

POLICE SWOOP ON MILITANTS

Two hundred and fifty supporters demonstrated outside the court when six victims of the recent police raids appeared in court again in Coventry on Wednesday.

The prisoners, among them Father Patrick Fell, a priest well known for his work in Irish relief organisations, were again remanded in custody. Police opposed bail, citing the arrest of 'two further men in the north on the same charge' (conspiracy 'to cause by an explosive substance, an explosion in the United Kingdom').

Police mounted a massive security operation for the court appearance, manning the entrances in force and surrounding the area with marksmen. It took only twenty minutes for the prisoners to arrive at the court from Winston Green Jail in Birmingham, as police had cordoned off the whole route.

INTIMIDATION

Since the first raids on 13 April, when armed police swooped at dawn on the homes of people suspected of being sympathisers of the Irish Republican movement, intimidation has been systematically stepped up. Over 50 homes in the Coventry area have now been raided. Friends of the accused have been picked up after visiting them in prison, and in some cases this has meant a twice-weekly interrogation by the police.

Among the homes visited by the police in the first raids was 27 Paynes Lane, the Coventry headquarters of the International Marxist Group. Items taken away included IMG documents and photographs. These latter showed one of the police involved in the raid as the only Englishman present when

members of the RUC and Scottish troops attacked a party of Warwick students at a Civil Rights rally in the north of Ireland in March 1972. The Special Branch man who removed the prints remarked: "Not bad. But they are not as good as the ones we've got of you lot."

TWO AIMS

This repression has two definite and related aims. First, to intimidate Irish people resident in Britain

Father Patrick Fell



from giving any support to the struggle of the oppressed minority at home. Second, to intimidate those British revolutionaries who are prepared to fight in the British labour movement for solidarity with the Irish struggle.

These aims can only be defeated if the broadest possible unity against the repression is forged within the labour movement, particularly among the organised groups of the revolutionary left. The joint meeting in London held by the IMG, the SLL and the IS was a big step forward in this respect. In Coventry a defence committee has been set up to campaign in support of the six accused. At the moment it is trying to arrange regular visits for the prisoners, as well as sending them cigarettes, books, food, etc. It also hopes to raise the fare from Ireland for the mother of the youngest accused, who is 17 years old.

A picket will be held outside the court in Birmingham when the case finally proceeds to trial. Details of this and of the work of the defence committee can be obtained from: Defence Committee, 27 Paynes Lane, Coventry (0203 58991).



Only three days after the wave of police raids, on Monday 16 April, 800 people packed London's Conway Hall to hear Gerry Healy of the SLL (second right), Duncan Hallas of IS (left) and Tariq Ali of the IMG (right) stress the need for united action to defend militants facing attacks from the police. The chair was taken by Gery Lawless (second left).

Among the speakers from the floor was Jim Kemp (foreground), a member of the London Joint Sites Executive Committee, who called for full support for the Shrewsbury building workers. This is being taken up by all the three organisations concerned. Appeals were also made for the Belfast Ten and Stoke Newington Five.

The size of the meeting and the enthusiastic response of the audience to appeals for united action in defence of victimised militants shows what can be done to fight back against repression. What is important is that the entire movement be mobilised every time that the State strikes at any of its sections.

FREE MAY DAY SUPPLEMENT INSIDE

MAY DAY TUC AVOIDS ACTION

Victor Feather has announced that he for one will not be making any appearance on labour movement platforms on May Day. Little wonder, considering the way in which the General Council has made a mockery of its Day of Action. The May Day strike was called by the recall conference of the TUC as a protest against the Pay Laws. Yet on 25 April, Mr. Feather declared that the day of action is a 'specific expression of acquiescence in Phase 2 of the the pay policy'. He then went on to show how little the General Council had bothered to do to prepare for a national stoppage: they had simply issued an invitation, printed some thousands of leaflets, and produced some speakers notes.

We can expect some denunciations of the Tory Government in Mr. Feather's 'speakers notes'. But what they will not contain is the

real policy of the General Council for the coming months: the preparations *already underway* for talks with the Government on the very question that provoked the May Day strikes: the pay laws!

In other words, the purpose of the Day of 'Action' for Feather and co. is to *conceal* their determination to *avoid* a struggle to smash the pay laws, behind some colourful demonstrations and windy speeches.

BREATHING SPACE

The failure of the first battles to break the pay laws has given the Government a breathing space: nothing more. The union leaderships' refusal to organise a united offensive against phase 2 means that the next big national confrontation will probably be postponed until the third phase of the laws comes in later this year.

The current wave of local and sectional strikes in steel, the car industry and engineering show very well that the militancy of the working class is anything but broken. The enormous scope of support and solidarity action for the hospital workers from the rank and file of the working class movement has demonstrated that months of stenderous press campaigns did not in any significant way weaken the unity of the working class movement.

The two key cards which the Government possesses are the trade union bureaucracy's refusal to lead the fight, and the use of repressive violence against militants under cover of the authority of Parliament and the legal system. The ruling class hopes to use the breathing space before the next round of confrontations to offer trifling concessions to the trade union bureaucracy in return for active or passive

acceptance of phase 3. At the same time it will attempt to intimidate workers by making repressive moves against the militants: the attack on the Shrewsbury building workers is a forerunner of government plans.

Thus on May Day militants must fight against any resumption of talks with the Tory Government: they must demand that nothing be accepted from the Government short of the complete scrapping of the Industrial Relations Act and the Pay Laws: they must demand that the unions treat any repressive attack on any group of workers as an attack on the whole class and they must demand that the unions organise the defence of the picket lines against police attacks. With these policies the working class movement can return to the offensive and halt the attempt of the General Council to throw the movement in to headlong retreat.

DEFEND BUILDING WORKERS AGAINST FRAMED CHARGES

Twenty four building workers, members of UCATT and the TGWU, are in danger of being jailed under the 1875 Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act. The men face a total of 210 charges, all arising from their picketing activities in Shrewsbury during the building strike last year.

Haunted by the spectre of the Pentonville Five, the Government knows that it dare not use the Industrial Relations Act against these workers. Hence the use of the 'conspiracy' charges. There is no doubt that vast sums of money are being spent by the state to make these charges stick. And that is not too difficult. The 1875 law means the defendants can be jailed without providing any proof that they actually committed any of the so-called offences. All they have to do is prove that they 'conspired to do so'. As far as the working class movement is concerned whether they did commit the offences or not is irrelevant.

These workers must be defended because what they did during the building strike was done on behalf of all workers. They were right to take any action they thought necessary against scabs and to take all steps which would make it possible to win the strike. When workers are engaged in decisive struggles with the employers they will inevitably come into collision with the law; after all, that law is there to protect



Trade unionists rally near court during first hearing

the interests of private property. What's more, if there is no suitable law in current use, the state will either dig one up from the archives, or promulgate a new one.

FRAME-UP

Shrewsbury is a frame-up. The men are charged under an act specifically designed to

railroad militants to jail. Unlike the state which is pursuing the case with some enthusiasm, the leaders of the TGWU and UCATT remain silent. They have not organised one mass picket, called any strikes, or raised any funds. In fact they have not taken one serious step to defend these men.

Fortunately at rank-and-file level there has been a response. The London Joint Sites Committee are organising buses for a mass lobby of the court on 25 May, which is the new date set for the case. Meetings have been held in Sheffield and Coventry and are planned for other areas such as Leeds, London, Oxford, etc. The Sheffield meeting called on the AUEW district committee to 'raise support', and stated '... in the event of the jailing of any of the building workers there should be an all-out stoppage.'

The defence of the Shrewsbury workers involves two things. First, a fight against a sinister piece of legislation which loads the law even more in favour of the employers and their state. Second, the need to defend all actions taken by militants in the war against the ruling class. If these men are sent down then it can make other workers less confident and more inhibited in that struggle. The release of these men will encourage other militants to take up the fight even more vigorously.

James King

STOKE NEWINGTON FIVE DEMONSTRATION

Five militants - Hilary Creek, Anna Mendleson, Jim Greenfield, John Barker and Jake Prescott - are serving combined jail sentences of over 50 years. The prisoners sentenced at the Stoke Newington trial were found guilty of conspiracy to commit the so-called Angry Brigade bombings. As they were charged under the sinister 'conspiracy laws' it was not necessary for the state to find them guilty of actually committing the bombings.

Unfortunately, their jailing hardly caused a ripple in the tranquil waters of the British left. Encouraged by this lack of protest and action, the ruling class has since turned its attention to the Shrewsbury building workers using the 'conspiracy laws' against these trade union

militants. Such action is not surprising. Whenever the ruling class is under attack it uses frame-up methods like the conspiracy laws to jail its opponents. The Tolpuddle Martyrs were framed on similar charges: the Scottish revolutionary John McLean was sent to jail through these laws, as were the 12 leaders of the Communist Party in 1925.

Despite its lack of early progress a movement is beginning to grow around the pending appeals of these comrades. On Saturday 12 May a demonstration will leave Speakers Corner, Hyde Park at 3 pm. That same evening there will be a rally at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn to be addressed by Robin Blackburn, Paul Foot and a speaker from the Communist Party.

THE MINERS' ASSOCIATION

Raymond Challinor and Brian Ripley

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Hope for Italian Militant

A new campaign has been launched to free Goliardo Fiaschi, an Italian anarchist militant who has been in jail for 15 years.

Fiaschi has a long history of anti-fascist struggle, starting in an anarchist partisan group at the age of 13 against Mussolini. In 1957 he crossed the Pyrenees to join the underground resistance in Spain, but was 'fingered' by the French police and trapped by Spanish forces in an armed ambush. He was given a 20-year prison sentence by a Barcelona military tribunal.

After systematic torture he 'confessed' to being involved in a bank raid in Italy in 1956. In 1959 the Italian High Court sentenced him in his absence to another long term for his alleged role in the robbery. After eight years in the notorious Burgos prison, Fiaschi was taken to Italy to start his other sentence.

Readers are asked to send resolutions from their trade union branches to the Italian Embassy, 14 Three Kings Yard, London W.1., demanding his release. Individuals and groups of workers are asked to send messages of solidarity to this class war victim. Food, tobacco, parcels and money for his defence should go to: Goliardo Fiaschi, Villa Bobo, No. 1, 73100, Lecce, Italy.

'FREE IRELAND': First issue of new Anti-Internment League paper just out, price 5p. Copies from A.I.L., 88 Roslyn Road, London N.15.



Support the Belfast 10

Police sealed off the area and stopped and searched all passing cars when the 'Belfast 10' re-appeared in Lambeth magistrates' court last Tuesday, charged with causing explosions in London on 8 March.

Bernadette Devlin, Vanessa Redgrave and Edna O'Brien have so far offered to go bail for the Ten, but this has been refused. Meanwhile a Defence Committee has been set up and has already organised a picket of over 50 people outside Brixton prison, where the Ten are being detained.

A further picket outside the Home Office in Whitehall is planned for 2.00 p.m. this coming Sunday (29 April). For more details of the Defence Committee's activities contact: Maureen Maguire, 88 Roslyn Road, London N.15.

CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILY

LEEDS POLYTECHNIC UNION

SATURDAY 12th May

HISTORY OF THE FAMILY

Shelie Rowbotham and Linda Smith

THE FAMILY UNDER CAPITALISM

Margaret Coulson, Lee Sanders-Corner

SUNDAY 13th May

THE FAMILY IN POST-CAPITALIST SOCIETY

Maria Lottus

Each session will be followed by workshop discussions

and plenary sessions. Final plenary session with panel of speakers and closing discussion.

Papers will be duplicated for distribution at the conference if submitted on A4 stencils by May 1st, to the address below.

There will be facilities for children (a creche) as long as we are given numbers. The conference is organised by Leeds Poly. Women's Lib. but is aimed at all those female and male who see the importance of this subject to our political understanding.

Coaches will be organised from these areas:

London: Felicity Trodd 01-340 7031

Coventry: Ann Smith 0203-58891

Manchester: Vicky Anderson 061-226 3328

Details from: Vel Jones, 69 Bagby Rd., Leeds 2

Phone: 0532-27777

ARMY STEPS UP TERROR CAMPAIGN

A.I.L. calls conference on

Troops and Labour Movement

No fewer than three men have been shot dead, in what even the *Irish Times* describes as 'hotly disputed circumstances', since the 3rd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment moved into the Ardoyne area of Belfast on 9 March.

There is a 'theory', the paper continues, 'that troops who spot a man whom they believe to be involved, but not at that moment engaged, in subversion, no longer arrest him but shoot him'. Similar allegations are also widespread in Newry, near the border, where the 2nd Battalion of the Paras is based. It is clear that the British Army campaign of terror in the Six Counties has been considerably stepped up since the publication of the White Paper.

KITSONISM

In this Whitelaw is applying the theories of Brigadier Frank Kitson. The concessions to the middle class politicians must of necessity be accompanied by military repression aimed at destroying the base of the IRA's support among the people of the catholic ghettos. But there is more to Kitsonism than that.

The streets of Belfast and Derry today are a laboratory for the kind of repressive techniques which will be used tomorrow against 'disruptive elements' in Britain, i.e. all those who defy the Tory Government, and fight its attempts to enforce anti-trade union legislation and State control of wages.

CONFERENCE

These two themes will run through the conference on 'The British Labour Movement and the British Army in Ireland' called by the Anti-Internment League for 19 May, in the Conway Hall Red Lion Square in Holborn, London.

The main emphasis of the conference will be on



the responsibility of the labour movement in Britain to act now against the terror in the north of Ireland. But it will also be pointed out that failure to do so will mean a costly and difficult fight for workers in Britain in the future. Four main points will be hammered home:

1. The British Army is a repressive and not a peace-keeping force.
2. British imperialism cannot solve any of the problems which face the Irish people, in fact it is the source of these problems.
3. The only solutions are ones which are based on self-determination for Ireland, i.e. withdrawal of troops, release of internees and political prisoners, no right of a minority of the population of Ireland to veto national re-unification, etc., etc.
4. The repressive techniques now being developed in Ireland will be used in Britain. This is part of a European phenomenon; armies are being reoriented towards domestic repression. The arrest of the Shrewsbury building workers, and the police raids on various areas of Britain recently, are the first straws in the wind, to be ignored only at great cost.

The AIL has invited speakers from various organisations in Ireland. The British Society for Social Responsibility in Science has agreed to provide speakers for a workshop on the technology of repression. There will also be a film show, and sketches based on Connolly's writings presented by a theatre group.

The drive is on now to get sponsorship for the conference from trade union, student and political organisations, and already the first applications for delegates credentials are coming in. Enquiries to: Maureen Maguire, 88 Roslyn Road, London N. 15.

INTERVIEW WITH DESERTER

We publish below an interview with a British soldier who deserted rather than be part of British imperialism's war of occupation against the Irish people. For security reasons, his name has had to remain anonymous.

At what stage did you first become disillusioned with army life?

Well, it started off last summer when we began what was known as internal security exercises which were designed especially for service in Ireland. I just didn't think it was right the way that these were being carried out.

What sort of things were being done that revolted you?

The things that we were taught to do and say whilst 'interrogating' prisoners - like telling them that their father was a bastard and their mother was a prostitute, and some of the less subtle things like standing them up against a wall upon toes and finger-tips with a sack over their heads, while throwing buckets of water over them, punching them in the ribs and going over them with a scrubbing brush. This was in addition to all the muggings and beating up and general intimidation of the population.

How do you view the objective role of the army in the north of Ireland?

I just don't think that what the army is doing is right. It's not going to help anybody at all. I certainly support the right of the Irish people to sort out their own affairs without any interference from anybody, and to resist any such interference by any means necessary. At present this means supporting the I.R.A.

Can you see any clear signs of general demoralisation within the army?

Yes, certainly. This is illustrated in the amount of mindless discipline being inflicted upon troops during the past year or so, even during training. Stupid, pointless things like being put on a charge and fined if so much as a speck of dust is found near your bed during inspection, getting prison sentences for all sorts of silly things, not being able to speak or think for yourself. You were a number more than a person. It's a form of brainwashing.

Two men from my unit deserted at the same time as me. They were fed up with this sort of treatment. Also there have been several cases of attempted suicide in my unit.

Do you foresee the possibility of the army being used against workers in struggle in this country?

Yes I do. I'm sure that if a revolutionary situation were to come about, they would try to use troops against British workers.

Have you come into contact with anybody who is thinking about deserting from the army sooner than serve in Ireland?



"I only joined for the going, archery, canoeing and soccer."

Quite a few people have said they would. I think at the moment most of them are scared of being caught or scared of what would happen to them if they go back. I hope in the near future quite a lot of them will take their fate into their own hands and follow my example.

CONFERENCE

THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT AND THE BRITISH ARMY IN IRELAND

Conway Hall Red Lion Square, (Holborn). Saturday, 19th May 1973.

Details from Anti-Internment League, 88, Roslyn Road, London N.15.

TROOPS IN COURT

Four British soldiers received four-month suspended sentences in the north of Ireland recently for an attack on a power station worker whose injuries had required five days' hospital treatment, the Prisoners Aid Committee reports in its April bulletin.

The committee also reports that seven British soldiers found guilty of stealing goods worth several hundred pounds were given three-month suspended jail sentences by Belfast magistrates on 23 March.

The bulletin adds that three paratroopers were fined at the same court for a series of burglaries, and quotes an army private as saying in court: 'Everyone knows that our blokes have been doing jobs'. Asked if this meant that members of his regiment were stealing he said: 'Yes, everyone knows what has been going on'.

3rd Conference of Radical Scholars of Soviet and East European Studies

4-6 May, Birmingham University Union, on

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

- May 4 (7.30): *Marx and the dictatorship of the proletariat*—S. Zienau.
 May 5 (10): *Dictatorship of the proletariat in the transitional period (1917-21)*—C. Goodie, A. Holt.
 (2): *Bureaucracy and the Party in the twenties*—P. Ivanov.
 (7): *Free discussion and social*.
 May 6 (10): *How to fight empiricism in Soviet studies*—H. H. Tieklin.
 (2): **WORKSHOPS**

For information, accommodation and creche: CRSEES, c/o Lucas House, Pritchatts Rd., Edgbaston, Birmingham.

Liverpool Occupation Continues

The occupation of the Tillotson's factory in North Liverpool has now moved into its sixth week. The 400 SOGAT workers, a majority of whom are women, are resisting all attempts to pressurise them into settling for less than their original demands.

On 24 April the national union officers presented to a chapel meeting a document outlining the basis for an agreement with the management, but it was referred back to the officials by an overwhelming majority. Tillotson's have already been forced to concede the reinstatement of the four sacked chapel officers; but although it was this action which sparked off the occupation, the workers are now holding out for their long-term demands on job security.

They insist on further guarantees concerning redundancies, and on the company establishing a clear negotiating procedure, ensuring the rights of the union representatives. Tommy Chute, the sacked Father of the Chapel, is optimistic about the job security demands, but given the company's recent record on negotiations is wary of anything less than cast-iron assurances on negotiating rights.

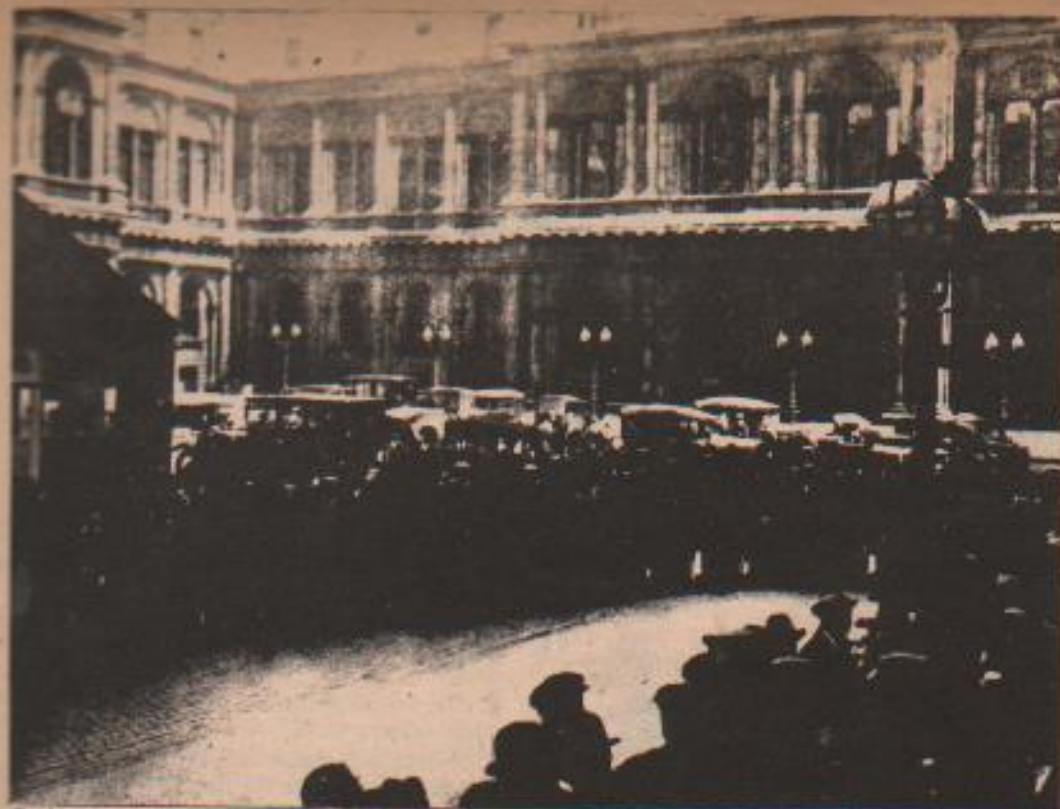
The workers' militant and determined fight has exposed completely the company's bluff about taking them to the National Industrial Relations Court over 'unfair industrial practice' and 'incitement to workers to break their contract of employment'. They obviously realised that such action could only stiffen the workers' resistance and further boost the local support they are receiving.

Money is still coming in from other factories and sites despite an almost total blackout in the local press and radio, but the real test will come if the current negotiations collapse and a long struggle sets in. In that case not only money would be needed but also practical solidarity actions such as extensive blacking of Tillotson's products.

Send donations, messages of support to: SOGAT, 254/256 County Road, Liverpool 4.

THE GENERAL LESSON

by E



Scabs queuing in the forecourt of the Foreign Office on 3 May

May Day is celebrated as a demonstration that the future belongs to the working class. This year, for tens and hundreds of thousands of working men and women, the day of action is not just a protest at the Government's policy, but is an opportunity to show their massive potential power.

Workers know that there has been a retreat before the Government's pay-freeze offensive. They understand that the one-day strike will not force concessions from the Government. But it does raise, once again, the idea of a more decisive strike against the ruling class.

It is appropriate therefore to remember the lessons of the last major battle against capital — the 1926 General Strike. It is written into the way that the crisis of British capitalism is working itself out, that the working class will once again embark on this form of struggle in the not too distant future.

The General Strike of 1926 was the culmination of a long drawn-out battle. Millions of workers

determined than ever to unite for struggle. So, under enormous pressure, the Trades Union Congress did not dare turn its back when the mine-owners once again posted notices of wage reductions in 1925. At a special Congress held on 29 June, there was a vote to put an embargo on the transport of coal. The ruling class, not yet ready for such a showdown, decided to buy nine months time in which to prepare for a fight, by giving the mine-owners a temporary subsidy of £23 million. This was Red Friday.

FORCES MUSTERED

But the Government had retreated only to muster its forces. And muster them it did. Its much heralded Samuel Commission, an alleged impartial body which was to investigate the coal industry, was turned into a forum for attacking the miners. Employers testified that miners' high wages had forced them to lock out engineers and others, hoping to turn the workers against the miners.

Council loaded with titled rabble. The OMS had committees in 22 of the 28 Metropolitan Boroughs. It called for special constables, workers to maintain public services, transport drivers and people to do clerical work. The Government divided the country into ten areas, each headed by a Civil Commissioner with full powers. These extra-constitutional bodies organised from Whitehall commanded 200,000 vehicles, by arrangement made with private enterprise. Five months of coal stocks were set up. The special constable strength was increased from 98,000 to 226,000. Military,

naval and police forces were briefed to occupy and guard the docks. The State was on a war footing.

MINORITY MOVEMENT

The way in which the workers organised for the strike is of great importance. After the defeats of the early twenties, the Communist Party launched the Minority Movement. This was a rank-and-file movement based on the trade unions, trades councils and various local Labour Party branches. By 1926 it was able to hold a conference of 547 delegates representing

Police firing on unarmed workers, the bombing of a police column, followed by a frame-up trial, started the first May Day demonstrations.

Chicago in 1884 was a city of intense class struggle. That year agitation swept throughout the United States for the eight-hour day. By 1886 Chicago was the strong point of this campaign. Its principal labour organisations were affiliated to the Eight Hours Association. The movement was led by anarchists, who were at first scornful of the demand, but later became its most effective and popular advocates. The Chicago beer-wagon drivers, toymakers, and carpenters were its most enthusiastic supporters.

HAYMARKET MARTYRS

May 1st, 1886, was set as the day on which the demand should be put into effect. The employers were implacable in their opposition. Armed workers drilled in secret halls. Bomb-plot scares circulated through the city.

On the first two days when thousands were either on strike or locked out the threatened violence did not take place. The next day Chicago police fired on strikers battling with scabs outside one plant. A number of workers died, many were injured. Later at a mass meeting in Chicago's Haymarket, a bomb was hurled at an advancing police column.

After a fusillade of indiscriminate police fire, the leaders of the demonstration were arrested. A witch-hunt trial followed and four of the leaders — George Engel, Adolph Fischer, August Spies and Parsons were sentenced to death for 'inciting' the bombings. The Haymarket Martyrs were hanged on 11 November, 1887.

INTERNATIONAL MAY DAY

The frame-up and brutal hangings evoked a tremendous reaction throughout the American and European labour movements. The methods and demands of the Chicago movement — the general strike to enforce the eight-hour day — although not new, were taken up again by many workers' parties and trade unions in Europe. It also inspired the first action of the soon-to-be-founded Second International.

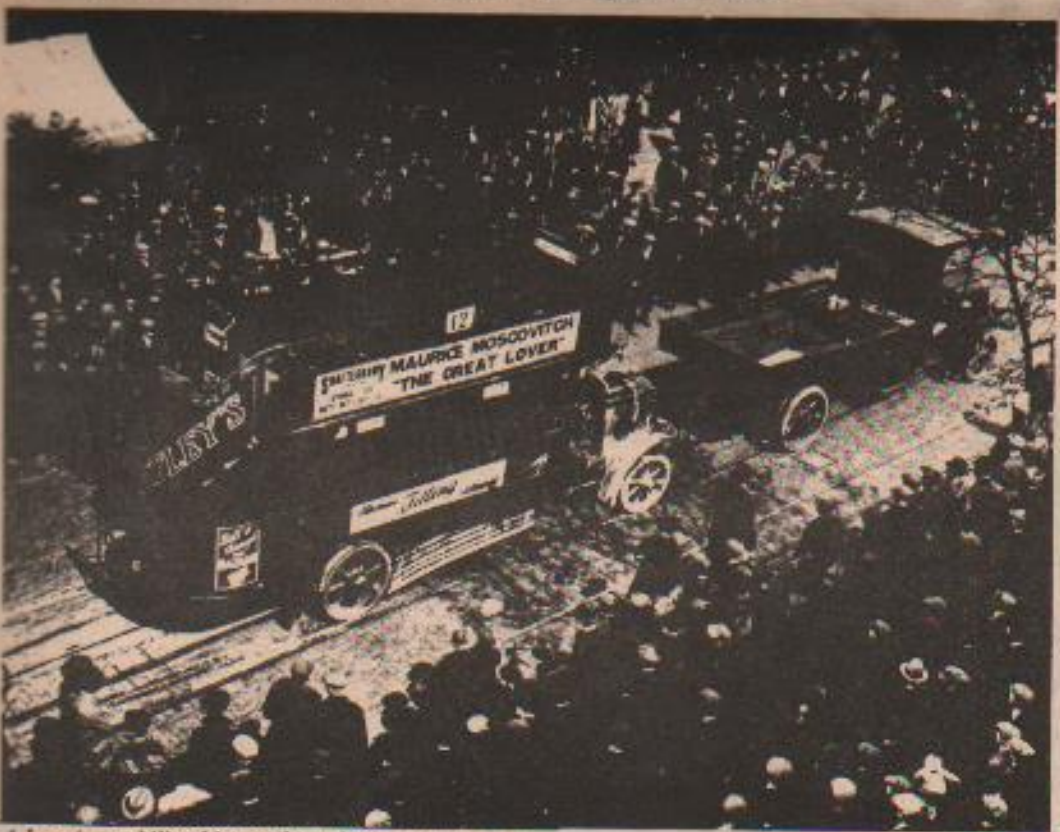
When the first congress of the International met in Paris in 1889 it carried a resolution calling for 1 May to be a day of international labour demonstrations for the eight-hour day. Thus May Day has its origins in the violent struggles between the capitalist state and the working class.

SUNDAY SOCIALISM

From its heroic beginnings, May Day sank for nearly eighty years into nothing more than a Sunday outing. To the leaders of the Second International, May Day was not to be a demonstration of the strength of the working class as its inspirers had intended. The labour leaders who ascended the May Day platforms explained the desirability, but impossibility, of

The First

John Burns speaking in Hyde Park



A bus, immobilized by strikers, being towed away

had suffered in the Great War for capitalist territorial gains, returning with hopes of a so-called better land. Disillusioned with the capitalist slaughter, they now faced disillusionment at home. In 1921 the miners and cotton workers were locked-out and their wages cut. This was repeated in 1922 in shipbuilding and engineering. And in 1925 the miners were threatened with another wage cut.

The workers saw that united action was needed to beat these attacks. The offensive arose not because of the nastiness of individual employers, but as part of an overall fight against the workers' organisations. This was due to the world depression, increased foreign competition, and the inspiration towards revolution inspired by October 1917.

The collapse of the Triple Alliance of 1921 and the utter failure of the first Labour Government of 1924 had made the workers more

Meanwhile the Government encouraged the TUC to believe that the Samuel Commission would report favourably for the miners. The TUC were only too willing to accept this.

Thomas, the railwaymen's leader, attacking those who warned that a confrontation was being planned by the Government, specialised in making disarming speeches: 'instead of organising, mobilising and encouraging the feeling that war was inevitable, let them concentrate on finding a solution honourable and satisfactory to all sides.'

But behind its approving glance at Thomas and the other leaders, the Government built up its strike-breaking forces. These were the real weapons on which it relied. A semi-official body known as the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies was set up with a



GENERAL STRIKE OF 1926

Wyatt

957,000 workers. It had over 200 miners' groups, 153 in engineering, 126 in the railways and five small unions affiliated en bloc. The main slogans for the strike were 'Councils of Action' and for a 'Workers Defence Corps'. In those days the CP understood the need to organise the working class against the capitalist state and the government. Today there is an urgent need for such a body. But the one potential force that does exist, the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, even though it is led by the CP, has remained a pressure group more interested in alliances with

the 'left' leaders than organising the rank and file. The Minority Movement did, however, make certain important and vital mistakes. It called for all power to the TUC, thereby ensuring that the control and direction of the strike remained to the end in the hands of the very people who did not want to fight. The betrayal of the TUC should have been predicted and preparations made to take the movement into a real struggle to challenge the capitalist State. The CP leaders' policies of uncritical support

May Day

first May Day demonstration in 1890.



the international classless society, and then returned to their main job of collaboration with the ruling class. Although the Austrian and French socialists responded to the Paris resolution and called for a general strike on May Day, the German socialist party ordered meetings and demonstrations to take place outside working hours.

The Paris resolution had — like the 1973 TUC resolution — been left deliberately vague. The different national leaderships interpreted it to suit themselves. If May Day was to be used to mount an international general strike as a political weapon to enforce the eight-hour day, where would it stop? The realisation of a truly internationalist May Day conflicted with their whole outlook on Parliament and reformism.

Despite attempts by the English reformist leaders through their control of the London Trades Council to sabotage efforts to make May Day a mass mobilisation for the eight-hour day, there was a magnificent response from the London workers. This was initiated by the newly formed 100,000 strong Gas Workers and General Labourers Union, dockers, various East London trade unions, socialist societies and radical clubs. Over 200,000 people thronged into Hyde Park which was a sea of union banners and slogans calling for the eight-hour day.

Frederick Engels, who attended the Hyde Park demonstration, wrote: 'Entire layers of the working class, with which we would otherwise have made no contact, have been shaken out of their lethargy ... We have drawn new strength from May Day and the demonstrations have been like a plough over virgin land. The idea of May Day has taken root in the hearts of the workers whom we could never have reached with our programme.'

But that great demonstration which inspired Engels did not spark off a mass militant movement in Britain. Like the continental socialist movements, the British labour movement followed the path of reformism and narrow national interests.

MAY DAY 1973

Again the British working class are on strike this May Day. Again the trade union and Labour Party leaders have failed to give the strike their wholehearted support and have failed to mobilise the massive potential of the working class. The idea of a political strike against the Government conflicts with everything they stand for.

Nevertheless whole sections of workers have taken up the call. May Day was founded as a day of international class solidarity, as a step in the struggle of the working class to organise itself politically on an international basis. The fight for such organisation expresses the fact that its self-emancipation from a world-wide system of exploitation can only be achieved on an international scale.



Petrol wagon escorted by mounted police along St. George's Road, Southwark

for the TUC lefts flowed from the policy of the Russian Communist Party, who thought that the best way to defend the USSR was by relying on the so-called anti-imperialist sentiments of the then leaders of the TUC. Today, the CP has taken these policies to their logical conclusions, but in 1926 it did play a major role in organising and defending the strike, and its militants were the most determined fighters.

COUNCILS OF ACTION

During the strike the most important local organisation was the Council of Action. The Councils embraced industrial, co-operative and unemployed organisations. Labour Party militants, members of the CP, individual trade unionists, unemployed workers, all worked in the Councils of Action. They carried out mass picketing; circulated bulletins; took over local transport; issued permits for essential supplies; arranged food and provisions for strikers; and got credit from the co-operative where possible.

purpose of carrying out the strike. But in a situation such as May 1926 they become something more. Forced to face the open and aggressive power of the capitalist State with its attempts to break the strike, they either extend their own base in the working class and take over functions of government and administration, etc. or they are crushed. If the Minority Movement and the CP had prepared for this eventuality and worked towards extending the power of the Councils of Action, thus creating a national situation of dual power, then there would have been a real possibility of a successful socialist revolution.

WHO DECIDES?

The Councils of Action were direct bodies of workers' democracy. What matters in a General Strike is who decides when it is to be called off and on what terms. Should the TUC, with no direct accountability to the workers, decide? Or should it be a national assembly of delegates from the areas, who are responsible to mass meetings, who should take all the decisions?



The food convoy on May 9 in East India Dock Road

Some met every day. Others were in permanent session, day and night. Special Departments dealing with Finance, Propaganda, Publicity, Relief and Prisoners Aid were started. Others organised Workers Defence Corps and the troops and police took care to avoid these areas.

In Northumberland and Durham these bodies were federated and began to grow into organs of administration and government. In Newcastle, for example, the OMS simply broke down, and the local authorities had to go cap in hand to ask the unions to take over the vital services. The Trades Council agreed, on condition that all police, OMS and troops were withdrawn. The workers, unlike the TUC with its plaintive appeals to the Government's sense of fair play, maintained the peace by asserting their superior power over that of the armed forces of the State.

The Councils of Action had been set up for the

The decision of the TUC, to call off the strike without even one single concession, gives a clear answer to that question. The capitulation of the TUC meant the betrayal of the miners, massive wage cuts for the working class in the next years, and the demoralising unemployment of the thirties. No wonder that 'Birkenhead, Chamberlain and some of the others listening wore triumphant smiles' at the settlement — quoted by Julian Symons in *The General Strike*.

Only by organising their own power can the working class ensure that such a self-out is not repeated. Furthermore only Councils of Action can recall that power if the Government fails to fulfil its agreements. Finally it is only Councils of Action which can form the basis for the working class to go on to the destruction of the capitalist State and establish its own State power.

Jack Woddis's *Time to Change Course* — What Britain's Communists Stand For is the most thorough exposition of the policy and outlook of the Communist Party of Great Britain to have appeared in recent years.

The publication of this 150 page booklet was widely heralded in the Communist Party press, and it was launched with a series of public meetings and party branch discussions across the country. It is obvious that the Communist Party takes this book very seriously and the views that it expounds are representative of Party policy in the present situation.

The importance which the Communist Party gives to this book only makes the disappointment of reading it all the greater. I expected to disagree with the book. But I also expected that it would contain views that were both new and important.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. You would search in vain for even a suggestion of the debates and discussions that have been taking place among Communist Party militants for at least the past two years. There is, in fact, very little in this book that has not already been outlined in the *British Road to Socialism*.

But perhaps the Communist Party got everything right years ago in the *British Road* and only needs to reprint this "truth" with a few more up to date examples and a slightly more popular presentation? This is basically the dish Woddis serves up to us as his answer to the "deep seated crisis" he sees facing the working class movement.

The truth, however, is that the basic political ideas of the Communist Party contain many fundamental errors and weaknesses. What the present crisis does is to expose even more dramatically the nature of these errors and to make more urgent the recognition of these weaknesses by those militants who look to the Communist Party for political leadership.

CRISIS OF THE NATION?

The first chapter of the book — "What's Wrong with Britain?" — is designed to explain the nature of the present crisis. The trouble is that when it gets right down to it Woddis cannot make up his mind whether the problems now facing the mass of the people in this country are due to a crisis of the British nation or to the fundamental nature of the capitalist system on which this country's society is presently based.

The book is organized around the idea that ours is a "National Crisis". Hence the title "Time to Change Course", which tries to put across the idea that the great British Nation is headed in the wrong direction and that the task of all right-thinking Britons is to steer the Nation towards surer waters.

At the same time the book contains lots of passages and statements that put a different view: the difficulties of the mass of the people are an inevitable product of the contradictions of the capitalist system, and the only solution is the overthrow of that system and the construction of a socialist order. The trouble is, these two outlooks are contradictory, and so Woddis's arguments tend to waffle back and forth in confusion from one position to another.

An attempt is made to reconcile these two viewpoints by arguing that the national crisis is due to the domination of the ship of state by the captains of monopoly capitalism, and that only the working-class and a socialist policy can chart a sound course. Thus we get arguments like the following:

The nation is not the big monopolies, the generals, Buckingham Palace, Home and Powell. The nation is the people who have built its industries, created its culture, set up their popular organizations and struggled over the years to establish democratic rights and a better life... These are the national gains which we want to preserve and extend... More than ever it falls to the working class to mobilise all that is best and most progressive in our national life in order to defeat the danger threatening the British people... It is the British ruling class which, despite its jingoist flag waving, is revealed as the traitor to the nation. It is the Communist Party and the working class which, by opposing Britain's entry into the European Common Market and by putting forward a programme that will challenge the big monopolies, stand out as the real champions of the nation. (p.30 — my emphasis)

CAPITALIST CLASS

What is wrong here is that it completely misunderstands what the idea of "nation" means, and what part it plays in the political outlook of capitalist society. The "nation" both as a social and political reality, and as a political idea was created by the capitalist class in the course of its coming to power over the various pre-capitalist social groups (feudal landlords, etc.) that ran society before it.

The purpose of the idea of the nation was to bind together all the groups in that society, under the leadership of the capitalist class, for the revolutionary struggle that laid the foundations of capitalist class rule and capitalist soci-

SOCIALISM THROUGH MASS STRUGGLE OR THE BALLOT BOX?

ety. In those societies — such as Britain — in which the unfettered rule of the capitalist class and all of its positive achievements were completed long ago, the idea of the "nation" today plays a thoroughly reactionary part. Talk about the Nation, the national interest, public opinion, etc. is used to hide the fact that we live in a society in which there is no common interest — a society which is divided at its very root into different social classes (the working class and the capitalist class) with completely contradictory and irreconcilable interests in each and every question of the day.

There is a big danger in sections of the left trying to use the idea of the Nation, national interest, etc. — because this plays right into the hands of all those reactionary forces who will use the very same idea to convince workers that they are wrong to struggle. In this game all the cards are stacked in favour of the reactionaries, because they represent the dominant, established class in the country and only have to convince people to accept things as they are and to stop rocking the boat.

We, on the other hand, have to expose the deceptions of the ruling class and convince people of the necessity and possibility of struggling against a powerful enemy. We can only do this by laying bare the false and deceptive character of ruling class ideas.

BRIAN SLOCOCK

For example, when the gas workers or power workers go on strike it does hurt millions of ordinary working people who have to go without heat or light. Perhaps hundreds of thousands of workers are laid off and suffer loss of pay as a result. It is because of this reality that reactionary politicians can make appeals to the "national interest" and to "public opinion". This "national interest" is simply the interest that all the people in the country share if they accept the present way in which our society is organized. The only alternative to this is the long-term interest, the class interests of the workers and the material interests of many other social groups, that the masses have in the changing of the present organisation of society.

So the task of revolutionaries, in the face of reactionary rhetoric about the Nation, is not to succumb to this deception but to expose it — to make clear the fundamental opposition of interests that exists between the different social classes in our society and to explain that the only solution to the needs of the masses is to fight for the interests of the working-class against the "national interest" of the capitalist class.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

His lack of clarity on these points leads Woddis into other mistakes and confusions. For example, he often seems to suggest that certain policies followed by the government are due simply to evil intentions and not to the fundamental needs of capitalism in Britain:

British big business and its Tory government still try to stand outside the mainstream of world politics today, constantly seeking to disrupt the progress that is being made. Above all, by clinging to their objective of re-establishing Britain as a world-wide imperi-

alist power, with investments, bases, and influence throughout the world, the British monopolies are hindering the development of Britain's economy. (p.21)

But this is absurd! As Woddis has just told us two pages earlier:

Rivalry between the major imperialist countries for markets, for sources of raw materials and cheap labour, for fields of lucrative investment, for strategic bases and political influence is growing sharper, despite their overall desire to unite against socialism, the working-class and the national liberation movements. (p.19)

Is this the "progress that is being made" in the "mainstream of world politics today"? It would appear, in fact, that our Tory government is right with-it as far as international imperialist strategy today goes. The point is that this strategy is forced on the Tories, as it would be on any capitalist government, by the world imperialist economy and the needs of British capitalism.

Lack of clarity on this point is very serious, because it confuses the working-class movement about the reasons for the fiasco of past governments elected with mass popular enthusiasm (especially the Labour governments of 1945 and 1966) and the tasks which face the movement if such failures are not to be repeated again. The point here is that failure to solve the problems of concern to the masses is not a result of mistaken policies, or evil and insincere leaders, but a necessary consequence of the failure to decisively break with capitalism. Even the most sincere Labour Party 'lefts' will have no choice but to enforce the brutal policies required by the capitalist system, if the government of which they are a part is not immediately involved in the process of smashing that system — of mobilising the masses to take away the political and economic power of the capitalist class and replace it with workers' power. The fact that our sincere 'lefts' may have many sleepless nights because of their class treachery will be little consolation to the masses who have to pay the price of their confusion.

In the present period of crisis and mass struggle, the revolutionary left must be absolutely clear on one central point. The only way forward lies through the overthrow of capitalist class power, and that can only be achieved through the mobilisation of the mass of the working class (along with other groups suffering from oppression under the capitalist system) on the basis of a programme that decisively breaks with the capitalist system. The fact that comrade Woddis on several occasions states that he too shares this belief does not make up for the fact that on each decisive question he thoroughly muddles the matter. If we are not clear cut and consistent on such decisive questions we will convince no one. Our propaganda will simply serve to back up the counter-revolutionary, reformist ideas that have served to misdirect and disorganise the working-class movement in the past.

PARLIAMENT

On the crucial question of how the destruction of capitalist class power will take place in Britain, Woddis has this to say:

A Socialist Government based on a Parliamentary majority comprising Labour Party MPs supporting genuine socialist measures along with Communist MPs, and with the full backing of the majority of the people acting through their political and social organizations, will use its new-won political power to carry through the political, social and economic measures needed to end capitalism and introduce socialism. (p.54)

In Woddis's view, an elected Socialist government based upon a Parliamentary majority is to be both the key instrument for introducing socialism and the form of working class rule under socialism. Parliament will be radically reformed, but basically a Socialist Britain will still leave intact all our great National institutions.

It is important to be very clear on what our disagreements are with this view. We are not denying the importance of Parliamentary activity as a weapon in the class struggle: of course revolutionaries should take part in Parliamentary elections and attempt to elect MPs. We are not in disagreement about the need for mass struggle to destroy capitalism: the Communist Party plays a big part in the struggles of the working class and Woddis makes it quite clear that there could be no socialist revolution without mass action. Our disagreement is about the relationship between mass struggle and Parliamentary struggle.

For the Communist Party, mass struggle is necessary to support the work being carried on inside Parliament by Communist and left MPs. It is their activity, organised as a Socialist Government, that will have the creative job of stripping away the power of the capitalist class, enacting socialist laws, etc.

For revolutionaries, however, Parliamentary activity is undertaken only in order to support the struggle of the masses — to spread revolu-

TIME TO CHANGE COURSE

What Britain's Communists Stand For

JACK WODDIS

30p



tionary ideas, develop the unity of the masses, and facilitate the organisation of their struggle. It is the masses and the organisations and institutions which they create in the course of their struggle which will have the task of creating socialism. The work of socialists in Parliament must be strictly subordinated to the struggle and institutions of the masses. Similarly a Socialist Government seriously committed to the destruction of capitalism must base itself not upon the hollow shell of a majority in Parliament, but on the solid bedrock of majority support within the institutions of working class power created by the masses in the course of struggle.

This is not just ultra-left day dreaming. Socialism will not come to Britain except as the result of a deepening crisis which moves the vast majority of the people to launch a determined fight against all those things which they have passively accepted throughout most of their lives. This in turn will produce social struggles of a depth and breadth such as we have not seen for many years. The ruling class will fight back with every means at its disposal: the seduction of reformism, the repression of the state, the brutality of semi-fascist thugs. The working class will be forced to create institutions and organisations out of its own struggle in order to take even the tiniest step forward: local strike committees, city-wide coordinating committees, national conferences representing all those engaged in struggle, support committees to organize unorganised layers, defence squads to protect pickets and demonstrations from police violence and semi-fascist thuggery, etc.

DUAL POWER

What this will lead towards is the embryo of a separate working class power lined up against that of the capitalist state: what Lenin and Trotsky termed "dual power". At each and every stage of the struggle the question will be urgently posed: do we create our own institutions to organise our struggle? Or do we put our faith in the existing institutions of the capitalist state? For example: in the event of a local mass strike do we help the local council carry on as usual despite our strike, or do we organise to meet the needs of the working-class and its allies ourselves? Do we petition the local Chief Constable for "fairer" treatment from the police, or do we organise our own defence squads?

The final question will be: do we put our faith in a Parliamentary majority, the civil service of the capitalist state administration, the army and the police to bring about Socialism or do we entrust these tasks to the forces and institutions that the masses have created themselves in the course of struggle, which have stood the test and learned the lessons of these struggles? Do we urge the masses to subordinate their institutions to the capitalist state, or do we call on the masses to press forward to take power on the basis of these institutions, and demand that the capitalist class dissolve their historically bankrupt institutions?

Our answer to each and everyone of these questions is clear. But what will comrade Woddis and the Communist Party have to say? There is one good test — we can expect the soundest reply to come from those who have already grasped the problem and are actively engaged in promoting the organisation of the struggle of the working-class and its potential allies. While comrade Woddis has a great deal to say about the need to reorganise Parliament he has almost nothing to say about how to better develop the independent organisation of the masses.



French school students are continuing to organise in their hundreds of thousands in strike committees against the conscription laws, defying the threats of the Prime Minister, Messner, to restore order, and smashing all attempts by the fascists to mobilise against them. On 9 April, the day parliament re-opened, 100,000 workers and students marched in united action after the Communist Party and its powerful trade union federation, the CGT, had been forced to switch from denouncing the 'ultra-left' movement to supporting it. The Ligue Communiste (French section of the Fourth International) and other forces have called for another major demonstration on 1 May.

Meanwhile, another major confrontation has developed in the nationalised car industry, sparked off by a struggle over grading by a few hundred largely immigrant workers. Management and government seem bent on confrontation: 40,000 workers are locked out. Renault refused to negotiate on 20 April, and on 23 April armed riot police were used to clear out workers occupying the Peugeot plant at St. Etienne. The leaders of the two main union federations, the CGT and CFDT, are likely to be forced to call a national strike; but only after every endeavour by the CP to appeal to the government for negotiations, to call off the occupations at Sandouville and other plants, etc.

A vigil will be held outside the Indonesian Embassy in London on 7 and 8 May to protest against the continued detention of at least 55,000 political prisoners — most of them held without trial, without fixed sentences, and under appalling conditions. Their detention and the legal basis for subsequent and present arrests largely result from the events in 1965-66 when General Suharto took power, outlawing the mass Communist Party and massacring tens of thousands of militants.

The vigil will take place from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. on both the Monday and Tuesday opposite the Indonesian Embassy, 38 Grosvenor Square, London, W.1. For further details and information about the situation in Indonesia contact: R. Hibbitt, 6 Crossleigh Court, West Drive, London, S.W.16. (677 1402 or 267 3348).

About 800 people defied a police ban to take part in a demonstration in Berne, Switzerland, on 24 March against a meeting called by the MSI, an Italian neo-fascist organisation. The demonstrators, many wearing crash-helmets, marched from the central railway station to a hotel where the fascists were scheduled to meet. Some militants rushed the building but withdrew when they found that others were pelting it with stones. No police were to be seen, and according to television reports £13,000 worth of damage was done, mostly to plate-glass windows.

Chanting 'The Fascists will not speak' and other slogans, the demonstrators then marched on the Swiss parliament. They were finally dispersed by police with water cannon, but succeeded in their purpose: as a result of the demonstration the fascist meeting was called off.

On the morning of 10 April, Israeli commando units murdered three leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organisation — Abu Yusef, Kemal Adwan, and Kamal Nasser — and at least forty others, blowing up the Beirut offices of the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in the process. Praised as a model of tactical manoeuvre and 'deterrence' in the imperialist press throughout the world, the Beirut massacre shows all the counter-revolutionary ruthlessness of the Israeli regime, which now seems to have elevated assassination of liberationists to a systematic policy.

But the spontaneous response of Lebanese youth is a positive sign for the Arab revolution. The acquiescence of the Lebanese regime turned to complicity when it unleashed police against student demonstrators as they tried to march on the US Embassy in protest on 11 April. The day after, while the PLO leadership remained silent about the role of the Lebanese regime, the funeral march of 100,000 became the biggest anti-government demonstration seen in recent years.



Palestine liberation forces—seen here training in Syria—continue to operate despite the ruthless onslaught of the Israeli regime.

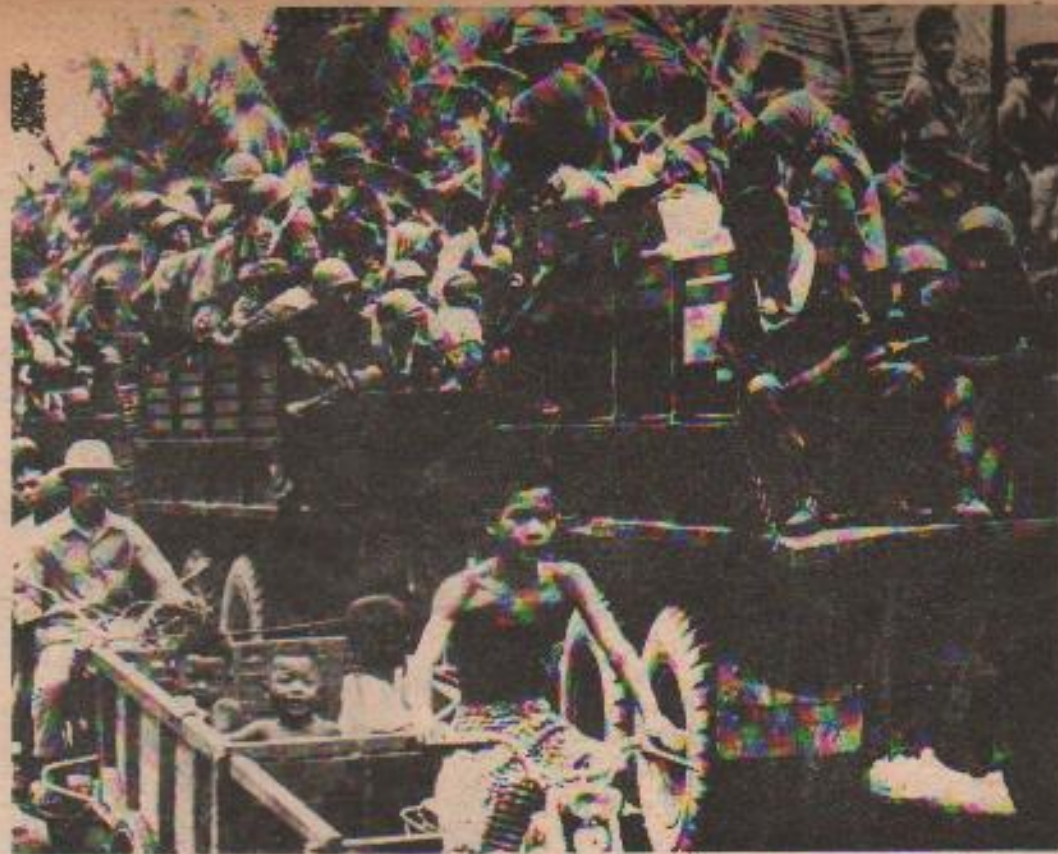
RENAULT TOUS UNIS!



'All united at Renault' reads a banner outside the strike-bound factory.

On the night of 28 March, a fascist gang attacked the Casalotti printshop in Rome, smashing the presses and burning stocks of pamphlets and books kept there by the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (Italian section of the Fourth International). Casalotti prints for the publisher Savelli, recently sentenced to prison for alleged libel in publishing revelations about the responsibility of fascists for the Milan bombings of December 1969, in the book called *La Strage di Stato* ('State Slaughter').

In a special issue of their paper, *Bandiera Rossa*, the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari have called for a united response to the fascist attack on the freedom of the press and the revolutionary left, and for a mass fund drive to rebuild the Casalotti printshop and the Savelli publishing house.



Cambodian puppet troops leave for yet another attempt to stop advancing liberation forces

AMERICANS STRUGGLE TO HOLD CAMBODIA

Prince Sihanouk's recent journey through the liberated zones of Cambodia has dealt a considerable blow to the Lon Nol regime and its American backers. Sihanouk's journey was only possible because of the strength of FUNK — the Cambodian liberation movement — and its control over entire areas of the country. The regime is now on the verge of collapse following the bombing of the presidential palace at Phnom Penh, the teachers' strikes and demonstrations, and the open splits within its own ranks.

FIVE FRONTS

There are five battle fronts now open in Cambodia: Kompong Thom in the North, Phnom Penh in the centre, Takeo in the south, where FUNK have just liberated Angkassern, Suay Rieng in the east and Neah Luang in the Mekong.

Supply convoys which tried to get through the Mekong to save the capital at Phnom Penh have been turned back with heavy losses. The American air-lift from Thailand is now the only means of supply for the capital. The liberation forces are continuing to close in despite massive saturation bombing by B-52s, bombing on a par with that of Hanoi and Haiphong last winter, in which entire villages like Trapeang, Throt and Dey-Eih have been obliterated.

This is probably the reason why FUNK have not yet taken the capital. As Sihanouk explained: 'If an assault was made the bombers and fighters would reduce the town to rubble. It is better to wait. The gangrene is actually inside the town itself.'

AT FOREFRONT

For Washington the situation is equally pressing, which explains why they sent General Haig on a special mission to Indochina. Cambodia is at the forefront of the military struggle in Indochina. The extension and consolidation by FUNK of the liberated zones will effect the relationship of forces in Laos and South Vietnam. The liberated zones of the three countries form a geographic and political block more united than ever before.

American imperialism cannot hope to win in Vietnam if it loses the battle in Cambodia. The chances of the Lon Nol regime surviving seem very slim. Even the use of all the Americans' fire power has been unable to stop FUNK.

To raise the stakes would mean striking elsewhere such as bombing the Ho Chi Minh trail, or Vietnam. But this would mean provoking a massive reaction in both the USA and throughout the world. In this crucial situation international solidarity with the Indochinese revolution can play a vital role. This gives added importance to the demonstration called by the Indochina Solidarity Committee (and supported by the National Union of Students, the Communist Party Student Committee, the IMG, IS, the British Peace Committee and many other groups) for 5 May in London.



DEMONSTRATE!

Saturday 5th May

RALLY 2 p.m.

Trafalgar Square

then march to U.S. Embassy



International Marxist Group

(British Section of the Fourth International)

182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

I would like more information about the IMG and its activities.

NAME

ADDRESS



Where does Scanlon stand on Incomes Policy?

The *Morning Star* has been telling us recently that the National Committee meeting of the AUEW held two weeks ago, was a big victory for the left.

It is true that the NC successfully disposed of moves by the right-wing to allow the union to defend itself in the NIRC. A future Labour government would be urged to repeal it, and no recognition should be given to the Act meanwhile. A familiar call went out for the TUC to set up a fund for unions penalised under the Act.

But in the absence of any commitment to industrial action in solidarity with those workers victimised by the Act, whether engineers or otherwise, the real significance of this move becomes clear. The union leaders want to spread their losses until the benevolent Mr. Wilson can come along later. It may not be too impertinent to suggest that this omission is linked to Scan-

lon's failure to retract his remarks about negotiating amendments to the Act (i.e. recognising it) in return for the Tories putting it on ice, thereby clearing the air for a TUC-Government deal over pay. But then the 'left', dominated by the CP, 'omitted' to drag up this embarrassing affair.

TALKS

Scanlon defended himself against the accusations which nobody would voice, by reiterating his opposition to the Act. The *Morning Star* editorials tried once again to convince us that Hughie had been the victim all along of a smear campaign by Fleet Street. But a motion demanding that EC members should have no more talks at all with the Government, somehow failed to survive the compositing process and find its way on to the NC agenda. Instead, Scanlon can talk to the Government, on matters other than pay. This means that when the TUC is talking with Heath about

the economy at Chequers, Scanlon is to leave the room whenever Feather or Heath are rude enough to mention the word 'wages'.

In spite of the *Morning Star*, Scanlon revealed at the NC that the TUC had recently made further offers of pay restraint to the Government (£3.50 this time). This is all of a piece with Scanlon's support for the TUC pledge to discourage other unions from breaching Phase 2 if the hospital workers were made a special case. Scanlon is no man of principle when it comes to incomes policies, and principles don't usually change with the calendar. As he said of the 1972 Autumn talks: 'a 12-month agreement would have given a breathing space for putting our (the TUC and the Government) houses in order.'

CLAIM

The most important motion passed was the claim for a £10 wage increase, 35 hour week and equal pay



The Red Ladder Theatre Group perform during the London Conference Against the Freeze, held at Central Hall, Westminster, on 14 April. The conference was a small but real step forward in bringing together militants from different industries and unions in London to discuss the next steps forward in the struggle against the Government and its policies. It was agreed that the immediate priorities should be to mobilise for the May Day strikes and in support of the Shrewsbury building workers.

for women to be lodged in August. This is clearly going to create difficulties for Mr. Scanlon, who will be busy at Chequers over the summer working out how much the economic indicators of British capitalism will allow his members.

Fortunately however, some invisible hand made sure that a motion calling for a national struggle on the claim also failed to reach the agenda along with the one on talks. This leaves the question of tactics up to the EC. If the EC then repeats the tactics of 1972, bargaining plant by plant on the national claim, then the union membership will be divided, strongly organised piece-rate men on the one side and weakly organised flat-raters on the other. This would result in another disaster.

No doubt the *Morning Star* will frown at this cynicism. Yet after the NC refused even to discuss the Fine Tubes strike (where workers

have been on strike for 3 years) on the grounds that the struggle was 'not urgent', one disgusted delegate summed it all up: 'If Scanlon and the NC refuse to break one anti-union employer in Plymouth, how can they lead a campaign against the government over our pay claim?'

Well, let us all put Mr. Scanlon and the *Morning Star* to the test. Let us have a national meeting of shop stewards from throughout the engineering industry to discuss the concrete steps to make the (national?) strike a success. Let us have an overtime ban straight away so as to run down the employers' supplies in advance. Let us invite T&G and TASS stewards to the conference and invite them to give us their concrete support in what would surely be the claim to spearhead the working class through Phase 3. And then Mr. Scanlon will no doubt make it absolutely clear to us all where he stands on incomes policy.



Watergate crisis grows for Nixon

Last August, in reference to the burglary and bugging of the Democratic national headquarters in Watergate, President Nixon asserted that: 'No one in the White House staff, no one in this Administration, presently employed, was involved in this very bizarre incident.' But last week his press secretary Ron Ziegler was forced to declare all previous White House statements on the Watergate affair as 'inoperative'. While Nixon himself remains untouched so far, some of his closest aides — like John Mitchell, his former Attorney General, and



H.R. Haldeman, his chief of staff — are now implicated in what promises to become the greatest scandal ever to hit an American administration.

Under the impact of the Watergate affair, Nixon's Gallup rating has dropped 14 points in the last three months, at a time when the American ruling class as a whole faces its greatest crisis. Inextricably committed to the war in Indochina, it faces a massive social crisis at home with inflation threatening to reach an annual rate of 10%. Even George Meany, the notorious right-wing chief of the AFL-CIO trade union confederation, has been forced to tell his members, 'go out and get all you can'.

The crisis of the American capitalist class is now compounded by the crumbling authority of the Nixon administration. Either Watergate will be the end of Nixon, or he will have to engage in more and more reactionary policies and strengthen still more the apparatus of his regime in order to regain the confidence of his class.



MAY DAY GREETINGS

to all friends and comrades past and present from Clarion's new centre in London, Park Hill, London S.W.4. (822 6379)

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I.M.G. RED FORUM: A series of introductory discussions for those in the London area on the politics of the Fourth International. Every Tuesday, 8 pm, at the General Pictor pub, Caledonian Road (5 minutes walk from Kings X tube).

'AFTER MAY DAY - WHAT NEXT?' Hull Red Circle on Thursday, 17 May at 8 pm in 'The Rose', Beverley Road.

'ELECTIONS - THE LABOUR PARTY & THE WORKING CLASS' Merseyside IMG public meeting. Speaker: Brian Shcock. Weds. 8 May, 7.45 pm in the Warrington Co-op Meeting Hall (Small Room).

GAY LIBERATION CONFERENCE at Essex University on 5/6 May. Workshops and discussions on various aspects of gay oppression with speakers from various gay organisations. Plus films and disco. Accommodation provided. Organised by Colchester GLP.

RANK & FILE TECHNICAL TEACHERS meet at 'The Roebuck', Tottenham Court Road, near Warren Street tube, 7 pm, Sunday 29 April — discuss local organisation, 1973 Conference.

WOUNDED KNEE is over but the war continues. Anyone wishing to help please write the Anglo-Dakota Solidarity Campaign, c/o Compendium Books, 240 Camden High Street, London N.W. 1.

JUST OUT! 'Lessons of the 1926 General Strike', by Bob Dent. A look at the role of the Government, the TUC, and the rank-and-file, with lessons for today. Copies 10p each (plus 3p postage). Bulk rates available. From Millennium, 9 Sefton Drive, Liverpool 8 (051-733 2635).