

The Red Mole

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Labour and Indochina

The terror bombing raids on Hanoi and Haiphong carried out by the United States during the last few weeks of December 1972 created a feeling of revulsion throughout the international working class movement. In Australia the seamen demonstrated their solidarity by refusing to handle U.S. vessels. In Genoa the dockers imposed a similar ban. In Bangladesh there were massive demonstrations which resulted in the burning of the USIS office in Dacca and two students being shot down and killed by the police.

HYPOCRISY

In Britain there was an emergency demonstration on 23 December but from the ranks of organised labour there was no immediate response. Sensing that unless they acted quickly there might be some spontaneous displays of solidarity by sections of workers, the leaders of the British Labour Party ended their silence and condemned the bombing. Compromised by their own past record in office when they emerged as one of the most slavish supporters of American imperialism in Vietnam, the Labour leaders would like to forget all this. When Jenkins writes a letter to Heath (published on the front page of the *Daily Mirror*) he does so as a 'new European' very conscious of the future interests of the European ruling class. He doesn't want, for tactical and factional reasons, the European bourgeoisie to be tarnished by the crimes of American imperialism.

But the shirts of Jenkins and the Labour leaders are already soiled. Where was all this brave talk when Roy Jenkins was a minister in Wilson's government and preaching the virtues of the "special relationship" which supposedly prevented the Labour government from breaking with Lyndon Johnson. The "civilised veneer" of Jenkins was nowhere to be seen in those days. As for Wilson himself he talks today in terms of "Vietnam becoming an election issue" if Heath continues to support the Americans. What sheer hypocrisy from a man who was known even in the White House as LBJ's favourite poodle. The Labour Party when it was in power did its best to smash and defeat the Vietnam solidarity movement. Callaghan as Home Secretary used to talk in terms of deporting IMG leaders. Today he too is 'concerned'.

No! Messrs Wilson, Jenkins, Callaghan, etc.: your chatter about Vietnam does not impress us in the slightest as you have aided, defended and have been involved in imperialism's crimes and aggressions in Indochina. Your Labour predecessors in the Attlee government actually sent British troops into Saigon in 1945/46 to maintain the existing order. And you would do the same again if you were in office.

LEFT COVER

As for the Labour "left", they have merely provided a "left" cover for this overall policy of British social-democracy. When Wilson was tied to LBJ, they were tied to Wilson. Now that Labour is in opposition of course all the brothers can band together and engage in a spree of resolution passing, emergency House of Commons debates and phrasemongering designed primarily for electoral gains. During the mass demonstrations organised by the VSC in 1968 the Labour left was nowhere to be seen. In fact one of them, Sid Bidwell, refused to speak on a VSC platform because of the "presence of a Black Power" militant. Like its leaders it was frightened by extra-parliamentary activity and, particularly, militant street demonstrations.

That is why for us the actions of the Australian seamen and the Italian dockers are a million times more important and effective than all the hypocritical cant mouthed by the Labour Party leaders in opposition. The solidarity movement in this country which is beginning to re-emerge must fuse its extra-parliamentary actions with the present militancy of the British working class. A response from British dockers, for example, would have a powerful impact on projected solidarity actions in this country. In that sense the January 20th mobilisation should be seen only as the re-emergence of a solidarity which must continue until final victory.

From protest strikes against the fines

ORGANISE TO SMASH THE ACT

By PAUL HUNTER

The Industrial Relations Act and the 90-day pay freeze — which is bound to be followed by a longer term incomes policy in "Stage 2" — are both part of the same governmental strategy for curbing the industrial strength of the working class.

For in order to have a cat-in-hell's chance of surviving inside the Common Market, the British capitalist class has to try to decisively break the power of the organised working class in this country.

The employers today are too vulnerable to take on the trade union movement in economic confrontations. The Tories have had to eat most of their Party Manifesto about Government not "interfering" in industry, no "lame-ducks", no compulsory wage control, etc., and have had to pay out huge subsidies to Rolls-Royce, UCS, British Rail and now the Coal and Steel Industries.

To meet this weakness of the employers, the Government is set on a political confrontation with the organised working class. Broadly speaking, this consists of an attempt to use the "awe and majesty" of the State (Acts of Parliament, Courts of Law, etc.) to throw back the industrial strength of the working class and browbeat us into accepting a smaller "share of the cake" and a lower standard of living.

CAREFULLY TIMED

The Pay Freeze was carefully timed. As the *Economist* (25 November) pointed out, the Government had to wait until the Power Workers had settled their pay claim because "they could bust any policy" — and they might well have done just that!

But its more general timing was dictated by the fact that during these particular months of the year no powerfully organised section of the working class had a pay settlement due. Those sections which did have claims due for settlement — like the hospital ancillary workers, the teachers and the gas-men — are poorly organised and industrially weak.

In other words, the Government's timing of the Freeze was deliberately aimed to avoid a confrontation with powerful sections of the working class like the engineering workers, and to defeat weak (and therefore low-paid) sections of the class first.

GOAD AND THE A.U.E.W. FINE

Then along came a Bible-thumping black-leg with the rather appropriate name of Goad. By bringing an action against the AUEW in the National Industrial Relations Court he threatened to upset the whole careful strategy.

For if the AUEW Executive Committee started a real fight back against the Act at the same time as the hospital workers tried to break out of the straight-jacket of the Pay Freeze, the two struggles might well get linked together and the Government might have to take on the AUEW over the Pay Freeze after all.

Nevertheless, the Court (tempted no doubt by the prospect of establishing a legal precedent



North London engineers demonstrate during one-day stoppage

that scabs cannot be barred from union membership) decided to see how far it could go . . .

UNION LEADERS REFUSE TO LEAD

The AUEW Executive Committee's response to this threat was muted in the extreme. They merely sacked the bank which had paid the first fine and called on their members to "take appropriate action to defend the policy of the union."

At the same time, speaking on radio and television, Mr Scanlon stressed that the AUEW was not defying the Law, that they were not defying the court's authority to levy the fine and that the strikes would be protests only.

No wonder the response was confused and sporadic — to the delight of the capitalist press and television.

It was exactly the same do-your-own-thing pseudo-democracy which made it impossible to win the 1972 national engineering pay claim. Its function is to avoid any struggle with the right-wing in the union (and in this case with the Government too), and yet preserve Scanlon's "left" image in the union.

And in the case of the hospital workers, Mr Alan Fisher of NUPE is showing exactly the same evasion of responsibility to lead a political fight in defence of his members against the Pay Freeze.

The way he does it is to say that the hospital workers are a "special case", and that the strikes are again just a protest against the "unfairness" of the hospital workers being "singled out", etc. In other words, he is not against a Pay Freeze — for everybody else.

Contrast the way the National Committee of Stewards for Health Workers described their one day strike on December 13th and their week of Action from 29 December to 4 January:

"We see this as not just in pursuit of our sectional interest, but as the **FIRST MAJOR BLOW OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AGAINST THE FREEZE**. Therefore we call on all other sections of workers to join us in our struggle to smash the freeze."

A POLITICAL STRUGGLE

Our trade union leaders shy away from this sort of political struggle because, when the chips are down, they accept the "rules of the game" as

laid down by the capitalist state: that the working class must never use its overwhelming industrial strength in the political field (that would be "undemocratic") and must wait for "the next Labour Government"

Needless to say, the ruling class do not apply the same rule to themselves. On the contrary, they make use of their dominant position in society every single day (not only through the Government and the Courts, but also through the press, radio and television, etc.) to influence political decisions in their favour.

This is why the only way to answer the "awe and majesty" of Acts of Parliament, Courts of Law, etc., is with the awe and majesty of the enormous industrial strength of the organised working class in political struggle.

That is how the Government was forced to release the five imprisoned dockers.

That is the only way to smash the Pay Freeze and the Industrial Relations Act.

And it is the only way to prepare the ground for bringing down the Tory Government altogether.

IN BRIEF

* Bernadette Devlin has issued an appeal for worldwide solidarity actions on the first anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Derry (see page 3 for full text). In London there will be a rally on Sunday, 28 January in Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, preceded by a demonstration starting from St Paul's at 2.30 p.m. and marching via Fleet Street and Gray's Inn Road to Camden Town Hall.

* Indochina Demo (see page 3)—after fruitless approaches to the British Committee for Peace in Vietnam for a united demonstration on January 20th, the Indochina Solidarity Conference Committee has regretfully been compelled to organise a separate rally and demonstration on that date. The rally will start at 2 p.m. at Charing Cross Embankment, and will be followed by a march to the American Embassy via Trafalgar Square.

WHAT POLICY FOR THE A.U.E.W.

By JOHN MARSHALL

The present attack on the AUEW flows directly out of the struggle at the time of the freeing of the 'Pentonville Five'. The failure of the trade union leadership to turn that great upsurge into a struggle to smash the Industrial Relations Act and the Tory Government, allowed the ruling class to resume more or less at once its attack on the trade union movement. The House of Lords decision itself, that trade unions as a whole and not individual militants were legally responsible for strike action, was designed to strengthen the attack.

It had never been the Government's intention to proceed mainly by imprisoning or fining individuals. Such a policy would be certain to produce the greatest possible explosion of the working class. The idea was to hit - particularly with fines - the national organisation of the unions. This is in line with the Government's aim of forcing the trade union leadership to police their own members. Hence the £55,000 fine on the TGWU or the £60,000 extracted from the Engineers.

NON-RECOGNITION

The line of the TUC against the Industrial Relations Act was to try to ignore it, by non-recognition, in the hope of the speedy return of a Labour government which would repeal



Engineers lobby AUEW leadership for action

the laws against the trade unions. This 'strategy' of the TUC was doomed to failure. It is of course correct to refuse to appear before the NIRC, but this can only be done within a policy of attempting to destroy the Act. If no real struggle is waged then all the strategy of non-recognition means is a pie in the sky attempt to ignore the real world. In practice, while you may try to ignore the Act, the Act does not ignore you. The TGWU fine soon demonstrated this point. They brought the whole strategy of the TUC crashing down.

The AUEW leadership, to its credit, has at least so far attempted to carry out a policy of refusing to deal with the Court. Almost all the other major unions gave even that up at the first attack. By not paying the fines the AUEW leadership effectively called the NIRC to battle. What it is to be criticised for is not having any effective strategy for victory.

CRITICISMS

At the time of the original struggle against introduction of the Act, the AUEW was one of the few union leaderships to show even the signs of a real fight. The one-day strikes called on March 1st and March 18th of 1971 were the two main nationally organised actions against the Act. But that was only one side of the AUEW's policy. The other side was shown in the two most important disputes it has been involved in over the last two years - the struggle at Ford's and then the national engineering claim of 1972. At Ford's the union executive in fact carried out one of the main provisions of the Industrial Relations Act, by enforcing a secret ballot to decide on a settlement. In the case of the Engineers' pay claim, the union leadership, instead of leading a national struggle, left individual areas to fight it out alone. This led to severe defeats in areas like Manchester.

In this situation, where the AUEW leadership has appeared to show some fight on certain issues, but backedpedalled on others, it is very important to sort out what are correct criti-

cisms of it and what are not. Nobody with a grain of sense can believe that the AUEW by itself can defeat the Act. The real criticism to be made of the AUEW leadership however is two-fold. First of all, their entire policy of hinging everything round non-recognition has fostered illusions that it was possible to simply ignore the NIRC while waiting for some future government to repeal it. Secondly, now that the AUEW is under attack, the leadership is not taking the steps necessary to extend the struggle to the point where the Act can be defeated. It is on these grounds that the union leadership must be criticised.

THE MILITANTS

Since the Goad fine, militants in many areas have been taking strike action. This action is vital for starting the fight. But it is not possible for local action by itself to defeat the Industrial Relations Act and the Government. The response of the AUEW executive in only calling for locally organised initiatives is therefore totally inadequate.

National action is necessary, not just against the fine but against the Act itself, and in the present situation only the AUEW executive is in a position to organise such action. This is absolutely necessary as the start of a campaign to involve other unions in the struggle. This in turn is the next step for fighting the present attack. Such a policy has two prongs. The first is for the AUEW to approach all other unions at national level for action. The second is to build on the solidarity which has already developed at local level.

The need for local co-ordination and solidarity flows naturally out of the situation in the plants themselves. In most key plants other unions organise alongside the AUEW. In many cases, these other unions, at a local level, have supported the AUEW-initiated strikes. It would be easy to put out a call for such local solidarity to be organised more permanently and on an area basis, by conferences of local trade unionists which would plan out the next step in the struggle against the Act.

Hospital Workers: The Next Step

By MIKE FITZGERALD and COLIN SMITH

December 13th saw 180,000 hospital ancillary workers engaged in strikes and demonstrations to protest against their frozen pay claim. This the first time that such widespread action has hit the health service. But union leaders are now sitting back congratulating themselves on their success in regaining the initiative from sections of militant rank and file workers who are still in the process of forming a national organisation (National Alliance of Stewards for Health Workers - NASH).

These latter will have to make a sober analysis of these events if they are to carry the struggle against the freeze further. It is true that the action on December 13th was the result of the union bureaucracy's fear of further independence by their members, and that a significant minority of workers took up NASH's call for a 24-hour strike rather than the official token half-day affair. Nevertheless most ancillary workers are still unprepared to go beyond the limits laid down by their official leaders. The militants have been unable to sustain the struggle enough to make their projected week of action from Dec 29 - Jan 4th really effective.

NEED FOR ORGANISATION

Calls to action by unofficial bodies will meet with no response unless backed up by a solid organisation at the base. NASH's problem is not that it doesn't have a clear perspective on paper of what needs to be done, but its failure actually to get its message over to the mass of ancillary workers through systematic intervention in the demonstrations, mass meetings, union branches, etc.

However if NASH's failures are partly the result of its members' inexperience and lack of resources the main reason must be attributed to the objective difficulties in organising ancillary workers whose traditional passivity has many origins. The vicious circle of low pay attracting female and immigrant labour, the ideological hold of the 'service' and 'help' ethic which renders them so vulnerable to moral blackmail, and the present structure of the unions in which the shop steward system is still woefully weak in many hospitals due to the highly centralised bargaining structure of the Whitley Council - all these factors make NASH's tasks extremely difficult, the more so because of their urgency.

However the weakness of hospital workers makes it all the more important for militants from the rest of the labour movement to come to their support. The success of stage one of the freeze depends on defeating those weakly organised sections of workers whose claims were at the head of the pipeline when the freeze was imposed, thus boosting the ruling class's confidence when it has to take on the militant sections of the class after February.

SUPPORT COMMITTEES

NUPE is balloting its members this week on what further action to take. Although the ballot, with nine different alternative courses proposed, is designed to create confusion and divisions and thus channel militancy into the least effective directions, it is certain that ancillary workers will be engaging in militant action in the very near future. Wherever they do it is vital that support committees be organised to overcome their inexperience, lack of economic strength, and vulnerability to manipulated 'public opinion' and thus prevent demoralisation and defeat. These committees, based on trade union branches, local stewards' committees, political groups, students, etc., can at least raise money, join picket lines, distribute rank and file papers and hopefully take up NASH's call for solidarity action from other sections of workers. In particular as many rank and file health workers as possible must be urged to attend the national conference of NASH to be held on January 21st where a strategy for carrying forward and widening the struggle in the Health Service will be hammered out. Fraternal delegates will be welcome from outside the NHS unions.

As well as the freeze, health workers and the rest of the working class must be prepared to fight against the attacks on the NHS contained in the Government's proposals for its reorganisation. These are part of a general strategy of running the NHS at minimum cost with minimal service while expanding the private sector for the benefit of those who can afford private insurance. To discuss how to combat the effects of reorganisation and the rest of the ruling class's strategy for Health, a conference has been organised for Sat Jan 20th at 10a.m. at Middlesex Hospital Medical School. Everyone concerned with the health and its future under this government is urged to c

£10,000 FUND DRIVE FOR WEEKLY PAPER

The Red Mole



The last few weeks have seen more money coming in. We have crossed the halfway mark and the Fund Drive total now stands at:

£5,136

Meanwhile more militants from the labour movement have signed the appeal which was published in the last issue of the paper, and which appealed "to all revolutionaries and socialists in Britain to help make the newspaper into a weekly and contribute to the £10,000 Fund Drive". They are:

Coilean Simpson—building labourer (T&GWU shop steward)

Norman Wright—docker (T&GWU shop steward)

Bill Yates—tinsmith (shop steward)

Andy O'Brien (NUPE shop steward)

R.F. Parker (NUPE shop steward)

Martin Timmins—welder (Chairman, Basingstoke branch, Boilermakers Union)

If you would like to contribute, please fill in the form below.

Fill in this form and send to: FUND DRIVE, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1. (Cheques should be made out to The Red Mole).

I am enclosing £.....p..... for the Fund Drive.

NAME

ADDRESS

I know the following who may also wish to contribute:

NAME

ADDRESS

JOHN MACLEAN MEMORIAL YEAR

81 Park Avenue North, London N. 8.

Dear Comrade Editor,

November 30th next year (1973), will mark the 50th anniversary of the death of John MacLean, the courageous and beloved revolutionary, who was at the centre of the struggles on "Red Clydeside", during and after the First World War. He died in 1923, his health broken by his experiences in prison and his intense political work. But unless some steps are taken this anniversary will go almost unmarked. MacLean's contribution to the working class movement, and the political ideas for which he stood have been almost forgotten, he is at best remembered as an ikon, who epitomised the spirit of the Clyde, but whose role and ideas are neither discussed nor understood.

And yet MacLean has increasing relevance. A discussion of his contribution raises a number of vital questions. What can be learned from MacLean's fight for an anti-imperialist stance by the labour movement during the World War? What was the influence of MacLean as a theoretician and Marxist teacher compared to that of the shop stewards in the shipyards and factories, and how did he influence them? What can we learn from MacLean about the relationship between revolutionary intellectuals and the working class? Why did MacLean refuse to join the Communist Party of Great Britain? What was

the detailed background to this important aspect of the history of the working class movement in Britain? Why did MacLean, almost alone, place the national struggle in Ireland between 1919 and 1921, at the centre of his propaganda and agitation? What lessons can we draw for the attitude of contemporary revolutionaries to the present round of struggle in Ireland? Why did MacLean call for a Worker's Republic of Scotland? Can a nationalist stance in Scotland and Wales be consistent with a socialist programme?

I would like, through your paper, to appeal for support from all those in England and Wales who are interested in some activity to mark the 50th anniversary of MacLean's death. Let next year be "John MacLean Memorial Year", there should be a series of activities to commemorate his work, to promote the publication of his writings, and to promote the broadest possible discussion about the man and his ideas. Already I have been pledged support by a number of individuals who are well known for their work in the labour and socialist movement. Also the John MacLean Society in Scotland has decided to organise activities in MacLean's native country. Anyone interested should write to me at the above address; in Scotland they should write to Nan Milton, Atholl Cottage, Westfield nr. Bathgate, West Lothian.

Yours fraternally,
Bob Purdie.

INDOCHINA

The Bombing, the 'Pause', and the Indochinese Revolution

By JULIET SUMNER

"In the history of imperialist butchery, the destructive power unleashed on the Democratic Republic of Vietnam since May 8th (1972) is of republic of proportions. The bomb load released by four squadrons is equivalent in destructive blast to a Hiroshima-type atomic bomb While these colossal crimes were being subjected one of the most courageous peoples in the world to genocide, the Kremlin chieftains clinked champagne glasses with war criminal Nixon, as if they were toasting his deeds in Vietnam. They pictured their summit conference with Nixon as a "great success", a big step towards "world peace", while Nixon with the callousness of a professional executioner, continued the most ferocious and barbarous acts of aggression and violence ever to be vented on the workers and peasants of a small country"

(From a Statement by the Fourth International issued on 31 May 1972)

The B-52 raids on Vietnam during December 1972 have far surpassed the butchery of May, but have failed to achieve their objective. Nixon is finding out like Johnson and Dulles before him that the Vietnamese are not usually impressed by terror and blackmail. He has been

compelled to temporarily suspend the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong.

Of course bombs continue to rain down on the rest of the country. But why has Nixon suspended the raids? In the first place because the Vietnamese leaders have made it clear that they were *not* prepared to modify their positions on the 9-points agreed to by Kissinger and Le Duc Tho last October. In fact General Giap stated at the height of the bombing raid on December 22, 1972 that: "The US hopes to bend the will of the Vietnamese people by mass bombings of North Vietnam. This will prove to be an illusion. Hanoi, Haiphong and other cities may be bombed and even razed, but the will of the Vietnamese people will never give." This statement is in marked contrast to the mealy-mouthed utterances of Russian and Chinese leaders.

Secondly the number of B-52's knocked down by the Vietnamese has quite clearly demoralised the American military establishment. After all, 34 B-52's were downed in two weeks is an extremely impressive total and the Vietnamese leaders are justified in claiming this as a victory of some importance. And lastly the terror bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong created a potentially dangerous split within the ruling class internationally. The response from European bourgeois leaders must certainly have given Nixon

some food for thought; particularly as it came on the eve of the enlargement of the Common Market. To prevent himself from becoming completely isolated he announced a 'pause' in the bombing. His slavish followers in this country are implying that he has beaten the Vietnamese down to their knees and that they are now prepared to make further concessions. Hanoi has denied these reports most vigorously. It is obviously a weak attempt to cover up American losses and the failure of the terror bombing.

The very fact that Nixon could carry out these raids without fear of a serious threat of reprisals from either China or the Soviet Union is a telling indictment of the latter two countries. However the main reason for the raids was not only to bring concessions from Hanoi, but to prevent a new offensive in the South. The latter may have been delayed temporarily, but the bombing has *not* succeeded in changing the balance of forces in the South. What it does show is the enormous importance the imperialists and their puppets attach to bombing raids simply in order to preserve the *status quo*. That is why, as we argued at the time the Vietnamese revealed the terms of the 9-point plan, an agreement to end the bombing throughout, Indochina would, of itself, represent a major advance for the revolutionary forces. That still holds true.



Despite the bombing civilian casualties have not been as high as they might have been—thanks to these shelters

ALL OUT FOR JANUARY 20th!

By JOAN STOTT

As a response to the terror bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, the Indochina Solidarity Conference called an emergency demonstration for Saturday, 23 December. Despite the short notice almost 800 militants from the IMG, AREAS, CFB(M-L), CP (Clapham branch) and the Indochina Solidarity Conference turned up. The demonstration marched from Hyde Park to the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square where an American flag was burnt amidst chants of "Victory to the NLF" and similar slogans. An appeal was made by the organisers of the demonstration to make the January 20th demonstration the most militant and biggest mobilisation of recent months.

An international call has been made by a whole number of antiwar and solidarity organisations for making January 20th an international day of protest. These include the United Peace Action Coalition in the National States and the Indochina Solidarity Front (FSI) in France.

The pacifists, vegetarians, social-democrats and their camp-followers in pressuring Heath to stop

backing the Americans and basically restricting their activities to applying electoral pressure. Our position is completely different, because we view the struggle in Indochina from a different vantage point. For us the struggle of the Indochinese people is part and parcel of the international class struggle against capitalism. The fact that they are in the frontline of this struggle means that we have to educate workers in other parts of the world (including Britain) on the meaning of what is going on in Vietnam.

Our solidarity actions have therefore to stress:

- The reason we are on the streets is because we support the Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian workers and peasants. We want them to win. We are for the defeat of US imperialism. That is why we raise slogans such as "Victory to the NLF" or "All Power to the PRG".
- This victory would be considerably aided by the withdrawal of all imperialist troops from the area and a stop in the bombing. We do not support the right of these troops and planes to be there in the first place. That is why we raise the slogan of "For the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all US forces in Indochina".
- Precisely because we are in favour of the "unconditional" withdrawal of all troops, etc., we do not give any support to the concessions

which the United States has gained from the Vietnamese revolutionaries over the last few months. This does not mean that we are criticising the Vietnamese comrades for making these concessions. No, the Vietnamese militants have been placed in this situation by the treachery of their allies in Peking and Moscow. They need a breathing space.

The role of the solidarity movement in the advanced capitalist countries is, however, not the same as that of the militants in Indochina, though the goal is the same. Our tactics are determined by how best we can ensure the victory of the revolution in Indochina. That is why we are not in favour of the 'Sign Now' position. It educates no one. It politically disarms militants active in the solidarity movement and it implies that once a treaty is signed all our problems will be over. This is not only false but it helps to sow dangerous illusions. Even after a treaty was signed the civil war would not be over. The 200,000 political prisoners locked in Thieu's prisons face extermination. Thieu is threatening to arrest and "neutralise" other NLF supporters. The dynamic of the situation will result in new mass upsurges, particularly after a ceasefire. That is why our slogan can only be **SOLIDARITY TILL FINAL VICTORY**

International Fund To Aid The Indochinese Resistance

The recent Indochina Solidarity Conference pledged full support to the peoples of Indochina in their struggle against US aggression. With the new bombing onslaught on the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the prospect of four more years of war for Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, the need to fulfil that pledge is even more urgent.

The International Fund to Aid the Indochinese Resistance, while supporting the other solidarity activities now being organised, also offers a practical way of showing solidarity with the Indochinese peoples: making a financial contribution to their struggle.

The Fund, which was one of the conference sponsors and is working in the ISC continuing committee, collects money to give to the liberation movements and revolutionary administrations of Indochina, to use as they wish. The amounts which can be collected are of course small compared with the need, let alone with the colossal spending of the US war machine; but they need not be negligible. Regular contributions on a mass basis can add up to a real and worthwhile expression of our solidarity.

Send a contribution now (cheques payable to "Indochina Fund") to the address below. Bankers order forms for regular payments are available.

Jane Prince
21 Priory Grove, London S.W.8.

BERNADETTE DEVLIN APPEALS FOR SOLIDARITY ACTIONS

To mark the first anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Derry, Bernadette Devlin has issued the following appeal for international solidarity actions in support of the Irish struggle on the weekend of 27-28 January.

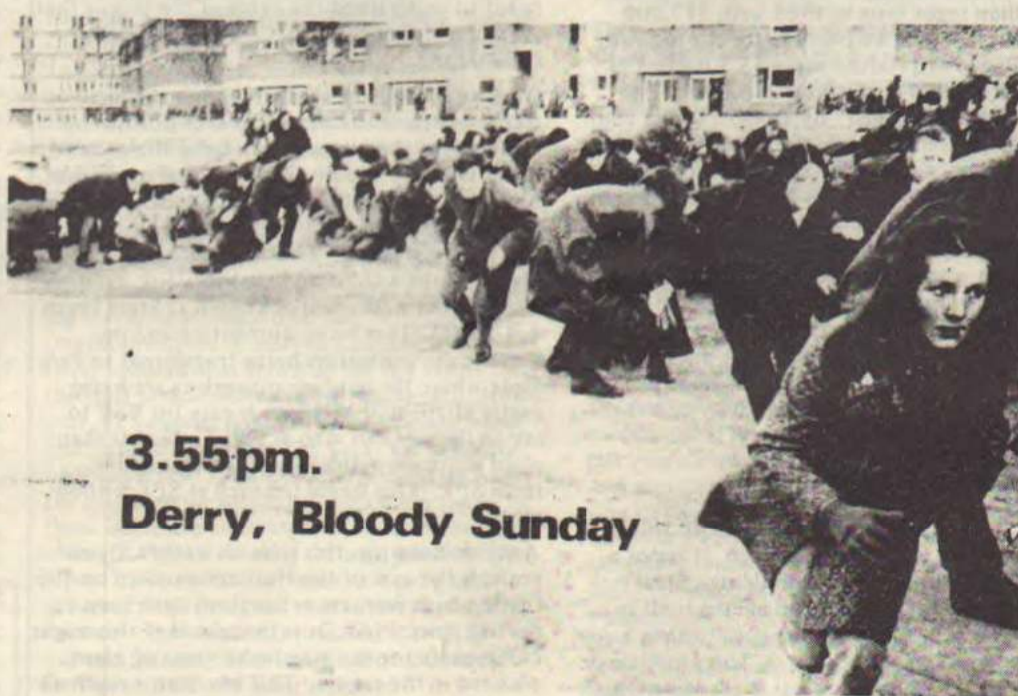
Sunday, 28th January 1973 will be the anniversary of Derry's Bloody Sunday.

On January 30th last, British paracommandos murdered thirteen peaceful demonstrators during an attack on a mass civils procession in Derry.

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

It failed. Stormont has been suspended.

But British aggression in Ireland continues. Since the abolition of Stormont, the British propaganda service has attempted to give the impression to the world that Britain is playing the role of arbitrator between two warring



3.55 pm.
Derry, Bloody Sunday

Irish tribes. Whitelaw, the British Gauleiter, is depicted as a gentle and impartial referee.

The reality is very different.

The essential conflict in Ireland is between the Irish people and British imperialism, supported by native reaction. The specific form it takes is an attempt by Britain to suppress the struggle of the nationalist-Catholic

population, and to crush its vanguard, the Irish Republican Army.

What this means is the continuation of concentration camps, the imprisonment and torture of thousands of political prisoners, daily harassment and mass intimidation of the total Catholic population—highlighted by the situation in West Belfast, where over half of the total male population has been

arrested, questioned, or had their homes raided by the British Army. When people in this area talk of the British Army of Occupation, it is no idle slogan. It is the literal truth. Andersonstown today is as brutally and effectively occupied as Warsaw was under the Nazis.

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

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

The week-end of 27th-28th January 1973 provides an opportunity for a worldwide week-end of activity to focus world attention on this struggle, and I appeal to all revolutionary groups, to the student movement, and to the workers' movement throughout the world to organise on that week-end, in every major city in Europe, America, Australia, Asia and Africa, demonstrations, protest meetings, pickets and other activities, to demand the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, self-determination for the Irish people, the ending of internment and release of all Irish political prisoners, to show their solidarity with those socialist and republican forces struggling against British imperialism in Ireland.

STEEL : CUT HOURS, NOT

Just before Christmas, the Government finally gave its blessing to the closure and development plans of the British Steel Co. will cost the State at least £3,000 million and will cost the working class at least 50,000 jobs by 1976-7, although the Govern

By ALF JENNINGS

The 20,000 redundancies which have taken place since 1971 have produced great uncertainty among steelworkers and the local announcements now being made at such places as Shotton and Ebbw Vale, where all sorts of assurances had been given by BSC only recently, have produced considerable shock. This despite the fact that the overall plan and its concrete implications for the various plants has been known and publicised by the revolutionary groups for over a year. The reaction of the union leadership, the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (formerly BISAK TA), was to deny the authenticity of the document. But the detailed announcements now being made correspond more or less exactly to the document itself, first acquired in late 1971. Any serious union leadership would have been able to gauge the situation. The overall strategy could have been deduced from those closures which have occurred so far by anybody with any knowledge of the steel industry at all. What is more, this plan was discussed publicly as early as 1966 with the publication of the Benson Report, and during the course of the Labour Government's nationalisation of steel. The activities of the Labour Party and the union bureaucracy in steel are a severe condemnation of their politics, as we shall see.

SIMPLE

The idea behind the plan is simple. Production of steel is to be concentrated in four major plant complexes: Llanwern (Newport), Port Talbot (Swansea), Lackenby-Redcar (Teesside), and Scunthorpe. A fifth, and small complex, Ravenscraig (Glasgow) would cater for the 'closed' Scottish market. All remaining steel-making activity* will be eliminated if the working class lets BSC and the Government get its way. The object of the exercise is to reduce the number of men needed to produce a ton of steel. This saving in labour time is to be achieved by re-siting steelmaking on coastal sites, thus saving the cost of transporting iron ore overland. Most of this is imported from the Southern Hemisphere in huge container ships which require large port facilities.

Secondly, the building of these new complexes involves the installation of new steel converters which use oxygen rather than coal or oil. These units are able to produce many more tons per man shift than the steel converters used at present. Together, these two changes make it possible for BSC to close steel making in such areas as North Wales, North Teesside, the Manchester Ship Canal, Corby, Glasgow and parts of South Wales, thus saving the BSC the cost of thousands of workers. For British capital, the rationalisation of steel is an urgent task. This was not so much the case in the Fifties when the steel industries of Germany and Japan had been destroyed by the War and the other competitor, US steel, was preoccupied with domestic economic growth and the Korean War boom. The disadvantages of previous world supremacy have now overtaken British imperialism in general and British steel in particular.

ILLUSIONS

There are many illusions being fostered in steel. Earlier in the year, for example, Melchett, Chairman of BSC, was saying that the target figure for capacity in 1980 should be 40 million tons, the Government that it should be 35 million tons. *Tribune* and the Labour left created the impression at the time that this was the difference between redundancy and no redundancy in steel. If only Labour were in power, these scrimping Tories would not be slaughtering whole towns. But in fact, the difference between the two estimates represents only a difference over the rate at which additional oxygen units are installed in Llanwern and Redcar. The inland plants, and the non-oxygen coastal plants, would face closure just the same; even their timing would be little affected.

The Labour opposition also linked this up to their chauvinist campaign against the EEC.

* Production of common steel is to be concentrated in the five complexes, accounting for some 27-28 million tons out of a planned capacity of 33 million tons planned for 1980. The difference is made up by what are known as 'special steels', that is high quality steels produced by electric arc converters, mainly sited in the Sheffield-Rotherham district. Electric arc production does not have to be sited near the coast since it uses scrap metal rather than pig iron as its raw material, and therefore needs to be sited in the industrial heartland.



Ebbw Vale - massive redundancies announced a month ago

Those bureaucrats in Brussels were trying to restrict the 'growth' of British steel, and the Tories, who are being very unpatriotic these days, are letting them get away with it because they never did agree with the nationalisation of steel anyway. This wailing of the Labour left is false political economy. Physical output - 'growth' - can rise a great deal while employment simultaneously falls. For example, in 1969, 10 Open Hearth converters at Port Talbot were replaced by two 300 ton oxygen units with a combined capacity of 3½ million tons. The labour force in the converter shops was reduced from 2,200 to 400 men. An additional unit would double capacity, creating only a few score of new jobs; this additional unit, in turn, would more than make superfluous the 1 million ton output of Ebbw Vale, putting several thousand jobs up the valley on the line. The job reduction does not stem from a crisis of demand, but from a crisis of productivity. Output per man and per unit of capital in British steel are much lower than in the steel industries of Britain's competitors, and this will govern policy in British steel regardless of Britain's formal entry into the EEC.

As to the whole business over nationalisation, the Tory opposition to this in 1967 was geared to forcing up the price of compensation. But Labour had exactly the same plans for steel as the Tories. Those on the Labour left who claim surprise at the present plans, know full well that the Benson Report, produced by the British Iron & Steel Federation in 1965, predicted that "whereas the industry produced 27 million ingot tons in 1965 with 317,000 workers, it should be possible for the industry as envisaged to produce some 35.3 million ingot tons in 1975 with about 215,000". The industry "as envisaged" by Benson would concentrate production in half a dozen big units, closing most of the 30 or so steelmaking plants in England and Scotland. The return of Labour to power would make no difference to the needs of British capital, which the Labour Party was defending when it carried out nationalisation - the industry by 1966 was so bankrupt it could not raise the capital for new investment and the dozen major companies could not possibly destroy their plants, measures absolutely necessary to raising the productivity and therefore profitability of the industry.

DIFFICULT TO FIGHT

Plant closures are notoriously difficult things to fight. This is very true in steel. It is not a declining industry like shipbuilding. Steel workers can see oxygen plants being built in places like Scunthorpe whose output they know is already replacing their own. There is little or no history of struggle in steel, a situation which is only just beginning to change. The ISTC, the main steel union, has no annual conference, and its shop stewards are not the centre of power in the plants, since major disputes in the plant are quickly taken into conciliation machinery by full-time officials. Its branches are built on the basis of shops in which workers are organised into production teams, the various positions in the team carrying 'seniority' and graded pay; the leadership does not hesitate to take disciplinary measures against militants who even so much

as make enquiries about the wages and conditions of steel workers in other areas as in the recent Teesside parity claim.

The ISTC interprets rationalisation within plants not as a threat to jobs but as a source of threat from non-ISTC workers ('craftsmen') who are thought to take advantage of the disturbance to the seniority ladders caused by technical change. In 1969 ISTC negotiated the Green Book, which itself is a serious source of redundancy; ISTC has also accepted unusually high redundancy payments, which undermines opposition to redundancy in advance (this is one reason why BSC can give several years of advance notice with such confidence). The lack of any inter-regional organisation at rank and file level is one of the greatest factors reinforcing the isolation of militants under these circumstances, and one of the greatest obstacles to working out a strategy.

COUNTER-STRATEGY

What sort of counter-strategy is needed? Very often, following an announcement of closure, the entire labour force of a steel town will mobilise, forming the sort of ad hoc Action Committees which we have seen in Irlam and Stanton. In the absence of any national strategy, the spontaneous reaction of the labour movement is to demand 'no closure'. But this is not a basis for a strategy because it leads to false arguments - fired up especially by local MPs and local ISTC officials who are often implicated at many levels in local state administration - that the plant is "really viable" because BSC has failed to understand the demand for this or that type of product or facility. BSC has got its sums wrong.

Of course, BSC knows its own interests perfectly well, and the destruction of productive resources in the interests of raising the productivity of industry is part of the logic of capitalism. BSC soon demonstrates that economics is on its side and the workers are left without a perspective for struggle. This also allows BSC to divide workers from one another. For example, in Rotherham, the works known as Steel Peech & Tozer (SPT) is being dismantled and its electric arc converters being transferred to Park Gate where the existing converters are being partly eliminated. Here, it is easy for BSC to say to the anxious men at Park Gate that their plant is "really viable" once the arcs arrive from SPT. This leaves the men at SPT without allies.

Another example, this time on a more dramatic scale, is the case of the Hunterston plant on the Clyde which workers in Scotland have been expecting since 1968. It is thought that this might compensate for the massive closures of plant planned in the region. This has been a myth all along. In 1968, the Scottish Division of BSC assumed that the development of an ore port at Hunterston meant a big complex was planned. This was news to BSC Headquarters, but it has since been politically unwilling to shatter the bubble. The belief that confidence can be placed in the capitalist market will be cruelly shattered on the Clyde.

SOUNDER RESPONSE

A sounder response has been developed by

groups of workers who have put forward the idea of a 35 or 32 hour working week without loss of pay for all steelworkers, recognising that this is a national problem. This expresses the correct idea that, regardless of the capitalist profit-drive, if the work load contracts, then the working week must also contract if redundancy is to be avoided. However, this cannot form a coherent strategy, for certain material reasons. Without an annual conference it is difficult to get the union to take this up. Such a struggle could take many years. Also, a 35 or 32 hour week is an arbitrary figure - a negotiated reduction of hours on an industry wide basis would probably need a lower figure. But most important, because the spread of redundancy is uneven, a 35 hour week is useless for men in plants facing total closure, and a negotiated reduction carries no guarantee against redundancies. This is in fact an improvisation. A shorter working week is a long standing aim of the trade union movement and many workers have tried to use this traditional form of struggle to meet a new problem - widespread rationalisation throughout the British economy - to which it is not really suited.

What is happening in steel is an example of the violent, irrational and contradictory nature of capitalism as a social system. The modernisation of steel is a step forward in the organisation of society's productive processes; yet under capitalism, it means the destruction of resources and labour time which could be put to other social uses if society was run on the basis of a plan and common ownership of its resources. In fact the capitalists will only go ahead and introduce these new techniques if they can bring about precisely such a wastage of resources and labour time. The aim of reducing the labour time needed to produce steel is the whole object of the exercise.

It is not possible to deal with this completely irrational situation by appealing to the market to reason, or demanding a negotiated reduction of the working week in the belief that capitalism is after all 'progressive'. Since the working class is not yet in a position where it can solve this problem rationally, that is seize the means of production from the capitalists and operate them on the basis of a plan, then it must defend its own interests regardless of those of capital. The only way to meet this situation is the demand for the sliding scale of working hours with no loss of pay, which is discussed at length in the IMG pamphlet on steel. How does this work?

SLIDING SCALE

The key question is not whether the plants stay open or shut. As far as this is concerned the employers have time and all the forces of the state on their side. The key question is whether the working class can force BSC to employ the existing labour force in steel, since they cannot find employment elsewhere. This is after all, what BSC is interested in with its national plan - reorganising in such a way that a unit of steel is produced with less men than at present. The workers must place them in a position where, if they want to go ahead with new techniques, then they must give the workers a shorter working week. They can be

MEN!

ration for the next ten years. This has understated the figures.

confronted with this (for them) impossible choice by the demand for the sliding scale of hours.

This could work as follows. If one mill in a complex is to be closed, then all the workers' struggle in the complex on the basis that the labour time saved should be spread across the entire complex, thus resulting in a shorter working week for all the workers. This unifies the workers. All the workers can easily understand that it is to their advantage not only to get a shorter working week but to force the issue of the scale before BSC gets round to closing their particular piece of plant. They can also avoid all the demoralising business of haggling with one another over who is to get what job, working excessive overtime to get their names on shortlists, etc. In the case of SPT and Park Gate, for example, the same idea can overcome the disunity of the workers. Instead of fighting among ourselves for a piece of equipment, fight together for a common aim, after which BSC can arrange its equipment as it pleases!

A struggle conducted on this basis, not by steelworkers alone, but with the help of the many thousands of other workers affected by steel closures in the surrounding area, would change the balance of forces in such a way that BSC would either have to grant the principle of the sliding scale - the 'right to a job' which would be a tremendous encouragement to workers elsewhere in the industry to take up the same demand or grant at least a reprieve instead. If the same thing was then put into practice by the workers in plant after plant, BSC's closure programme would either grind to a halt or it would have to grant the principle to the workforce as a whole.

This is the way to beat BSC. But this can only be done if: (a) the workers understand that the aim of reorganisation from BSC's point of view is not for the purpose of getting rid of 'outdated' plant, or because the product of this or that plant is not profitable - rather, it is because too many men are producing steel under the present international competitive conditions; and if (b) the steel militants can organise themselves on an inter-regional basis. While there is absolutely no reason why the workers in a plant facing total closure should not adopt exactly the same strategy, it is clearly that much more difficult, and various local 'solutions', which aren't solutions at all, more readily appeal to workers in a stronger position. This is all the more likely because the closure of a steel town mobilises the entire labour force in the district, workers who are not so immediately aware of the national situation in steel. The leadership of such struggles easily falls to MPs and the like who are the incarnation of localism.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

This is why it is critically important to build a national leadership of steel militants who can pose an alternative line to that of the union bureaucracy, and who understand that the struggle in steel should be used as an opportunity - an opportunity missed at UCS - to activate the entire labour movement for a struggle against rationalisations and redundancy on a class basis and not on appeals by this or that group of workers to the market peculiarities of this or that industry. The struggle in steel could be used to show how the slogan of the 'right to work' can be concretely realised - not on the basis of demanding the 'full employment' which the ruling class was able to give in the Fifties, but on the basis of struggle.

Steel militants in various parts of the country are making an effort to form a national rank and file organisation with a functioning national paper. For further information, write to: Ron Thompson, 64 Grosvenor Road, Rotherham.

STEEL

The Coming Redundancies and How to Fight Them

(includes 'Confidential Report' on closures)

By Dave Bailey An IMG Publication 15p

Essential reading for all steel workers and all those concerned with the fight against capitalist rationalisation in steel, this pamphlet was written with the aim of helping workers in the steel industry to work out a strategy for fighting the redundancies which have now been announced.

Order from: IMG Publications, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

STUDENTS IN STRUGGLE

1. J.R.Clynes on the way forward in the NUS-backed national rent strike

Some 25 colleges will be on rent strike at the beginning of next term. This means that 19 colleges are joining those protesting against big increases in accommodation charges. This is an extremely sharp response to the decision by the last NUS conference to go for a national rent strike. Funnily enough, however, these rent strikes are directed at an increase in student grants. It says worlds for the character of the last NUS Conference that such a tactic was rejected to further the fight against accommodation charges. Nonetheless, the NUS leadership is committed to fight a grants campaign based upon a national rent strike.

Compared with the sort of campaign conducted last time, this could be a tremendous step forward. Then, the central feature of the campaign was the attempt to win the hearts of the nation's student landlords by inviting them to tea. This was combined with other wild activities like making representations to the local Conservative Educational Group. This of course is not to mention the lobby of Parliament. It came as a bit of a surprise to the NUS leadership, although not to anyone else, that this campaign was singularly ineffective.

The adoption of more militant tactics is partially a reaction to that last campaign. But more importantly it is a consequence of the acuteness with which the rationalisations in the colleges are beginning to be felt. However more militant tactics are not enough. To hit the root of the problem needs a different understanding of what is going on than that provided by NUS conference and the NUS/CP leadership.

GRANTS AND ACCOMMODATION

We have analysed previously the reorientation of higher education to the needs of capitalist industry. Part of this process has been a continual paring and encroachment on costs. In the present situation of historic crisis of profits, this operates more acutely.

Thus the restructuring of higher education itself becomes more and more simultaneously a rationalisation. Compare for instance the Robbins expansion (primarily sumptuous new universities) with the present Thatcher White Paper ten years later. At the same time, however, there is also the cutting back on unit costs which has resulted in high costs of student accommodation over the past period and the deterioration in the value of the student grant. This latter has come to be felt in an acute way. The immediate cause of this stems from the recent implementation of various ways of restructuring the costs of higher education by the bourgeoisie.

RESTRUCTURING OF COSTS

The main disagreement at NUS conference was that between the CP position, which wished to

see the notional element in the grant set aside for accommodation (which at the moment stands at £240) brought up to the average £260 price of hall accommodation, and an amendment calling for a 'claim' for £100 (to restore the value of the grant to the 1962 position). Such a debate exhibits immense confusion as to the real nature of the problem.

The problem is not simply that of the erosion of the value of the student grant. Rather it is the effects of the way the bourgeoisie is restructuring the payment of the costs of higher education which has to be confronted. The most easily identifiable instances of this are the DES strictures on self-financing of catering, which have led to the recent huge price increases and worker redundancy; and the policy of 'Loan Financing' whereby a portion of the cost of future student residences are incorporated into the present charge for hall accommodation. It is through such measures, to apportion some of the costs of higher education to students (and workers), that the present problem arises in such an acute way. To go simply for an increase in the student grant, even if tied closely to rises in the cost of living index, will do nothing to tackle the root cause of the problem. It is not at all out of the question that the bourgeoisie will permit an increase in the student grant. This accounts for the disagreements between the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and the Government/DES - the Vice-Chancellors pressing for such an increase. What they are both united on, however, is over the restructuring of the costs. It is this latter which has to be taken up.

The central aim of the struggle, then, should be to prevent this restructuring being effected by the bourgeoisie. The basis for the struggle should be the refusal to allow the bourgeoisie to sort out its own problems concerning the financing of higher education at the expense of students. The same thing goes of course in defence of college workers. Clearly, it would completely vitiate the aim of the struggle to separate out the grants question from that of price rises, accommodation charges and redundancies. The bourgeoisie sees them as connected questions; so should we.

METHOD OF STRUGGLE

When looked at from this overall point of view, it is quite clear that college authorities are equally as implicated in the determination of student conditions as are the Government/DES. We should not be misled by protestations of support on the grants question. The beginnings of a correct attitude to the college authorities was one of the useful implications of the decision for a national rent strike. But we have to develop this implication in a consistent fashion.

What we have to insist is that the struggles of the mass of students over price rises, accommod-

ation charges, in solidarity with worker-redundancies and so on as well as the rent strikes should be the basis of the campaign. It is around the actions of the mass of students on the basis of a rejection of the attempts of the State to solve its problems at our expense that alliances can begin to be forged. We don't look around for allies and then decide what the basis for struggle is afterwards, as has been the case with the NUS/CP leadership in the past.

It is through militant forms of struggle with the rent strikes as a focus (mass boycott of refectories, demonstrations, occupations) that the issue can be raised in such a way as to provide a focus for us to be able to win over our real friends - the mass of the working class. Such struggles are positively excluded by linking up with college authorities - not to mention the way in which such a strategy actually raises a barrier to any meaningful alliance with the working class.

Any campaign must be based on what is happening in the colleges, not on some struggle which is supposedly happening elsewhere around Parliament or DES committees - or, worse, on the basis of waiting for the return of a Labour Government. It is not true that the essential political questions (the capitalist organisation of education) can only be raised and affected in struggle around Parliament or elections. They can be raised and fought over here and now in the colleges themselves. Indeed because the vanguard of the working class is not organised in the Labour Party, the issues upon which we are concerned won't become recognised by the working class in any other way. It is only as an adjunct to the struggles in the colleges that the question of elections and Parliament should be raised. Not as a substitute for such a struggle.

NUS AND STUDENT UNIONS

In all this, the role of student unions and NUS come to the fore. It is absolutely vital that student unions organise the struggle in the colleges and that we get real leadership and perspectives from the NUS. Without doubt the ties of the student unions to the college bureaucracies and the lack of real democracy in many of the unions will be a real barrier in the struggle. Inevitably, these questions will have to be confronted during the course of the struggle. This is unfortunate but a necessity given that these questions have not been sorted out when they should have been in preparation for what is indeed the beginning of big new struggles in higher education.

Against 'Loan Financing'!
Against self financing!
No redundancies!
No price rises!
£100 on the grant, tied to the cost of living!
End discrimination against married women!
End discretionary awards - grants for all students!

2. Nina Thomas, one of those victimised, on the expulsions at Lancaster University

Two students at Lancaster University were expelled for a year at the end of last term for heckling at a meeting of a well-known Monday Club member Ronald Bell, M.P. Why has the Lancaster administration been prepared to come down so heavily, and is it prepared and able to uphold this vicious attack on the left? What are the problems facing the University administration?

After the Thatcher proposals were dropped, the job of dealing with political problems in the colleges was left to individual college authorities. Our Vice-Chancellor, Charles Carter, during a year of struggle over the victimisation of several members of staff in Lancaster, was fairly successful in terms of the net result - the staff concerned were not reinstated. However, he suffered considerable criticism inside and outside the University from his handling of these affairs. While he unfortunately has the initiative he still has the problem that these issues are combatted by student mobilisation. A thread running through his annual report delivered to University Council this autumn, therefore, was that in dealing with student "troubles" it is reasonable to pick out and punish a small number of students for the actions of a large number.

BALANCE OF FORCES

In the last couple of years, Lancaster students have been involved in a number of quite high level struggles. In all these, the college authorities were decisively beaten. Last year, however, we suffered defeat. This was largely the result of an inadequate CP leadership which refused to base itself on the struggles of the mass of students but instead attempted to win over 'public opinion'. The shoddy compromises

which were concocted and the opportunities thereby lost have led to demoralisation.

This was shown at the beginning of last term when SRC, our Student Union, was presented with a bill for £600 for damages caused during the struggles last year. We agreed to pay part of it, when it should have been clear that all the responsibility for what happened rested on the shoulders of the administration. It may have been this sign of weakness that has encouraged Carter to go on to the offensive against students.

DEFENDERS OF 'FREE SPEECH'?

In the present case the authorities were supposedly concerned with 'free speech'. Perhaps the authorities' concern for this question can be pinpointed if we look at the fate of a report of last year's events, drawn up by elected students and representatives from ASTMS for presentation to the University Council. This was rejected both for publication and then, after we had published it ourselves, for discussion. As one "outside" member of the Court, Councillor, Poysner commented - "It is my impression... that an excuse is being made not to accept their report. I feel you have ignored their feelings and held back free discussion."

The point is that there is no abstract freedom of speech such as that which the University rules pretend to protect. What we have to fight is the idea that in any way the University is neutral, and precisely challenge the power that it has to define the way things are organised and in whose interests.

Even more, in the case of Ronald Bell we are dealing with an extreme right wing member of the Monday Club, closely associated with the

National Front, who advocates strong state repression of students and workers. Bell and his kind are concerned precisely to deny free speech to those that are critics of capitalism and especially to those that wish to see capitalism overthrown. It is absolutely vital to prevent these elements from rallying support in the colleges, as anywhere else.

PRECEDENT

Only six students out of the 200 or more who came to the Ronald Bell meeting were picked out; two cases were dismissed (having presented witnesses to the investigators that they were "moderates") two were dealt with summarily and fined £4 and £5; the remaining two, both known militants and members of revolutionary organisations, were expelled for a year. I for one was never offered summary procedure but my case was taken directly to the University tribunal.

If Lancaster University authorities get away with these expulsions, a dangerous precedent is set both here and in other colleges, as intimidation and weakness follow. It is unlikely that it will remain isolated. Already we have seen what has happened at Stirling. But the situation at Portsmouth Poly also needs close watch. Precisely the same manoeuvre seems to be afoot here. Any successful attack can weaken the whole student body.

Lancaster student federation has called on NUS to generalise the fight if our appeal on the 11th January is unsuccessful, and there is every indication that the University will remain firm. We therefore call on all students for messages of solidarity through their Unions and their support in further action we need to take.

COMMUNITY POLITICS VS. INDUSTRIAL POLITICS?

The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community, by Mariarosa Dalla Costa (with an introduction by Selma James). Falling Wall Press, 25p.

This pamphlet consists of a long central article by Mariarosa Dalla Costa, sandwiched between an introduction by Selma James, and an early article by her dating from 1952. Since it is the article by Mariarosa that expresses the ideas shared by her and Selma most cogently, it is that on which the discussion is centred.

MARXIST IN CONCEPTION

Mariarosa's analysis is marxist in conception; it rejects feminism (the theoretical kind that poses the real class struggle as between men and women); it centres on the working class woman. Mariarosa argues that in a capitalist society a woman's job is the production of labour power in the home. There, unpaid, in a pre-capitalist economic situation, she produces new workers and reproduces existing ones. Such a situation produces the dependent psychological characteristics which make our struggle so difficult, and involve men as the agents of our oppression.

In producing labour power, Mariarosa argues, housewives are themselves exploited, surplus value producers, and integral members of the working class. The struggle must be waged against organisations of the working class which divide between those producers employed in the factory and those in the home. Capitalist society is in fact one great social factory. The crucial task for the women's liberation movement is to start the self organisation of women, whose potential social power can be utilised in community struggles. There is no solution in advocating that women should work, for this involves at best a change in the mode of exploitation, at worst the adoption of a double one. Therefore the women's movement should organise around demands that women should reject housework; meet their husbands on their own grounds outside the home at factory meetings; rent struggles can be fought on the basis that women's social production in the home has more than covered the rent; hold neighbourhood meetings, etc.

On the question of wages for housewives, Mariarosa doesn't come down clearly on one side or the other. On the one hand it might give the impression that we wanted to "entrench the condition of institutionalised slavery . . . such a demand could scarcely operate as a mobilizing goal" — on the other "it gives an indication for struggle, a direction in organisational terms in which oppression and exploitation, situation of caste and class, find themselves insolubly linked." (p.34 and 53) The resolution of this contradiction involves the understanding of the nature of demands. For a demand is "a goal which is

not only a thing, but . . . essentially a stage of antagonism of a social relation. Whether the canteen or wages we win will be a victory or a defeat depends on the force of our struggle."

CRUCIAL CONFUSIONS

It is impossible in such a brief summary to capture the power and vitality of the writing that makes this pamphlet so stimulating to read. Yet those very qualities conceal what seem to me to be crucial confusions, leading to the division of a struggle where there should be unity. "We place foremost in these pages the housewife as the central figure in this female role. We assume that all women are housewives and even those who work outside the home continue to be housewives" (p.19); ". . . and this social factory has as its pivot the woman in the home producing labour power as a commodity . . ." (Selma's introduction p.7); "What we meant precisely is, that housework as work is productive in the Marxian sense, that is, producing surplus value." (p. 52). The basis of all the problems lies in these quotations.

Mariarosa confuses the reproduction of labour power with the reproduction of the labourer. The labourer himself (if he is male) reproduces the labour power. Women working in the home reproduce the labourer who sells his labour power in order to live, who also can deny its sale, who forms trade unions, who also will have the central part in overthrowing the system. Capitalists would like us to believe that workers are just commodities, cost factors in the production process. They would also like us to believe that the essential nature of woman is to be bound to the family, the home and to produce children because this is advantageous to him. And Mariarosa falls into this trap, as Margaret Benston and many others have done before her.

Yet if we examine women's actual position within capitalist society, it is as clear that women have always worked as that they have always reproduced the labourer; and almost all women have worked at some period of their lives in the capitalist market. Also, images of woman as sexual objects with a sexuality, however distorted, divorced from reproduction, have consistently been used by capitalists in order to assist them to sell commodities. Thus women face a complex triple oppression, not analytically reducible to the single reference point of the home. Since the three types of oppression are partly contradictory, they can be utilised in ideology to weaken a woman's position in any one of them. For a woman working may feel she is neglecting her home, or accept poor pay and conditions because she feels she is filling time until the real job of home making begins; a woman in the home suffers from fears that she is no longer attractive (a sex object) to her husband; while a woman who utilises her physical attractiveness

in capitalist terms is stigmatised as immoral. And so on. We have to deal with and oppose a triple oppression, and while at one point in time or place, one aspect may seem predominant, our strategy in combatting that oppression must surely inter-relate the struggles, not to emphasise one, to the relative exclusion of the others. Perhaps the clearest case for this yet produced is Margaret Coulson's article in *International No. 3*, 'Women's Liberation, Context and Potentialities', which has so far been largely neglected by the movement, and does not even appear in the latest anthology of British writings from the Women's movement (*The Body Politic*).

PROBLEMS OF ORGANISATION

Within the home, Mariarosa is absolutely right to point out that a housewife and mother's position is only apparently isolated, and that in fact she fills a crucial role for capitalism in the production of new labourers and the "maintenance" of existing ones (though her work neither directly produces commodities nor surplus value). But although she is in fact firmly tied to the capitalist system as a whole, her isolation and economic dependence do create real problems of organisation not fully recognised by Mariarosa. It is no accident that the parts of the pamphlet dealing with the organisation and demands relating to housewives is the vaguest.

It can be argued that developing an understanding of their situation, an demystifying it may be easier where women are outside the home, in collectivities, at school or especially in work — though the movement has hardly turned its attention to the possibilities of working in relation to young women in schools. If the politics of work with women in industry is not confined to narrow economic demands such as equal pay, but if such demands are integrated into an understanding of why economic struggles are different for female than for male workers, a basis for reaching or maintaining relationships with women in the home can be developed. It is unfortunately also the case that because of their economic dependency, and because of the chauvinist attitudes of male workers, who often do not regard women as capable of understanding the issues, only the most class-conscious women give full support in strike situations. It is in such situations that the women's movement can utilise the struggle to try and reach strikers' wives, again integrating industrial and home based struggles. Such potentialities are not explored in the pamphlet.

DIVIDING LINE

Finally let this not be misconstrued into the suggestion that this means that I am suggesting that the solution for the subordination of women in the home is work in the capitalist market. It would be ludicrous to say to women that we can

be liberated through work; but we have no right to try to stop women from working until the women's movement can provide an answer to the cash nexus involved in the decision to work. That requires a total revolutionary perspective, linking together all the dimensions of oppression that we face, and relating our struggle against them to a strategy for overthrowing the system as a whole. As Mariarosa says: "This ultimately is the dividing line between reformism and revolutionary politics within the women's movement"

Rosalind Davis.

Letter from Selma James

The title your reviewer gave for *Women, the Unions and Work*, or *What is Not to be Done* was as incorrect as the name of the publisher she gave. Not *Women, Work and the Unions*, and not Falling Wall Press. It was published by the Notting Hill Group, Women's Liberation Workshop, and is available from 20 Staverton Road, London, N.W.2, at 5p. plus postage. This first edition of 3,000 is almost exhausted and a new expanded edition is planned. Your reviewer perhaps confused this pamphlet with *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* which was published by Falling Wall Press and is available from them, 79 Richmond Road, Bristol (25p. + 4p. postage), from the Women's Liberation Workshop and bookshops.

Dalla Costa and I, as members of the International Feminist Collective, are amused at the distinction reviewers and critics of the left here and in Italy have made between our political views. My *Women, the Unions and Work* and her *Women and the Subversion of the Community* (which is included in *Power of Women*) have been treated as contradictory. In reality the two publications are part of a growing body of literature in three languages of our Collective.

Yet in Italy the Dalla Costa article is attacked and the James pamphlet praised; in England the James pamphlet is attacked and the Dalla Costa article considered "important". Is this because for the male-dominated left the revolutionary vista is always more attractive at a distance?

For our Collective, *Women, the Unions and Work* is a practical articulation of the theoretical position of *Power of Women* which Dalla Costa and James wrote together. Who does not see the nature of the connection between these two publications understands neither.

Power to the sisters.

Selma James.

NOTE: The mistake over title and publisher was made in the editorial office and not by our reviewer—Eds.

ECONOMICS AND IDEOLOGY

The Red Mole is starting the new year with a new regular column which will unashamedly discuss ideas. Its aim will be to combat wrong or confused ideas about the nature of capitalism. Those who oppose the struggle of the working class for power like to present such discussion on the revolutionary left as quibbling and hair-splitting. But those engaged in the class struggle know how necessary and how difficult it is to continually fight the ideas of the ruling class. The purpose of this column is to assist that struggle.

1. What is Capital?

By PAUL MOREL

One hundred years after Marx wrote *Capital* socialists still frequently show that they do not understand what Marx was referring to in the title of his great book. For example, a recent pamphlet called *Students and the Class Struggle* says this: "Under capitalism the means of production takes the form of capital, that is factories, machine-tools, tractors, etc." (page 6). This is the 'common sense' definition of 'capital', and is also the way that bourgeois economists define it: as a stock of productive wealth, as machinery or factories, or the money that can be used to buy them. What is wrong with this?

In the first place, this makes capital a 'thing' or a collection of 'things'. And it is clear that machinery is necessary for production under socialism as well as capitalism. Also, if capital is machinery and factories then the capitalists surely fulfil a useful function, indeed a vital one in making these things available to workers. Similarly, the workers 'deserve' a certain share of the social product because of the productivity of their labour. Bourgeois economists have attempted to construct a theory of 'fair shares' on precisely this basis.

The second objection to the bourgeois concept of capital is that it does not distinguish between capital as property and capital as means of production. If the means of production were either communally owned by the working class, or were owned on a private basis by the labourers themselves, then the property rights to such 'capital' would not seem to 'deserve' a reward in the form of profit. If there was communal

ownership there would be no social class to claim such a share and the entire product would return to the working class. If the means of production were owned by individual labourers then the returns would go to them.

SOCIAL RELATION

Marx was absolutely clear what he meant by capital: "Capital is not a thing, but rather a definite social production relation belonging to a definite historical formation of society . . . Capital is not the sum of the material and produced means of production. Capital . . . is the means of production monopolised by a certain section of society, confronting living labour power . . ." (*Capital*, Volume 3, Moscow 1962 edition, pages 794-5).

In other words, Marx argues that capital can take the form of money, machinery, factories, etc. But it takes all these forms only under certain definite historical and social conditions: namely, that the means of production are owned by one class — the bourgeoisie — which confronts another class — propertyless workers who are forced to sell their labour power to the capitalists and produce surplus value in order to acquire their means of subsistence. Capital therefore is capital not by virtue of the material form it takes, but because of this social relationship between two classes.

Capital, then, is not a thing but a certain social relation where the labourers do not own or control the means of production and where they are forced to sell their labour-power as a commodity to the capitalists. The correct definition of capital is therefore bound up with a correct understanding of what the worker does when he goes on the labour market,

Unfortunately, this is also not understood in the student pamphlet which we quoted above. It says this: "The working class or proletariat possess only their labour power (apart from their personal possessions), but it is this which creates the wealth of society." There are two serious errors here. Firstly, labour power is the capacity to work, it is a commodity and as such it creates nothing. Only labour itself, which is the consumption of labour power, creates value. To confuse labour power with labour is to confuse something which is prevalent only under capitalism (a commodity form) with labour itself, which is witnessed in all forms of human society. Marx rebuked an earlier economist Ricardo for making this confusion and asserted that unless the distinction between labour power and labour was understood, capital could not be revealed as a definite social relationship. The second error in this quotation is that not all wealth is produced by labour. A great part of wealth is produced by nature (see Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*).

NOT ACCIDENTAL

The misconceptions in this student pamphlet on the nature of capital are not accidental. The group which published the pamphlet, the International Socialists, hold that the USSR and China are 'state capitalist'. Such a mistaken view of these workers' states flows from their inability to define the essential nature of capitalist society: they have fallen into an error of bourgeois social science which regards all societies as having the same basic social relations. It is only with Marxist categories that the true nature of the USSR and China can be revealed as post capitalist transitional societies between capitalism and socialism.

Derry Bloody Sunday Commemoration Vigil

From the British Derry Commemoration Committee, 37 Middle Lane, London N.8.

On Sunday, January 28th, 1973, the people of Northern Ireland will be commemorating BLOODY SUNDAY 1972, when highly trained soldiers of the British Army, under official orders, shot and killed 13 unarmed civilians peacefully marching for their civil rights. English, Scots and Welsh people of many different political opinions will be visiting Derry on Saturday, January 27th, to hold an ALL-NIGHT VIGIL at Free Derry Corner in order to disassociate ourselves from the outrage that was committed by "our" Government in "our" name. NICRA (the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association) welcome this action. It is important that a large body of Scots, English and Welsh participate — both as individuals and as delegates from organisations. WHAT ABOUT YOU? Participants will be going from all parts of Britain. There is a Heysham-Belfast boat Friday night returning Sunday night (£6.60 return). BEA flies London-Belfast Saturday, returning Sunday evening (after the Commemoration Ceremony) at £13.20 return. It is hoped to organise cheap coaches from Belfast to Derry. Please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested in joining the Vigil.

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CEYLON AND THE HEALY SCHOOL OF FALSIFICATION

By Jaya Vithana IMG Publications, 5p. This pamphlet takes up and answers in detail the slanders and falsifications made by the SLI and others regarding the role of our comrade Bala Tampoe and the LSSP (R), Ceylon section of the Fourth International.

Order now from: IMG Publications, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

Ed Wyatt looks at the reasons for the success in America of MINERS FOR DEMOCRACY

On December 19th, Arnold Miller defeated Tony Boyle for the presidency of the United Mine Workers of America in an election which was ordered by the Courts and policed by the Labour Department of the federal US government. Miller was the candidate of a movement called Miners for Democracy, formed in 1970.

Miller is the successor to Jock Yablonski, who ran against Boyle in the 1969 election and was defeated. Soon afterwards, Yablonski threatened to use the Landrum-Griffin Act (passed in the 50's ostensibly against corruption in the unions) against Boyle, whom he charged with having rigged the election. Boyle was subsequently found to have paid out large sums of money to various individuals in the union during his campaign and to have denied Yablonski access to union facilities. Jock Yablonski, his wife and daughter, were murdered one month later. Investigations have since shown that the assassins were hired by officials of the UMW close to Boyle. Miners for Democracy was successful in getting the courts to declare the 1969 elections null and void, and in obtaining a re-run of the election, this time putting up Miller as candidate. Miller won by 14,000 votes.

DISCREDITED

The deposing of Boyle is altogether a good thing. For many of the younger and more militant miners, Boyle had become widely discredited. In the first strike officially sanctioned by the UMW since 1950, many miners had gone without strike pay, despite the \$70 million in the union's strike fund (*The Red Mole*, 29 November 1971). Boyle's gangsterism at union conventions was becoming widely known. Local officials were appointed rather than elected. If indeed Boyle did have Yablonski killed then he made a serious miscalculation of this changing mood.

But most important of all — and this was an issue Yablonski took up in 1969 — has been the question of safety and health in the mines. One of the most dramatic examples of this was the Farmington mine disaster in 1968, in which Boyle had said that the mine, owned by Consolidated Coal, was "one of the best companies to work with as far as co-operation and safety are concerned". Since 1966, 12,000 miners have been killed and 60,000 injured in cave-ins and gas explosions in US coal. At about the same time, Miller, then leader of a Local, was helping to organise the

Virginia Black Lung Association which began to campaign for a state health and safety bill, and for increases in the compensation paid to disabled miners.

The basic cause of Boyle's cynicism lay in the fact that the union had built up investments in coal companies over a period of years. The National Bank of Washington, for example, controlled by the UMW, was bailing out coal owners and helping them to modernise, while miners were living on pensions of \$150 a month, and those forced to retire through pneumoconiosis were paid compensation from a fund contributed to by employers on the basis of output. This indifference of the union to health and safety in the mines stems back to the Fifties when the UMW not only gave the coal owners a free hand to modernise and rationalise the pits, resulting in the loss of over 300,000 jobs during the coal slump, but also gave them loans to do this. Boyle came to power during this period.

SUSPICION

Nonetheless, Miller's election was not overwhelming, despite all the exposures of Boyle which have taken place since 1968, and the 1970 killings in particular. There is a good deal of suspicion of Miners for Democracy among the miners. This is understandable, because MFD has carried out an essentially legalistic campaign. MFD has nailed Boyle by using the Labour courts, and particularly the Landrum-Griffin Act, and it has been associated with lawyers and others, such as Ralph Nader the consumer-advocate.

Of course Boyle's men have tried to discredit Miller's integrity by pointing this out, and this does play on a genuine fear. Nixon is hoping to extend legislation against the unions in the coming year and it is feared that the intervention of the Labour courts has created legal precedents which might make Nixon's job easier. Cases of corruption and murder and mafia-type practices are always good propaganda. Whether this is true or not, this suspicion is justified. It indicates the political limitations of MFD. They have not carried out any political explanation which could offset the dangers inherent in inviting the state machine into the affairs of the union — union democracy can only be built if the unions are independent from the state.

In fact, the leadership of MFD have been riding on a wave created by a series of state interventions in the UMW. Boyle suffered a defeat

in 1969 at the hands of the government, when it introduced (partly, at least, for its own reasons) the Coal Mine Health & Safety Act, following the Farmington disaster. This incorporated some of the proposals of the Black Lung Association which had been campaigning for such a bill. Yablonski was a former pro-Boyle bureaucrat who had been persuaded by Nader to campaign against Boyle, but Yablonski had not built up a mass base in the reform movement and his decision to use the Landrum-Griffin Act shows his political limitations. Miller was not in the bureaucracy like Yablonski, and has been able to gain mass support by making the health and safety issue a central feature of his campaign, but he too has relied heavily in an apolitical sense on the labour courts.

NOT UNSYMPATHETIC

This makes the liberal ruling class not unsympathetic to Miller's candidacy. Firstly, the growth in wildcat strikes in the coal fields has clearly frightened the bourgeoisie, who recognised that Boyle was rapidly losing control over the men at local level. The ruling class remember that in the Thirties the UMW was in the leadership of the working class movement and played a major role in building the CIO, and they have also noticed in the British miners' strike the solidarity mining communities can display. Boyle is therefore a potentially dangerous anachronism they can afford to dispense with.

Another, broader question which forms a backcloth to all these developments, is the trends of development within the coal industry itself. One motive for the 1969 Act was to speed up the process of concentration of capital in the coal fields by making it difficult for smaller firms to meet the conditions of the Act. The Act even gave the UMW the right to close pits they considered unsafe. Hundreds of small concerns have closed down over the last couple of years. Of course the coal owners will blame anything and everything on to the safety measures, but it is critical for US capital nonetheless to speed up rationalisation in the mining areas because the demand for coal in the US is rising sharply (the nuclear fuel policy has failed and imports of oil are causing balance of payments difficulties). If rationalisation does not take place rapidly then demand will exceed efficient supply and thus force up prices. Naturally the ruling class want the burden to fall on the miners either way: miners working in disastrously unsafe conditions (with Boyle bailing out the companies) on the one hand, or miners having better safety conditions with fewer jobs on the other. But the ruling class would prefer the latter.

Whether Miller can fulfil his programme — more safety, better pensions, election of officials, etc. — depends on whether he is able to mobilise the rank and file to fight the remaining 20 Boyleites on the UMW Executive, the National Bank of Washington, and all the pressures flowing from the threads of this kind which link UMW to the bourgeoisie. Here again, democracy in the union is bound up with the financial independence of the unions from the ruling class. Despite the apparent liberalism of the state's intervention, it is always on the side of the employers. Whether Miller's use of the state was a necessary evil or whether it will become a habit through which he reflects the real interests of the state, can only be tested in practice by taking rank and file initiatives.

A LAST COLONIAL STRONGHOLD

By OLIVER MacDONALD

The joint communique issued at the end of Sir A. Douglas Home's talks in China declared that the discussions had been "free and unrestrained". What this means is anybody's guess: does it refer to the dotting Foreign Secretary's inability to control himself? However one question was undoubtedly discussed: Britain's Chinese colony, Hong Kong.

The island is a capitalist's paradise, as an excellent new pamphlet by the Association for Radical East Asian Studies shows. A combination of Chinese capitalists who fled China in 1949 and American, Japanese and British firms are all making huge profits from exploiting Hong Kong's 98 per cent Chinese population. Between 1960 and 1967 the rate of return on capital rose from 20 per cent to 35 per cent, while the share of Hong Kong's working class in the proceeds from manufacturing industry fell. There is no reason to believe the situation has improved since then. It is this exploitation which enables Hong Kong with a population of 4 million to export more than India with a population 140 times greater. In world trade Hong Kong ranks 18 or 19.

ESSENTIAL PROP

Hong Kong is an essential prop to the tottering pound. It is estimated that around £800 million from Hong Kong, providing about half the backing for the pound, is deposited in London. About half this sum is accumulated budget surpluses of the Hong Kong government. As the standard rate of tax on wages and profits is 15 per cent, most of this money comes from the already underpaid Hong Kong workers, not from the huge profits made in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong economy operates in the classic colonial manner: low wages, long hours, round the clock working, laws against trade unions and political parties, derisory social services. Hong Kong workers have the longest hours in South-East Asia. Twelve hours a day (including travelling), 7 days a week is the rule for the majority of men. The average daily wage for this

toil is HK \$10 (70p). To survive every member of a family must work. One out of every four factories employs (illegally) children under 14. Eight year old children earn 10 cents (1p) an hour by threading necklaces with plastic beads at home.

Social services are pathetic. Only 1 per cent of government expenditure is devoted to it. In the 1972-73 budget expenditure on social services was actually cut by 8 per cent. The Hong Kong government knows where its priorities lie: it spends five times as much on the police force, where corruption is rampant at all levels, as it does on the social services.

Housing is no better. In government built resettlement estates, where over one million people live, five to a room 12 feet by 12 feet is normal. Despite the lack of electricity and water, many of the 400,000 people living in huts or shacks prefer their hovels to government housing.

CHINESE

Seized from China at gunpoint by British imperialism in 1842, there is no question that Hong Kong is Chinese. Yet after a recent 4 day visit to Hong Kong, Anthony Royle, an Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office stated that, "There is no question of Hong Kong being taken over".

With half the population under 21, food prices and rent rising, capitalists now working on a 3-4 year return of their capital and Hong Kong goods more and more excluded from markets or subject to quotas (especially the important textile industry), the future for the Hong Kong working class is one of increased exploitation. 1967 showed that there is a tremendous potential for anti-colonial struggle. The British bourgeoisie is sitting on a time-bomb by continuing to hold onto Hong Kong. But the flood of super-profits makes the capitalist class incapable of understanding what lies in store for them.

The pamphlet *Hong Kong: Last Colonial Stronghold* can be obtained from: Association for Radical East Asian Studies, 6 Endsleigh St., London W. C. 1., Price 20p + 5p postage.



Arnold Miller, new president of the UMW

Revolutionary Marxist Group rejects press slanders

The following statement was issued by the Revolutionary Marxist Group (Irish sympathisers of the Fourth International) in reply to the smear campaign recently mounted by various bourgeois papers in Britain and Ireland.

We regard with alarm the recent smear campaign, directed against the Fourth International, which is being waged by certain sections of the bourgeois press, both in Ireland and abroad.

While we are in favour of the freedom of the press, we feel that this does not mean freedom to distort facts, which is an abuse of journalistic licence.

These libels have centred on the alleged involvement of the Fourth International in the military campaign against Imperialism in the Six Counties. In accusing the Fourth International of masterminding a projected conspiracy to manipulate the Republican movement, certain newspapers (e.g. *News of the World*, Dec. 10 1972) have labelled our comrades Ernest Mandel, Peter Graham, and Mairin Keegan, and portrayed them as "international terrorists" rather than Marxist revolutionaries. As for Liam Dalton, we cannot answer for his politics as he was never a member of our group but we must defend him as one sympathetic to the cause of Proletarian Revolution.

While we support the Anti-Imperialist struggle for national unification, which we regard as a necessary part of the fight for Socialism, as marxist revolutionaries we recognise the primacy of the latter objective. This can be achieved only through the involvement of the mass of the working class under the leadership of a Revolutionary Party.

In conclusion we must say that though we have become accustomed to this type of sensationalism from sections of the British bourgeois press, it is distressing to find these base libels reiterated throughout the Irish Media.

The Political Committee, Revolutionary Marxist Group, Dec. 10 1972.

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Monthly Organ of the British Section, International L.D. Organisation

Number One, Vol. 1, One Penny May 1953

FOR LENIN AND TROTSKY!

On The Anti-Fascist Front. Why The RED FLAG Appears.

A LETTER FROM GERMANY. TO REGENERATE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT.

There is a great need to re-examine the... (text continues)

Checklist: (text continues)

(text continues)

(text continues)

(text continues)

(text continues)

(text continues)

(text continues)

(text continues)

(text continues)

(text continues)

(text continues)

(text continues)

(text continues)



INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP

(British Section of the Fourth International) 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

I would like more information about the IMG.

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DECISIVE CONFERENCE FOR FRENCH TROTSKYISTS

The Ligue Communiste, French section of the Fourth International, held its 3rd Congress from 7 - 10 December. We reprint below a translation of the report of the conference published in *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Ligue.¹

At our first congress we declared our allegiance to the Fourth International. This decision signalled our commitment to the building of a revolutionary organisation; and called a halt to the fragmentation and demoralisation which followed the events of May '68.

At our second congress we broke with amateurish methods; recognising that we now had certain responsibilities and that we must provide ourselves with the means to respond to future developments in the class struggle.

This third congress marked a decisive step forward in the elaboration of a revolutionary strategy. It represents the synthesis and systematisation of three years of militant activity and experience.

We have grown in numbers, in abilities, and thus in responsibilities. From now on it is no longer sufficient to denounce the blind alleys into which reformist methods inevitably lead. It is no longer sufficient to say that the workers will not seize power that way. We now have to be able to point our own way forward - to construct an effective instrument capable of unravelling in a revolutionary sense the contradictions which are strangling capitalist society.

To build a revolutionary party which does not become a part of society as it presently exists; which does not become the opposition on the left of the left; which can provide the lever the masses need to finish once and for all with the power of the bourgeoisie - that was the purpose of the debate on the 22 theses presented to the congress.

These theses defined our tactics in constructing the party in light of the aims which we pursue. They deal with the need to gain an implantation in the new working class vanguard which has developed in the struggle. This is a vanguard which has not rejoined the Communist Party *en masse* after 1968, in contrast to those of 1936 or 1945. It now has to be shown the ways and means of doing battle with the reformist bureaucracies for the confidence of the mass of the workers, particularly in the trade unions. It is a question of building an organisation which can take advantage of bourgeois legality without becoming a hostage to it, remaining conscious of the fact that with regard to the laws of the bourgeoisie



we are like outlaws who have been temporarily relieved.

The adoption of the political resolution concerning the Union of the Left² and the crisis of the bourgeoisie was equally important.

We have explained that, if the electoral campaign expresses the deep desire of the workers for unity around a common programme, we will have no hesitation in calling in the second round³ for a vote for the Union of the Left, while at the same time denouncing the bankruptcy of the perspectives which it claims to offer.

A group which was still small, incapable of exerting any direct influence on the course of events, and concerned above all to educate its own militants and close sympathisers, might have been justified in taking an abstentionist position. We, however, are now in a position to pose the question in a different way. We think that even a limited electoral success for the Union of the Left would be seen by the working class as a favourable shift in the balance of forces between the classes, as an incentive to struggle; we think also that such a success could precipitate a political crisis among the Gaullists.

In these circumstances, we are ready to call in the second round for a vote for the Union of the Left because we feel that we ourselves are in a strong position. Aware of the fact that what is at stake is not a real solution, but a heightening of the present class tensions, we are ready to answer for all the consequences through our determined participation in the struggle. We are ready to play a leading role

in the sense of extending the struggle beyond the legal framework within which the Union of the Left is content to confine it.

We have to intervene with all our forces in the struggles taking place in order to develop and popularise examples of workers' democracy, of strike committees elected and subject to recall by the workers themselves, which constitute the most valuable experience of self-organisation for them on the eve of struggles on an entirely new scale. We have to show concretely, through support committees for example, how solidarity can be strengthened and cemented much more firmly in struggle than in the counting of votes in the ballot boxes.

We also have to support the experiences, even the most rudimentary, of workers' self-defence in opposition to the violent provocations of the police and similar forces; and against the fascist groups and the scab bosses' unions we have to take responsibility ourselves for the permanent organisation of this struggle.

In the sphere of organisation, we must devote our main efforts to education. The statistics collected at the time of the congress show the wide disparities inside our ranks: differences of age, of political backgrounds and experience, of organisational origin.⁴ All these differences must be absorbed if we are to build an organisation which has been hardened out theoretically - the only guarantee of the democratic life of the organisation. This is absolutely necessary if the leading bodies are to be exposed to the test of a real internal debate instead of sinking into a conservative and paternalistic approach towards the organisation itself.

Finally, the number and quality of the international greetings received by the congress only emphasises the extent of our tasks as internationalists. From support of the Indochinese revolution, to support of the liberation struggle in the Portuguese colonies. From the defence of immigrant workers, victims of capitalist super-exploitation and racism, to the development of working class solidarity on a European scale. Our 4th Congress, devoted to the preparatory discussion for the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International, will provide us with the opportunity in the coming months to arm ourselves for these tasks.

NOTES

1. This forms an introduction to an 8-page supplement published with the issue of *Rouge* dated 16 December. The main items in this supplement concern the discussion on the attitude of the Ligue to the 1973 elections, details of the joint campaign organised by the Ligue with *Lutte Ouvriere* for the elections, and the political resolution passed by the congress. Copies of this important issue are available at 15p per copy (postage included) from Red Books, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

2. Union of the Left: electoral alliance between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party (and supported by the Left Radicals). We shall be dealing with the 1973 elections, the Union of the Left, and the attitude and intervention of our own comrades at much greater length in the next few issues of *The Red Mole*. For a preliminary estimation of the significance of the Union of the Left, see *The Red Mole*, 46.

3. After the first round of voting, in which the Ligue Communiste and *Lutte Ouvriere* will be putting forward a total of 309 candidates, all candidates getting less than a certain percentage of the votes are eliminated, and a second round of voting takes place.

4. The *Rouge* supplement contains a full summary of these statistics. Some of the main ones to note: - The Ligue has 5,000 members, of whom 32% are candidate members and 68% full members.

- 35% of these are workers, 65% are teachers, students or school students.

- 4% of the members come from the Parti Communiste International (former section of the F.I. until the fusion with the JCR to form the Ligue); 8% come from the JCR (Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire, which played a leading role in the events of May '68); 12.5% joined in May '68; 11.5% between May '68 and the 1st Congress; 31.5% between the 1st and 2nd Congresses; and 32.5% between the 2nd and 3rd Congresses (i.e. in the last 18 months).

- Between six and seven hundred members were in other organisations on the left or extreme left before joining the Ligue.

- The Ligue has three times as many trade union members in the CGT (trade union federation dominated by the Communist Party) as in the CFDT (federation dominated by the Socialist Party).

- The Ligue intervenes inside 270 factories where it has members or cells. Regular bulletins are also put out for another 180.

THE WOUNDED AND THE MAIMED

By GERY LAWLESS

On Friday September 8th, 1972, 47 year-old James Jones hung himself in the bedroom of his home in Warrenhouse Road, Kirby, Liverpool. Very few papers reported his death; it did not appear to be important.

In fact, it was the first sign of the major problem faced by the British Army as it enters 1973.

Mr. Jones' 18 year-old son Jimmy had just become the one-hundredth officially admitted fatal casualty of the British Army during its latest war of repression in Ireland.

Exactly a week after this death, Angus Macpherson, Defence Correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, was boasting of a record number of recruits joining the British Army that month. The figures for October 1972, the last month for which figures are available, in fact show a drop of practically 25 per cent over those for the previous year.

UNPOPULARITY

There is a direct connection between this fall in recruiting figures and the suicide of Mr. Jones - it is the increasing unpopularity of the Irish war amongst the British working class, which in turn is reflected in the tremendous fall in morale of the British Army. To complete

the circle, the fall in morale of the army is equally affected by the rising death roll of the British Army, and the continually rising casualty rate, which increases the unpopularity of the war.

When Operation *Motorman* was launched in August 1972, British morale was at its all time high. The guerillas they were fighting were ill-equipped, and no matter how brave, could offer rare and mainly token resistance against heavily armoured vehicles and sand-bagged army posts.

All this has changed, and changed utterly: changed by, amongst other things, the RTG-7 rockets.

No longer does the cream of the British Army feel safe in its sand-bagged military posts; no longer are the armoured cars impregnable; no longer can the British parade heavy Armoured Fighting Vehicles through the streets of Belfast in shows of strength.

Instead, frightened, demoralised, and in some cases terrified British soldiers now count the days until they can get out of Ireland, or if they are out of Ireland, dread the day when they will be sent back.

DEEPER CAUSES

In fact, although the arrival of the RTG-7 coincided with a drastic fall in morale, the cause goes deeper.

In an attempt to reduce the fatal casualty rate, the British government has been taking advantage of the proximity of the battlefield to the advanced English hospitals to give a standard of medical treatment to the British Army which has never existed before. The result of this, as a recent British television programme showed, is to keep alive casualties who are little more than human vegetables.

Visits to the wounded and the maimed of the British Army by parents, wives and relatives have little effect on the morale of these wounded, but a devastating effect on the morale of the visitors, which in turn is spread like a virus through the married quarters and hometowns from which they have come. This again is reflected, on the one hand in the increasing numbers of serving soldiers who buy themselves out of the Army, and on the other in the decline in re-enlistment figures. These last have dropped even lower than recruiting figures - by approximately 34 per cent, and this in an army which depends on a re-enlistment ratio of a minimum of 50 per cent to maintain its middle-level cadre. This further affects the morale of those who remain in the Army.

TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Conscious that an admission of this state of affairs would turn the civilian population further against the war, which would then have a feedback effect on morale inside the army, the British government and mass media have attempted to play down the low morale. Nevertheless, what has appeared in print in the British mass media itself, when considered as the tip of an iceberg, casts some light on the actual situation. In early December, less than two months after the boasting article by their Defence Correspondent had appeared, the *Daily Mail* was reporting "exclusively" the attempt by just under 30 paratroopers to buy themselves out of the Army. There was more in this story than meets the eye. The reporting of it was in itself an attempt to paper over an even more serious crisis in another regiment.

In November, an "over-tired" member of the Labour Front Bench was confessing in the bars

of the House of Commons that the British Army had just faced its first mutiny over the present Irish war, when a unit in Germany had refused point-blank to contemplate a return to Ireland. The Labour Front Bencher mentioned no names, but Republican sources claim that the units concerned were the Second Battalion, The Light Infantry, and the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

Shortly afterwards, we had an admission, carried in most English newspapers, that large numbers of soldiers at Colchester in Essex, where the British Army carries out Bull and Drill "Cold Turkey", to dry out soldiers returned from Ireland, had been arrested on drugs charges. Only the *Daily Mirror*, on December 9th, and that in a short one paragraph piece, reported the much more significant story of the week - that British troops in Colchester had opened fire on the Admin block of the Barracks.

DESPERATE

So desperate indeed is the morale situation in the Army, that a bitter battle is raging inside the British Establishment at the moment between those who want to go for bust, and commit the name of the royal family to a campaign to restore credibility to the British Army, and those who oppose this move on the grounds of the damage it would do to the "impartiality" of the monarch.

In November, both the Queen Mother and Princess Anne were taken on tours of Army hospitals. It was expected to culminate in a pre-Christmas visit from Her Nibs herself, but this was vetoed by Heath. As compensation, the military wing of the Establishment had to make do with a visit to one military hospital by Edward Heath, an invitation to lunch with the Queen by Gene Kitson on Wednesday 13th December, and a series of articles in the newspapers suggesting that, if the IRA rocket launchers were modern, the rockets being fired were duds.

That this modern version of the ludicrous Black Propaganda story about the German Army's "cardboard tanks" was resorted to in a desperate attempt to boost the sagging morale of the British Army, is itself the clearest indication of how seriously the British Army High Command views the situation.



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