Apart from the general increase in unemployment, what made the situation far worse was that the duration of unemployment for men out of work went up during this period. The number of men out of work for over a year went up by nearly half, and the number of men out of work for over eight weeks doubled.

A feature which was particularly severe about this increase in unemployment was the way it was concentrated in certain areas. For example, in Northern Ireland unemployment even by October 1968 had reached 8.6% and in Northern England it had reached 6.2%.

Low pay and inequality of wealth

Before he came to power, Harold Wilson liked to give the line about how the Labour Party in general, and himself in particular, were completely opposed to low pay and poverty. He said that, "In the part of the world I come from men are very ruggedly equal. The Yorkshire Socialist reacts from poverty not so much because it is a product of inefficiency and a badly run social system, but because it is a crime against God and man."⁶ Yet it is probably in the field of low pay that the Labour Government's record was worst—not to say most dishonest.

It is now calculated that over one in six children now lives below the poverty line.⁷ This figure is practically obscene when compared to calculations that 1% of the population owns 81% of the industrial shares.⁸

The Labour Government did nothing about this situation. Of course they tried to conceal this. For example we were told at first that the Incomes Policy was aimed at helping the worst off. This claim always was a fast one as the only people who really gained from the holding down of wages were the firms who hoped to make higher profits as a result. After a while even this most dishonest of governments was forced to admit this. Thus Harold Walker, then



"our support and our appreciation of the firm leadership being shown. The country has been very well begun indeed."—Tribune, 6th Nov. 1964.

IAL INEQUALITY

Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Employment and Productivity, was forced to admit that "It is not a primary function of the Government's Prices and Incomes Policy to redistribute wealth." Even this was dishonest as it was no function at all of the Incomes Policy to redistribute wealth in any direction other than that of in favour of the employers.

After their bluff with the Incomes Policy, the Labour Government did not even particularly pretend to help the low-paid. They turned to union-bashing instead. Perhaps to have pretended would have over-stretched the powers for deceit even of H. Wilson, Castle & Co. as during this last four years in office those at or below the Supplementary Benefit level doubled.⁹

The situation now, after six years of Labour government is roughly as follows: the TUC calculates that a minimum wage of £16.10.0. is an absolute minimum. If they were realistic they would admit that with spiralling prices, rents, etc., this is far too low. But even taking this miserably low level, Labour did nothing to help this minimum wage. If we take even 8/- an hour (equivalent to £16 for a 40-hour week), then there are now still over 75 categories of occupation where at least 25% of the workforce gets less than this an hour.¹⁰ Some of the individual figures are frankly horrifying. For example, over 80% of women manual workers (classified by occupation) get under 8/- an hour.¹¹ What is more, all the talk of a wages explosion is nonsense as far as the low-paid are concerned. The increase in poverty revealed by the report of the Child Poverty Action Group is inevitable when you have a situation where you have a situation where prices have been going up at 6-8% a year but in at least 90 industries wages have only been going up at 4% a year.¹²

When Harold Walker admitted that the Incomes Policy was not aimed in any way at reducing inequalities of wealth, he made, in the same speech, a claim that the elimination of this

inequality was being carried out by Labour's taxation policy. It is therefore worth looking at just what this policy was aimed at doing.

During the first three years of the Labour Government alone, taxation went up fastest on the worse off. For example, on the wage we discussed before of £16 a week, the proportion of total income paid in all forms of taxation went up by over 15%, whereas for incomes over £60 a week, it only went up by less than 3%.¹³ Even for old age pensioners, the Labour Government did nothing about the fact that over 20% of their miserly pension income goes in tax.

The situation is even worse if children are taken into account. In the case of families with one child, the proportion of income paid in taxes during the first three years of the Labour Government went up as follows. For a family with an income of £11, taxation went up by nearly 30%, whereas for a family with an income of over £35, it went down slightly. Taking the family with two children, we find that by the end of the same period, a family with an income of over £50 a week was paying 31% of its income in tax, while a family with an income of £11 was paying 41%.¹⁴

Nothing was done about the retrogressive rates system either. A family with an income of £22 a week paid over 50% more, as a proportion of its income, in rates that did a family with an income of over £58 a week.

So much for Harold Walker's claim to be redistributing wealth through taxation.

As compared to all this, the capitalists did very well indeed under Labour. On a trivial level Arnold Weinstock got a knighthood after sacking 12,000 men and there was even an official honour for the man who made Harold Wilson's raincoats. On a more serious level, the firms raked in the profits to the tune of £1,383, 240,000 for the ten biggest firms alone.

The Parliamentary farce

We could have investigated many other features of the policy of the Labour Government; for example its record on the Health Service, on education, on immigration, on industrial accidents, etc. Those points covered should, however, bring home that this was a government carrying out the policies to fit the needs of the capitalist class. The important lesson to learn is why this was the case. Was it, as the Left Labourites claim, because Wilson "betrayed" the Labour Party, or did it stem from something much more fundamental?

In his more lucid moments even Harold Wilson was on the way to understanding why his government had no choice but to carry out the dictates of the capitalist system. In a speech to the TUC in 1964, he said, "If you borrow from some of the world bankers you will quickly find that you lose . . . independence, because of the deflationary policies and the cuts in the Social Services that will be imposed on a government that has got itself into that position."¹⁵ Wilson was on the right track but he could have looked closer home. It is not only international capitalists, the "gnomes of Zurich", who wanted "deflationary policies and cuts in the social services", but British capitalists as well. That lesson was rammed home in the first few weeks of the Labour Government, when hundreds of millions of pounds-worth of capitalist assets were transferred out of the country simply because the bourgeoisie had a misguided fear that Labour might do something to improve the situation of pensioners.

Exactly the same employers and financiers who now write irate letters to newspapers about the political strikes on Dec. 8th and Jan. 12th then were the people who carried out a capitalist political strike. From then on the lesson to Wilson was clear; either play ball with the capitalist class or that class will wreck the economy.

Strangely enough, it didn't even need a Marxist to tell Wilson that this action by the bourgeoisie was inevitable. Even dyed-in-the-wool reformer Sir Stafford Cripps had pointed out that the "idea that the wielders of economic



Over 1,700,000 unfit houses.

power will cooperate with a Labour Government is quite fantastic". What he meant here of course was a Labour Government which attacked capitalism. A Labour Government which carries out the policies of the capitalist class is of course no threat. On the contrary, because the working class has illusions in the Labour Party, the bourgeoisie frequently prefers that attacks on the working class should be carried out by the Labour Party. Thus, for example, in 1931, a prominent representative of the bourgeoisie gave the following piece of advice to George V: "in view of the fact that the necessary economies would prove most unpalatable to the working classes it would be in the general interest if they were imposed by a Labour Government."¹⁶ The "necessary economies" meant the slacking of unemployment pay in the interests of the employing class. The "general interest" meant of course the interest of big business. Exactly the same role was forced on the last Labour Government. Its "economies", as we have seen, were "most unpalatable to the working classes."

The Labour Left of course refuses to see that the power of the ruling class is in its economic control, not in its ability to win elections. The Labour Party are united on this, from Harold Wilson to the most "extreme" left-winger. Wilson speaks for the belief of the entire Labour Party when he says, "Whatever people say, at an election, the old establishment only have one vote each at the end of the day. So has the engineer and miner in my constituency."¹⁷ What is more, the Labour "lefts" desperately try to confine the struggle entirely to Parliament. Thus, for example, when one of *Tribune's* columnists suggested that an M.P. was calling for industrial action, that M.P. sent in a letter saying that "I should hate Francis Flavius to give anyone the idea that I am now calling for mass action from the trade union movement against it [the Incomes Policy]."¹⁸

The trouble is that while *Tribune* places such emphasis on elections, unfortunately for them the bourgeoisie does not. It knows that its power to bend any government to carrying out policies in the interests of the bourgeoisie will last as long as that bourgeoisie controls the economy and thus has the power to sabotage any steps taken by a Labour Government.

Why then does the Labour Left not say clearly that immediately after being returned to office a Socialist government would have to take economic control, and therefore ownership, out of the hands of the capitalist class? The reason for this is simple. No class is going to give up its power, wealth and position peacefully. Can you imagine saying to Sir Arnold Weinstock that he has had a good innings but now he is going to have to give up his race-horses and get down to learning how to operate a lathe? Just to ask the question is to see the answer. For anyone who still believes in the uniquely "peaceful and democratic" nature of the British bourgeoisie just consider the example of Belfast. Here we see the whole might of the British Army being used in defence of a regime that refuses to grant even the most ele-

mentary rights on housing, jobs, etc. and which is openly "racist" as regards the Catholic minority: If the British bourgeoisie is prepared to use force in that situation, it would not hesitate for a moment to use it against a British working class that was trying to deprive the bourgeoisie of the source of its power. The Labour Left can of course point none of this out as if it did it would have to argue for the working class to prepare to meet force with force, and the Labour Lefts would die with fright at this prospect.

The C.P. of course tries to have it both ways. It states that violence is not inevitable but then states in small print in the *British Road to Socialism* that of course it cannot be ruled out. This is meaningless. The working class will not use violence, even defensive violence, if it has been told for years that it can get everything by peaceful means. It will only use violence if for years before it has heard the arguments which show that violence is inevitable. This is why it is absurd when, for example, C.P.s and Left Labourites say things like, "Of course it would have been correct for the German working class to have resisted Hitler by force." How can you possibly expect a working class to respond to such appeals if it has been told for decades that violence is unnecessary? If force, whether revolutionary or even anti-fascist force, is necessary, then we must begin to answer the case for it now. The *British Road to Socialism*, by glossing over the long period needed to persuade the working class of the need to use force, prepares the way for terrible defeats for the working class. It is not the revolutionaries who are "unrealistic" but those who believe that the capitalist class will cooperate in actions against its own interests, or will even peacefully accept its own defeat. After six fruitless years of Labour Government, more workers are coming to see that the only realists are the revolutionaries and that the most "unreasonable" people are the faded old parliamentarians like Sid Bidwell and all the C.P. leaders who want to ape him.

J. Marshall

NOTES

1. A Manual of Applied Statistics, ed. Prest.
2. Socially Deprived Families in Britain Ed. Holmen
3. Ibid.
4. Not a Penny on the Rents.
5. Holmen, op cit.
6. The Politics of Harold Wilson—P. Foot, p. 326.
7. Child Poverty Action Group Press Release, 21/1/71.
8. Robie Blackburn in The Incompatibles.
9. Child Poverty Action Group, op cit.
10. OEP Gazette, Dec. 1970, p. 1114-5.
11. Ibid.
12. Incomes DATA report on 126 Industrial Groups.
13. Economic Trends, Feb 1969.
14. Ibid.
15. Quoted in The Forgotten Englishman—Coates & Silburn, p. 172.
16. Parliamentary Socialism, ed. Miliband, p. 176.
17. Foot, op cit p. 337.
18. Ibid, p. 319.



The Peasant Struggle

interview with an

This interview was conducted with Comrade Sudhir Bose, a leading militant of the Bengali Socialist Workers Party (Indian Section of the Fourth International) when he recently passed through London. The Red Mole is pleased to publish it because not much is known about the development of the Fourth International in the semi-colonial world. In future issues we will publish news about our comrades in Japan and Bolivia.

What is the political importance of West Bengal in relation to the rest of India?

The political importance of West Bengal is very great, but the only way you can appreciate this is if you understand the political and historical background and tradition of this province. For instance during the days of British imperialist rule over our country, it was in Bengal where the terrorist movement and the revolutionary movement was born. If a proper survey were conducted, I think you would find that one family in twelve would be able to boast a martyr who died for the cause of national liberation. They fought bravely against British imperialism and made Bengal the spearhead of the anti-imperialist struggle. That is why Bengal was the part of India which the imperialists disliked and feared the most and that is why they institutionalised a racist discrimination against the Bengalis. They could not trust us to serve in the British Army and in this of course they were right. If the Bengalis had been armed it is possible that a revolutionary leadership would have emerged to lead them.

Yesterday they fought against the British, today they lead the struggle against capitalism itself, that is against the Indian Congress and its allies. It was in West Bengal where the popular discontent and revolutionary fervour of the masses was channelled into popular frontism by the so-called left parties. Today a big mass movement is developing against the betrayals of these parties and, in my opinion, West Bengal will be the place from where the spark or rather the flame of socialist revolution will begin to set the whole of India ablaze, and thus bring about a change in the social structure of the country.

What is the present situation of West Bengal, in other words the state of the peasantry, working class movement, etc.?

There is a very serious crisis facing capitalism in West Bengal and there is a general feeling which has pervaded virtually every strata which shows us that the people are simply not prepared to be oppressed any longer. From a revolutionary point of view the situation couldn't be more opportune. The capitalists are aware of this and they have started shifting their industries from West Bengal to "safer" parts of India. This withdrawal of capital symbolises the pre-revolutionary situation which exists in Bengal today. The leading Indian industrialist, Birla, recently stated that he preferred Bombay to Calcutta because the latter was a "hell" as far as he was concerned. He is, of course, correct.

The level of political consciousness inside the working class is very high. They fight on the streets today on all issues and not only their economic demands. Last December the jute mill workers came out on strike and the employers locked them out. This resulted in solidarity actions by all other workers and poor peasants. A General Strike was proposed in order to defend the jute workers. The central government capitulated before the strike could take place. Of course the working class movement is faced with certain problems. The level of unemployment is constantly rising and at the moment the average rate of unemployment is 65% throughout the province in both the cities and the countryside. The second problem is the trade union bureaucrats who are by and large in the pay of the capitalists. These parasites have created in many areas an atmosphere of fear



Victims of the flood in East Bengal.

and they are constantly victimising socialist and radical workers. They act openly as the Trojan horse of Indian capitalism. But despite the growing poverty and constant fear of unemployment, the workers refuse to be intimidated and are in the fighting line of the struggle.

As far as the peasantry is concerned, as you know throughout India 70% of the population is agricultural. In West Bengal the figure is slightly less. Between 60% and 62% of the population depends on agriculture. Because of the famine conditions in the countryside and the drought, even among the peasantry the largest grouping consists of what can only be described as a rural proletariat. This class owns nothing except the mud and straw huts and their eating utensils. These people are today prepared to fight and go the whole way to smash the existing structures and change the social relationships which exist in the countryside. Thus we see that the demand for seizing the land today becomes extremely popular. This demand in some places was so powerful that we have seen the Naxalite movement winning a great deal of support and forcing both the right-wing reformist Communist Parties to make a show to the people in their short-lived "land grabbing" exploits. But they failed miserably and no one was taken in, not even the right-wing press.

According to the law there are no landlords. But of course this is a complete farce because in India it is the unwritten laws which operate. On paper a landlord might only own 25 acres, which is the limit, but in practice he can own land under several fictitious names. But this type of landlord has more of an upper-class kulak mentality rather than that of an old feudal landlord (this is in Bengal, of course). So as far as the class structure of the Bengali countryside is concerned, you have the kulak-landlords on the top, and then you have the middle peasants, but they are also in a state of decay because of the poverty, unemployment and the famine. Virtually every alternate year brings us famine or drought. Even today we are living in famine conditions. From April to October the agricultural labourers will therefore have almost nothing to eat. They will have only one meal in 24 hours and that meal would surprise even the most ardent revolutionary living in the developed capitalist countries. It consists of rice with salt and if they're lucky some cooked vegetables. The number of people who eat meat or fish is very limited. The agricultural labourers are on the lowest rung of the ladder. They comprise a large and growing majority and represent an

extremely potent revolutionary force in the Bengali countryside. In any future struggle they will be a decisive component and that is why our comrades are working in the countryside and leading struggles.

Could you tell us something about these fake left parties which believe in electoral fronts. What concrete results have their capitulations had on the consciousness of the Bengali masses?

The "left" parties were undoubtedly very popular because of their propaganda and agitation which was undoubtedly quite effective. But 1967 marks the great divide because it was in this year that these parties completely exposed themselves. These same parties which had in the past fought for some of the demands of the people, when they came to power in 1967, their lust for power and their desire to hold office overshadowed everything else. They openly went over to collaboration with the capitalist class. In the years when they were in power they behaved like any bourgeois government. The people saw for themselves that nothing had changed. Corruption, high food prices, unemployment, disease all remained the same and in times like these even the most violent revolutionary rhetoric cannot mask the fact that the condition of the people remains unchanged. Despite all their big talk, they failed to arrest a single black-marketeer or property speculator. In 1969 when they came to power again there was yet another chance for them to mobilise the masses against the bourgeois state and expose the central state apparatus. Once again they failed miserably. They weren't even capable of implementing an existing law regarding the amount of land any one person was entitled to own, though they know full well that many landlords are defying or disregarding this law, which after all was framed by a capitalist government. The least the United Front government could have done—after all it included two parties which call themselves communist—was to implement this law. The only actions the two CPs could carry out was restricted to a mock occupation of Indira Gandhi and Birla's gardens. It could be that some of the CP leaders knew the geography of these gardens well as they are entertained there on certain occasions. These attempts to bluff the people have failed.

I think that these parties have ceased to be left parties in any meaningful sense of the word. They are working hand-in-glove with the ruling Congress Party, with other parties like the Muslim League and in places even with semi-fascist parties like the Jan Sangh. These parties have become a part of the established order. Today in West Bengal there are only two exist-

ing revolutionary tendencies: the Maoists and the Trotskyists. These are the only currents who oppose both the capitalists and the sham opposition of the "left" parties. Of course the Maoists are much better known than us because of the great weight of the Chinese Revolution, but don't be too deceived by appearances because in some parts of Bengal we are much stronger. You can ask any member of the repressive state apparatus in the district of Bankura who are the Trotskyists of the Fourth International. He will tell you. He knows because he and his friends have been trying to defeat us and have failed. Our comrades continue to occupy the land.

What is the attitude of the Trotskyist movement in India towards the General Election?

You probably know that the Indian Constitution is the longest in the world. It has 395 Articles and innumerable clauses and appendices, etc., but this constitution or any other capitalist constitution is incapable of solving the problem which the country is now facing. The number of elections is increasing both on a provincial and the central level. Looking at it from a purely practical point of view, it would be impossible for revolutionaries to participate because in India to participate in an election costs a lot of money and we are poor and all our funds are anyway put to better use. To run one candidate alone would cost us a minimum of Rs. 20,000 (£1,000 approx. on the black market exchange rate). As you can see, no real revolutionary tendency would be able to spare that amount of money just for an election.

Of course, there is a more important and political side to the question. After all, a bourgeois election is a hoax, a farce, particularly as far as we are concerned. The toiling masses of West Bengal have seen through this farce. Large numbers of workers and poor peasants today have no illusions about the elections. They have seen many elections. They and others like them, particularly the youth, feel that there is only one way and that is the way of revolutionary struggle. This atmosphere has been enhanced by the two revolutionary movements who operate there, namely the Maoists and the Trotskyists. And now our party, the Socialist Workers Party in Bengal, has decided from both a tactical and strategical point of view not to participate in the elections. This doesn't mean that we extend the slogan of boycott like the Naxalites have done to every sphere of life without any regard for the level of consciousness of the masses. We have also decided to use the election period to go to the masses and explain to them the meaning of the election and why we are not participating in it.

What has been the role of the Naxalites or rather the CP(M-L) and what do you think their evolution is likely to be? Have they a future?

The Naxalites or the Maoists could be in fact one of the biggest parties in India, but because of their adventurism and because of their indecision and because of the internecine battles which take place inside their leading bodies, they have not been able to build an all-India party. Already they have disintegrated into different factions and groups all claiming their right to the true heritage. There are about 30 small groups and 13 different newspapers in West Bengal alone. They're saying almost the same things. Same strategy, same Mao Tse Tung, same ideas. They are divided on the question of who is the real leadership. The main party of course is the CP (M-L). They had a strategy of going to the countryside to start an agrarian revolution and this they tried, but never on the basis of the class struggle in the particular locality or on the bases of the masses in that locality. They tried it on the basis of individual terror by killing individual landlords and individual *jotedars* in Bengal. They failed because they failed to understand the role the masses

uggle in Bengal

play in any meaningful struggle and this despite all their "serve the people" propaganda. Their emphasis on individual terror brought upon their heads the entire might of the state and they suffered serious casualties. Many brave and heroic militants were killed. The repression has had a demoralising effect on many of their cadres and has caused some disintegration. I don't think that their future in that sense is very bright.

Only recently they have changed their strategy. They have left the rural sector, but alas, without a Red Army, and are now concentrating on the industrial sector. Here, too, they have a plan of individual terror which they proclaim quite openly. So far they have not been able to kill any big or leading industrialist. They have only executed some medium-size traders. They should know as well as anyone else that the laws of property mean that the dead man's bounty goes to his descendants and relatives or to the government. This property would never go to the people.

Another point on which we disagree with them is on their method of furthering the "cultural revolution" in India. They have started attacking colleges, schools and universities. They have ransacked and burnt many libraries containing extremely valuable books and manuscripts which would be of importance to any Marxist historian. They have even attempted to burn the entire library of Calcutta University where there are many books which are not available anywhere. The lunatic reasoning behind this is that Mao's writing is sufficient for everyone. You don't need to study anything else. This attitude has nothing in common with Marxism; it is in fact reminiscent of another ideology. They have also destroyed science laboratories in which useful apparatus has been destroyed and they also sometimes tend to kill teachers. Anyone who thinks I'm exaggerating should read the posters the Naxalites stick up all over the place in which they openly admit this. If anything I've underplayed some of their more "heroic" activities. In the name of the cultural revolution they have committed acts which would sadden the heart of any Marxist-Leninist who has read both Marx and Lenin. These acts serve no real purpose. They tend to lower the political prestige of the revolutionary movement as a whole. In a country with mass illiteracy you don't endear yourselves to the masses by burning books. This is why I tell you they are on a suicidal course which can lead only to total disintegration.

Could you tell us something about the Trotskyist movement in Bengal? What work is it doing and what is the present situation in the areas which are under their control?

Trotskyists of the Fourth International only began functioning in West Bengal at the end of 1968 and the beginning of 1969. After studying the situation and analysing the balance of class forces we decided to concentrate all our modest forces in the rural areas. If we can organise properly in one area and bring it under our control, the spark from this area would act as an inspiration for the rest of the country and point the way forward. So in one district called Bankura and in its rural area which is not very easy to reach because of no proper communication system. There is only one bus route and even on that you have to walk three miles where there isn't a road. In such an area, the Trotskyists started a movement. First we carried out simple, agitational political propaganda and were pleasantly surprised by the response we got. Then later we issued a call for a strike in that area. Everyone knows what a strike is in the cities. But a strike by agricultural workers in a country like India is virtually unheard of. The response of the rural poor to the strike was amazing and took us all by surprise. It was too big for the small Trotskyist

force in Bankura. For ten whole days the labourers didn't go to work. Despite the suffering they still refused to go. Finally their main demand was accepted. In this way our first strike was a success. (cf. *The Red Mole*, Vol. 1, no. 11—Ed.) Then we decided that simply to stop at wage demands was to pander to economism and this was the last thing that the poor peasants needed. So we decided to go further. The next step was to seize the land, and we proceeded to do so. The capitalists said this was illegal, etc, but in fact it wasn't because in some cases the land didn't belong to the landlord and he was occupying it illegally. We explained this and the agricultural labourers seized the land as a class, as a mass aware of its rights and its place in history. We have occupied over 300 acres of land in three different localities, and the lands belong to either the government or to the landlords. While the seizures were taking place there was a clash between the landlords and the police on the one hand, and our comrades and their supporters on the other. But our numbers were so large that the rural authorities were frightened of a confrontation. The real crisis that we had to face was in November and December of last year. This is the harvesting period and the local authorities were scared. So the local police station was reinforced; it was given a special wireless set and many other subsidiaries. Then semi-military forces were also brought to this area so that our movement, a new type of movement as far as India was concerned, could be halted. What was this movement and what was it engaged in doing? The land that we have occupied and which is well over 350 acres was not given to individual peasants. A committee known as the "Collective Farming Committee" with an elected leadership of 21 people, all of whom are agricultural workers, runs the entire area. There is a chairman of this committee as well. This form of organisation is new to Bengal if not India. Most of the other groups and tendencies who seized the land gave it to their peasant supporters to cultivate. We Trotskyists refused to encourage, especially in a place like West Bengal, individual ownership. Land belongs to the collective and its committee organises collective cultivation, etc. While the amount of land we have seized and which is under our control is nothing compared to the vastness of the province, it represents a far bigger potential, and it is the new form of organisation and its example which frightens the ruling class.

We have had many clashes with the authorities and have not been intimidated, but of course our resources are limited compared to the force of the bourgeois state's apparatus. The police have attacked villages and beaten up women and children, tortured peasants, etc. They claimed that the Trotskyists had launched an offensive against their special camp, but this was a blatant lie. From the beginning of November to December 24th 1970, there were eight clashes between the Trotskyists on one side and the police and rich peasants on the other. There were a few of our comrades wounded, many were arrested and 200 have had to go underground, and against our leading comrade Jagdish Jha the police have registered 50 different cases, all of a serious nature. The police have offered an unofficial reward for comrade Jha, dead or alive, of £50. This is a description of the reign of terror in the Bankura district of West Bengal. We have begun to start in some other districts also a similar movement and it will have its effect in the near future. Of course our aim is to generalise the struggle, but our resources are not great and the Fourth International does not have state power as yet. Despite this we think that comrades in Europe and North America could do considerably more to aid us.

What are the relations between the Trotskyists and the Naxalites?

We have one big agreement with them. Like us they are also opposing the capitalists and the whole role which the left parties so-called are playing in India. But there are some big differences also. For instance the Naxalites still believe in the bloc of four classes theoretically and they try and impose Mao's cult everywhere. They believe in individual terrorism and thus underrate the importance of the class struggle. We believe in increasing the struggle, in mass terrorism. But in the struggle when we see that the Naxalites are being oppressed by the police, we help them in every possible way. In that sense they are comrades engaged in a similar struggle. Most of the Naxalite workers are sincere and honest militants who are dying for their ideals.

What is the importance of the national question in West Bengal, particularly bearing in mind the fact that in East Bengal (Pakistan) it has acquired a phenomenal importance?



An anti-cholera poster in West Bengal. The biggest disease, however, is the bourgeoisie.

Yes, it is important . . . but we cannot simply restrict it to that as we don't want to replace one oppressor with another. We have no real differences with East Bengal. We speak the same language, share the same culture, etc. The differences that exist have been fostered artificially. On its own, Bengal is a sizeable country with a population of over a hundred million. Therefore the only slogan we can give is that of a Socialist Bengal and that is the way we hope to develop consciousness on the national question.

Knowing as we do and understanding the tremendous impact which the Chinese revolution has had in Asia and ourselves being outside the Maoist movement, do you think it will be possible in the near future to build a large section of the Fourth International in India?

Surely and certainly. I do not doubt it. What we lack and what both the orthodox Maoists and the pro-Moscow Stalinists possess is the backing of state power. In a country which is backward and a majority of whose people are illiterate like India today, simple propaganda in pictorial form or in films etc. on a large scale undoubtedly has a big impact. We, alas, do not as yet have the resources to match these efforts on our own. Our newspapers, etc., are very modest affairs compared to those of the pro-Moscow and pro-Peking tendencies. Also the financial resources of these states enable them to maintain full-timers, get printing presses and the like.

However, we must not be pessimistic in the face of this. What is always decisive is politics, and even as Mao has said, politics must be in command. We agree. We say that the programme and the politics of the Indian Fourth Internationalists today are an extremely important weapon and we shall ensure that this weapon is used well. The existing political vacuum makes it all the more imperative for the Trotskyists to develop roots in the masses and thus lay the foundations of a revolutionary party. I think we are beginning to do this and therefore I can say with a certain amount of confidence that the Fourth International has a big future ahead of it in India.

Interviewer: G. Camillo

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According to the authoritative French newspaper, *Le Monde*, the trial of Czech revolutionists will start on February 8, 1971. According to latest reports the trial will be held *in camera* and no observers will be permitted. The 26 comrades who are being tried are all members of the Revolutionary Socialist Party of Czechoslovakia and have been attacked by the Czech party organ, *Rude Pravo*, as "trotskyists," who seek to overthrow socialism. Thus all the vile slanders of the 30s and the 40s are once again being regurgitated and used against our Czech comrades. However the international balance of forces is, today, somewhat different and all the propaganda from the Stalinist arsenal cannot deceive the new revolutionary layers and currents that exist today in most parts of the world and which demonstrated, at the time of the Soviet invasion, their solidarity with the anti-bureaucratic struggle of the Czech masses.

The comrades of the Revolutionary Socialist Party are being accused of plotting to overthrow socialism. What a bizarre allegation. What a disgusting farce. It only serves to demonstrate the contempt which the Stalinist bureaucracy has, not only for the masses under its direct subjugation, but even for the hundreds of thousands of socialists elsewhere in the world. To imagine that anyone will take the charges against our comrades seriously is to live in a completely isolated bureaucratic dream world. What our comrades want is not to destroy socialism but to create it. What they want is to destroy the power of the bureaucracy and replace it with proletarian democracy based on workers' councils. And the fact that it is revolutionary marxists who are on trial and NOT members of right-wing groups which surfaced during the Prague Spring, indicates clearly who the bureaucracy is really frightened of and whose ideas really worry them. The growing revolt against the bureaucratic structures in Eastern Europe, the most recent manifestation of which was the workers uprisings in Poland this year, is a clear sign that political revolutions are on the agenda in the near future.

We therefore appeal to all revolutionaries to support the comrades on trial by carrying out solidarity actions with them. In particular we appeal to the militants inside the C.P. and the Y.C.L. to protest to their "fraternal" party against the repression it is carrying out. The Spartacus League organised a large picket outside the Czech Embassy on Sunday 7th Feb. which was boycotted by *every* daily newspaper. We say to the cold war anti-Communists: our comrades do not need your support or that of your friends, because they are even more opposed to the capitalist system and its different manifestations. They are in solidarity with the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people against American imperialism. So don't try to use their trial for your professional anti-communist activities.

SOLIDARITY WITH PETR UHL AND THE OTHER IMPRISONED COMRADES!

FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKERS DEMOCRACY !

FOR THE OVERTHROW OF THE BUREAUCRACY!

FOR THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION!

molehills

5th. COLUMN

It appears that the degeneration of the Communist Party knows no limits. At the Young Workers Conference in Manchester last Sunday (7th Feb.), they stooped to the level of rank reformism.

The conference, organised mainly by the Young Communist League, was generally aimed at persuading the more aware sections of the British working class to support the impotent and disgusting alliances between the Stalinists and certain "progressive" Labour Party and trade union leaders.

They invited one such leader—Lawrence "Lord Alf" Daly—to be the guest speaker for the morning session. With the recent miners' troubles still fresh in mind, some delegates demonstrated their objections, only to be threatened from the chair.

Throughout the conference the main theme was "we are here to discuss the problems of youth in industry, so don't bring politics into it". We were told by the chair that there was a wide range of political opinion represented. By this he meant the Young Liberals and other representatives of the bourgeoisie.

The most blatant show of repression of discussion was the way in which the amendments committee tried to stop any political amendments being put to the conference. One such amendment from the Spartacus League called upon the TUC to call a general strike to defeat the Industrial Relations Bill, explaining that while we supported such propagandistic actions as the Feb. 21st, the only way to inflict a defeat on the Tories was by the action taken by the working class at the point of production. The Stalinists tried to get their resolution on the Bill—a weak ineffective gesture—passed by the conference without any discussion whatsoever. When the chair refused amendments or discussion, there was uproar. It was only then that the amendment from the Spartacus League was put to the conference. Due to the manipulating tactics of the Stalinists, the amendment was defeated, with only two speakers allowed.

It was evident from talking to people in the lunchtime break that there was dissatisfaction not only with the way in which the conference was being rigged, but also with the politics of the self-styled conference leaders. Yet neither did those sincere members of the Labour Party Young Socialists who as we know are fellow party members of "comrades Wilson, Castle and Weinstock" have any perspective for the conference outside the Labour Party.

Yet it is quite clear from the Manchester conference that despite the manipulations of the Communist Party, it is possible to build a Young Workers Movement in Britain that is free from the domination and influence of the TUC big boys and their apologists.

The Spartacus League has the perspective of working in the Young Workers' Committees which are fighting all struggles affecting young people, from the fight for trade union democracy to the struggle to inflict a defeat on the Tories.

For any further information regarding the Young Workers' Committees, contact: The Spartacus League, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1, or ring 01-837 6954.

— the continuation of the fight to close Houghton Street and the planting of trees to create an open-space communal area.

— the Board of Governors to join the Society of Friends of LSE and to cease to have any say in the internal affairs of the School.

— the LSE Students Union to seek to join the TUC as apprentices, and to fight the Tories' Industrial Relations Bill.

— more lockers for students. At present four out of five can't have a locker.

— an elected committee to catch the thieves who steal wallets from the Library. About six wallets per week are stolen in termtime.

— a feasibility study to assess the possibility of a swimming pool, squash courts, and better facilities for students in the present Library when it becomes vacant.

— more public telephones; six (usually out of order) are not enough.

— higher wages for the permanent bar staff.

— Connaught House to be renamed Dutschke Hall.



EVENTS

MONDAYS: Birmingham Red Circle, 7.30, The Black Swan, Bromsgrove Street, Digbeth.

WEDNESDAYS: Stafford Red Circle, 8.00, Dog & Partridge, South Walls.

THURSDAYS: Glasgow Red Circle, 7.30, Christian Institute, Bothwell Street.

SUNDAYS: Ealing Red Circle, 7.30, The Anchor, Uxbridge Road, West Ealing (next to Daniels).

FEBRUARY 16th: Leicester University, 7.30 p.m. Tariq Ali on "The Struggle for Revolutionary Socialism"

FEBRUARY 16th: London Socialist Women Group open meeting, 8 p.m. George IV pub, Pentonville Rd (corner Cumming St). (Kings X or Angel).

FEBRUARY 17th: Hendon Tech. Soc. Tariq Ali on "Why the Spartacus League"

FEBRUARY 19th: What is women's liberation about? Brixton Town Hall, 7.30 p.m. Street theatre, controversial readings, speakers, literature. Refreshments. Organised by Battersea, Peckham, Streatham, Wandsworth W.L. groups.

FEBRUARY 20th: SPARTACUS LEAGUE CONFERENCE. For details contact Debbie Dodge, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1. (01-837 6954).

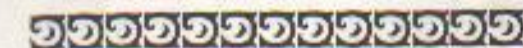
FEBRUARY 21st: Ealing Red Circle (see above). Topic: The Middle East.

FEBRUARY 26th: public meeting: Eva Figes, author of *Patriarchal Attitudes*, on *The Family*. Discussion. 8 p.m., Ecumenical Centre, 5-7 Denbigh Road, W.11, near Notting Hill Gate tube (go up Pembridge Road, turn left at Pembridge Crescent which leads into Denbigh Road). Organised by London Socialist Women Group, proceeds to March 8th Ad Hoc Committee.

MARCH 6th: "WOMEN UNITE" demonstration, 1.30 Speakers Corner. Rally Trafalgar Sq. 4 p.m. Contact March 8th Ad Hoc Committee, 23 Basilbech Road, London N.5 01-226 3911. Posters & leaflets available.

MARCH 8th: Frank Kease Defence Committee Social. Kings Head, Fulham Broadway (next to the station). Extension to 12. Entrance 5/-.

MARCH 28th: Day Seminar on "Social Causes and Consequences of Addiction", organised by Socialist Medical Association. Ring 01-346 5867 for details. Campaign against the Tory attack on the NHS—"Your Health in Danger" leaflets available from the SMA, 31 Lionel Street, Birmingham 3. Ring 021-236 0835.



TEACHERS' RED CIRCLE

A teachers' Red Circle is being set up. Its aim is to develop a political analysis of education and the following topics will be included: Education in a capitalist society; The role of education in the exploited countries; Education in Russia 1917-1970 (From the Revolution to the Degeneration); Education and women; Education and Black children.

Any people interested in this group should contact Jane Porter at 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1. (The meeting meetings will probably be held fortnightly at Sunday lunchtimes).

RED CIRCLES/RED MOLE CONTACTS

BELFAST: Alan Morris, c/o Red Mole.

BIRMINGHAM: Val Graham, 72 Cambridge Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham 14.

BRISTOL: Dave Prior, 7 Ravenswood Road, Redland, Bristol 6.

CANTERBURY: Brian Grogan, Elliott College, Canterbury.

CARDIFF: Susan Lukes, 92 Llandaff Road, Canton, Cardiff.

CHELMSFORD: John Jones, c/o Red Mole.

COLCHESTER: Ken Browne, Flat 7, Room 10, Bertrand Russell Tower, University of Essex, Colchester, Essex.

COVENTRY: John Presland, 27 Paynes Lane, Coventry, Warwicks.

EDINBURGH: Brian Gilmore, 17 Hillside St., Edinburgh.

GLASGOW: Roland O'Brien, 38 Pendeen Road, Glasgow E.3.

HERTFORD: Malcolm Harding, 8 Parker Ave., Bengo, Herts.

HULL: Malcolm Ball, Students Union, Hull University, Hull.

IPSWICH: Kevin Barter, 2 Carmarthen Close, Ipswich, IP2 8QG.

KEELE: Jason Hill, Flat 37, The Hawthorns, Keele, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs.

KIDDERMINSTER: Nigel Brown, 44 The Deansway, Kidderminster, Worcs.

KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES: Robin Bonner, 33 Effingham Road, Long Ditton, Surbiton, Surrey.

LANCASTER: Brian Heron, 29 Clarendon Road, Lancaster.

LEEDS: Ron Thompson, 132 Askaren Chase, Hunslet Grange, Leeds 10.

LEICESTER: Jean Holman, 7 College Street, Leicester.

LINCOLN: Dave Thompson, 65 Tower Cres., Lincoln.

LONDON

NORTH: John Weal, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

NORTH-WEST: Tony Fry, 101 Park Avenue North, NW10.

SOUTH: Tony Jones, Furzedown College of Education, Welham Road, SW17.

EALING: Will Rich, 8 Burlington Gdns, W4. (994 6862 weekends).

HAMMERSMITH: Eddy Amavoudian, 20 Thorny Hedge Rd, Gunnersbury, W4.

LOUGHBOROUGH: Ann Black, 4 Russell St, Loughborough.

MANCHESTER: Steve Cohen, 43 Brantingham Road, Whalley Range, Manchester 16.

NORWICH: John Harris, c/o Ian Douglas, 1 Cow Hill, Norwich.

NOTTINGHAM: Nick Beeton, 25 Henry Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham.

OXFORD: Bernard Reaney, 27 Southmoor Road, Oxford.

POTTERIES: Jason Hill, Students Union, University of Keele, Staffs.

READING: John Brendan Troy, 55 Gloucester Road, Reading, Berks.

STAFFORD: Graham Jones, 19 Lovatt Street, Stafford.

ST. ALBANS/HATFIELD: Chris Pailthorpe, Fairshot Court, Sandridge, Nr. St. Albans, Herts. (Tel: St. Albans 51854)

SHEFFIELD: Paul Neville, Ranmoor House, Shore Lane, Sheffield, S10 3AY.

STAFFORD: Graham Jones, 184a Silkmore Lane, Stafford.

STIRLING: Donald MacDonald, 6 Tarduff Place, Stoneycroft, Denny, Stirlingshire.

WEST LOTHIAN: Anne MacLellan, 5 Victoria Place, Bo'ness, West Lothian.

YORK: Phil Hearse, Goodricke College, Heslington, York.

MERCHANT NAVY (at sea): Peter Turner, "Oriana", c/o 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

"THE RED MOLE HOLE"—club for revolutionaries. Meets in the "Hearty Goodfellow" Inn, Arbury Road, Stockingford, Nuneaton. For further info., write to: M.P. Cheshire, 10 Westbury Road, Stockingford, Nuneaton.

This is the first report from the Mole's new Fifth Column. We shall appear each month. We shall try to give you the stories behind the news. We will not have all the background to all the news, but we will try. You can help. If you know of scandals involving any section of the bourgeoisie, join the Fifth Column. Let us know. We will let the world know.

* * *

The decision to send the Duke of Kent to Ireland caused a wave of fury in the Unfree Press. The *Sunday Express* carried the headline "Riot Risk to Duke". The *People* proclaimed "Palace in Row over Duke's Posting". The screaming banner in the *Sunday Mirror* asked "Who decided to send the Royal Family to Ulster?" All the press affected a concern that the Duke could be singled out for kidnapping or execution. The thought that His royal blue blood might flow in Ireland was used as an excuse for an orgy of stories about the bravery of our Royalty. To drive the point home, the Ministry of Defence in London issued a statement on Feb. 7th saying that there was no question of special security arrangements being made for the Royal Ponce.

This last statement came as some surprise to journalists, who that same day had visited the Duke's command—"Charlie" Squadron, Royal Scots Greys—at Omagh, Co. Tyrone. During the visit they were herded into a pen made of steel barriers and guarded like prisoners by soldiers with sub-machine guns and dogs.

* * *

To all members of the Angry Brigade. The man known to you as "Duncan" is a pig. The man who went to Manchester before Jan. 12th is a pig. Ask yourselves, are you being used by the pigs?

* * *

Few, if any, of the Left press have dealt with the question of Khrushchev's memoirs. Time-Life, the original publishers, have consistently refused to reveal where they got the manuscript from. Even Edward Crankshaw who edited the English edition was not informed. Nobody now believes that the memoirs are genuine. The question now asked is, who forged them? And for what purpose? Was it the KGB? Was it the CIA?

Victor Zorza in a series of articles in the Guardian on January 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, effectively indicts the CIA.

What should then be asked is why Victor Zorza, who, to put no finer point on it, is not unconnected with MI.6, chose to expose the CIA, their erstwhile allies. Perhaps the answer lies in the CIA's recent refusal to share Middle East information with what they call "the bum-boys from Leconfield House."

* * *

As we write, two Irishmen, Frank Roche and Bowes Egan, are on trial in connection with one of the most effective demonstrations of support for the Irish people which took place last year, Frank Roche for allegedly throwing two (2) CS gas canisters into the House of Commons, where men and women sit who condone its continued use in Ireland, Bowes Egan for allegedly conspiring to create this "public mischief".

Remember, two (2) canisters. Now think of this: between Sept. 1969 and Oct. 1970 the British Army threw 8,330 CS canisters and 1,478 CS grenades at Irish people and into Irish streets and Irish homes.

* * *

When the British Army driver of a careering Armoured Car in Belfast was informed that he had knocked down a middle-aged woman, he remarked: "I didn't knock her down, I mowed her down." Remember that when our brave boys start coming home... in coffins.



1913: DUBLIN STRIKE

Background

In a previous article in this series (*Red Mole*, 16th Nov. 1970) we saw how the political failures of the early revolutionary socialist parties led to the theories of syndicalism—that is the view that capitalism could be overthrown simply by trade union agitation. This view was perhaps strongest in the United States. Here the emphasis on trade union action fell in naturally with the need to unionise the basic industries of iron, coal, railways, etc. The product of these ideas was the foundation in 1905 of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World).

Any growth of ideas in the United States was rapidly transmitted to Ireland. The huge wave of forced emigration from Ireland to the United States during the 1840s, '50s and '60s had created a thousand and one links between the Irish and American working classes. In the case of the theories of syndicalism, the transmission of ideas was speeded up by the fact that in Ireland the same problem of unionising the basic industries existed as it did in the U.S. The man who first adapted syndicalist ideas to Ireland was James Larkin.

Larkinism

Like Ireland's other great labour leader, James Connolly, Larkin was not actually born in Ireland. He was born in Liverpool in 1876. He was influenced both by the ideas of Irish Republicanism and by those of the IWW. His first opportunity to put his syndicalist ideas into practice came in Belfast when he became an official of the Irish Dock Labourers' Union.

In Belfast Larkin led strikes of firemen, dockers and seamen. A successful strike of carters in support of the dockers gave him his first taste of the power of the sympathy strike. This was a tactic he was later to develop into a fine art.

In the course of this trade union agitation he momentarily broke through the religious sectarianism of Belfast to unite Catholics and Protestants in a massive coal strike. This was concluded successfully in late July and for once the parades of Protestant and Catholic workers against their employers matched the Orange bigot parades of July 12th.

The Dock Labourers' Union was however terrified by the industrial ferment that Larkin was creating and began settling disputes over his head. This experience plus the ideas of the IWW convinced Larkin of the necessity of setting up a new type of union in Ireland. On 4th Jan. 1909 he founded the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. The organisation of the union was soon immeasurably strengthened when James Connolly returned from USA in order to help run the new union.

Throughout 1910, 1911 and 1912 the union grew rapidly in strength. It carried out a whole series of sympathy strikes in support of seamen and other workers, it led a whole series of fierce strikes in which strikers and police were killed. The result of this was that by the end of 1912 wage rises of between 3/- and 12/- weekly had been gained. This was up to 50% of the appalling wages paid in Dublin in this period.

By 1913 it had become obvious that either the ITGWU must be smashed or it would unleash a wave of working class militancy that would threaten the foundation of capitalism in Ireland. As always in such situations, the employers resorted to the iron fist and the

jackboot. They found their self-appointed leader in "nationalist" William M. Murphy.

The "Labour War"

In times of open class warfare the employers lose their liberal face; the true crudity of their motives comes out into the open. Certainly Murphy can have few rivals in expressing the sheer fear, contempt and reliance on God-given right of the capitalist class. Whereas most employers talk about "avoiding unnecessary hardship", Murphy talked openly about the real motives of a capitalist in a strike—to use hardship in order to bring the workers to their knees. He stated simply, "A strike on the tramways would no doubt produce turmoil and disorder created by roughs and looters; but what chance would men have without funds, in a contest with the company that would and could spend £100,000 and more? You must recall that when dealing with a company of this kind, every of the shareholders will have three meals a day whether the men succeed or not. I do not know if the men can count on this." He continually confirmed his tactics throughout the strike. For example on 2nd September 1913 he stated, "The employer all the time managed to get his three meals a day, but the unfortunate workman and his family had no resources whatsoever except submission . . . The difficulty of teaching that lesson to the workman was extraordinary."

All the main employers of Dublin joined Murphy in his attack. No religious sectarianism was allowed to interfere with capitalist solidarity. Religious sectarianism was a weapon used by the employers to divide the working class; it had no place in profitable relations between members of the bourgeoisie. The first firms to join Murphy in locking out its workers were the Dublin Quaker firms of the "Society of Friends," W & R Jacob and Messrs Shackleton and Sons. By September 1913, 400 firms had allied formally with Murphy. They were strongly organised. All the firms had to deposit sums of money which were to be forfeited if they settled with the strikers before the others. The basis of their position was the pledge which Murphy intended to force all his employees to sign. This stated, "I hereby undertake to carry out all instructions given to me by or on behalf of my employers and further I agree to immediately resign my membership of the Irish Transport Workers' Union (if a member) and I further undertake that I will not join in or in any way support this union."

The Forces of "Law and Order"

It is important to realise that Murphy's tactics differed in no real way from those of every employer in a strike. They all see human misery as a weapon in their economic war against the workers. Murphy was just foolish enough to be open about it; but there is no significant difference between him and, for example, the Post Office which used economic hardship in order to try to get the post office workers to accept a wage rise which would not even keep their wages up with the rising cost of living. In exactly the same way as in present disputes, Murphy also relied heavily for his support on a campaign of hatred by the press and intimidation by the police.

In most strikes the support of the press is gained for the employers simply because the press-owners are also businessmen and naturally

support other capitalists. In Murphy's case it was even easier as he owned most of the press. In particular he owned the *Evening Herald*, the *Irish Catholic* and the *Independent* (sic). These papers carried an unending series of attacks on the strikers and personal abuse against Larkin. He was alternately referred to as "a man of undisciplined mind and inveterate malice . . . an impudent swaggering bully . . . indescribably foul of mind and tongue" and "scum like Larkin", while it was declared that "whenever there is real trouble in the wind, he is not to be found where his skin would be in danger." As for the strikers themselves, the press poured out its hatred in such choice gems as the following: "They are poor and have nought, but if they were rich tomorrow, debauchery would soon have them in poverty again" and claimed that "by folly or malice they have been placed in deplorable straits . . . all this to gratify the vengeful whim of an adventurer who has been battering on their credulity."

The police of course were totally committed on the side of the employers. Police brutality reached heights never before seen even in Dublin and foreshadowed the violence and torture of the Black and Tans. Continual baton charges were made on pickets. Larkin's meetings outside Liberty Hall and in O'Connell Street were systematically broken up. Michael Byrne, secretary of the Kingstown branch of the ITGWU, was tortured to death in a police cell. The assault was carried into the homes of the strikers. Typical of the heroic acts carried out by the police was the ruining of the eyesight of a baby while smashing up its room, and battering a man unconscious in front of six children. In addition, the police aided the actions of scabs. These included the shooting dead of a young girl as she was collecting her strikers' food pay. Larkin himself was of course arrested; on a charge of seditious libel and conspiracy.

Larkin clearly drew the lesson of these events. He wrote in the *Irish Worker* that "The most significant fact connected with the industrial struggle in this country has been the direct connection and agreement proved to be existing between the capitalists of the Murphy and Jacob type, the professional politician, the press and the clergy. Each of these sections most brutally and unashamedly stated that they are opposed to any improvement in the conditions of the common people . . ."

The End of the Strike

Despite the direct alliance of capitalists and the government, the Dublin workers continued the strike from August 1913 to January 1914. During this time the workers performed miracles of organisation. The most important of these was probably the setting up of the Irish Citizens Army. This was originally designed simply to provide protection against police and scabs, but later it was to be used by Connolly in the organising of the Easter 1916 rising against British rule. The solidarity and militancy of the strike was also enough to gain some notable victories—namely Larkin's release from prison after only three weeks of a seven-month prison sentence. This was achieved through a series of demonstrations of such size and militancy that the government feared that revolution was about to break out. Larkin summed up this lesson as well when he declared that "Not liberal justice but solidarity, class solidarity, is the reason why I am free."

Although class solidarity in Ireland could prevent the employers breaking the strike, it was not sufficient to win a victory. For that, solidarity action in Britain was necessary. It was therefore to the British trade union movement that Larkin and Connolly turned to for support as the strike progressed.

The response of many of the rank and file in Britain was overwhelming. For example, on one of Larkin's meetings in Britain, the *Manchester Guardian* wrote ". . . the chance of hearing him speak fills the Free Trade Hall and leaves thousands blocking the streets outside for a sight of him." Money and food in large quantities were collected. However, the bureaucrats of the TUC refused to give the one thing that could have won the strike outright—sympathy strikes. The rank and file succeeded in forcing the holding of a special meeting of the TUC, but that was as far as they could get. The leaders of the TUC defeated a resolution calling for a trade union blockage of Dublin. Deasy in his pamphlet on Larkin summarised the position neatly as follows: "The British workers had asked for the isolation of the capitalists in Dublin. Instead their leaders succeeded in isolating the Dublin working class." Thanks to this act of treachery, which was followed inevitably by 1919-21 when the TUC similarly sold out the British workers, it became obvious that the strikers could not win an outright victory. On the other hand, the solidarity inside Dublin itself meant that Murphy could not completely crush the ITGWU. By February 1914 a piecemeal return to work began on a significant scale.

The outcome of the strike was a great weakening of the union and the victimising of many of its finest militants. It was never again able to use the sympathy strike in the way it had done before 1913. But the union itself remained intact. Only in a few cases did the employers dare to impose Murphy's notorious document. During the four years after 1914 the ITGWU was to grow to five times its size in 1914. The decisive step in establishing trade unionism in the main Irish industries had been established—but only at a terrible cost.

The lessons of the strike were simple; firstly, that against an organised group of employers a single union is helpless—only massive solidarity action can gain a victory in these circumstances. Secondly, that a decisive victory by the employers over one section of the working class is a victory against the entire working class. Although the ITGWU survived 1913, it was only thanks to unimaginable sacrifices by the Dublin workers and never again was it to be able to gain for all workers the kind of improvements in living standards it had gained before 1913. Thirdly, and this is the most important of all, when an organisation falls down on an act of solidarity, it is only digging its own grave. If the TUC would refuse to support the Dublin workers despite the fact that they were locked in a real war with the employers, what group of workers could rely on the TUC in more "normal" struggles? By failing to act in 1913, the TUC took a giant step along the path that led to the defeat of the General Strike in 1926. It didn't understand that in trade unionism, solidarity is not a disinterested act—it is vital in a union's own self-interest. In 1913 the Irish working class suffered because the TUC didn't understand that lesson. In 1926 it was the British working class. Is it really necessary to repeat the lesson in 1971 or 1972??

Alan Jones