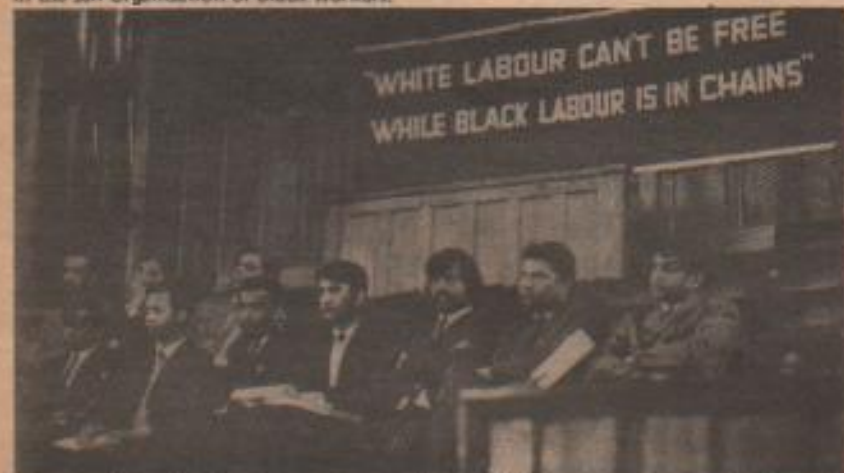


ORGANISE AGAINST RACIST OFFENSIVE

Members of the Mansfield Hosiery strike committee at the conference on Trade Unions and Racism held in Birmingham last month. The Mansfield strike was an important milestone in the self-organisation of black workers.



A couple of months ago, an Asian baker was arrested at work, taken to the airport, put on a plane, and flown to India as a suspected illegal immigrant — still wearing the workclothes he wore at the time of his arrest.

This is called 'removal' — a procedure brought in under the 1971 Immigration Act. Since the more recent House of Lords' ruling that the 1971 Act applies retroactively, a total of 10,000 black people face a similar sudden end to their stay in Britain.

The effect of the Lords' ruling has been to threaten all black people with arbitrary passport checks and police detention. The Government has now given every racist and fascist the chance to present his activities as 'defending the law.' Jim Merrick, chairman of the British Campaign to Stop Immigration, has openly offered to pay £100 for the longest list of illegal immigrants.

Those in the best position to claim the reward are undoubtedly racist officials in the civil service, now that the Government has relaxed the rules on the flow of 'confidential' information between government departments. Immigration authorities already rely heavily on these sources for information.

The Lords' ruling is a concession to
Assembly point for Sunday's demo is Speakers Corner at 2.30 p.m.

Call to lobby talks

By an overwhelming vote, delegates at the last meeting of Westminster Trades Council decided to call a lobby at Congress House, the TUC headquarters, on the morning of any future talks with the Government. These are now expected to resume —

despite the opposition which has already forced Scanlon to withdraw — next Friday, 27 July.

The IMG fully supports this valuable initiative by the Trades Council against the talks. We call on all trade unionists and socialists in the London area to make every effort to support the lobby. For final details, phone *Red Weekly* (837 6954).

ACTION COMMITTEES

Action committees, including representatives of local shop stewards committees, trade union branches, trades councils, and Labour Party organisations, should be created in every area to organise against the racist offensive. Such committees should explain throughout the white community the need to solidarise with black people and pledge to the immigrant communities their full sup-

By DAVE BAILEY

port for all immigrants, legal or 'illegal,' who fall victim to harassment. The committees should also organise action against employers threatening black workers with the Immigration Laws or suspected of collecting information for intimidation purposes.

They should also take up and generalise the initiative of the CPSA, who have refused to carry out Sir Keith Joseph's order that workers in labour exchanges should demand passports from black people seeking benefits. The action committees should campaign for other public service workers — in hospitals, schools, local government — to refuse to carry out such orders and refuse to demand any information not volunteered by black people themselves.

The action committees should ensure that shop stewards committees and trade union branches do not allow police or immigration officers to make enquiries or arrests of black people at work.

BOYCOTT COMMITTEES

But the black communities cannot afford to wait until the white workers come to their aid. They need to organise themselves to shield 'illegals' from the police, campaign against blackmailers within the community, and organise mass self-defence against police snatch squads and fascist attacks. A boycott of race relations bodies was proposed at a meeting of black organisations in Southall a few weeks ago. The committees to supervise the boycott which were also proposed at this conference should be set up as soon as possible throughout the immi-

grant communities, and should take on the organisation of collective self-defence.

The demonstration in London this weekend will help to show the Government that black people refuse to be used as scapegoats by the ruling class. But the campaign must not be limited to gaining an amnesty for 'illegals.' The racist Immigration Act allows for permanent police harassment, threats of deportation, 'voluntary' repatriation (encouraged by denial of social security benefits) and exclusion of dependants from the country.

This law will continue to provide new opportunities for racist attacks. Now is the time for workers to clean the racism out of the trade unions. The Southall meeting proposed strike action against the Immigration Act. This is what our target must be.

Racist jibes as Tariq Ali arrested

Tariq Ali, a leading member of the International Marxist Group, was arrested by two members of a Special Patrol Group police squad outside Buckingham Palace on Tuesday evening. He was there as part of a mass protest against the visit of Portuguese dictator Caetano to Britain.

While Ali and a group of demonstrators were moving to join another group of pickets they were charged by the police, who surrounded the demonstrators and made nine arrests. It was clear from the behaviour of

the police that they had specific instructions to 'get Tariq Ali.'

This move is undoubtedly part of a general campaign to threaten and intimidate political militants on demonstrations.

Tariq Ali commented to *Red Weekly*: 'One incident really struck me. A young Indian militant from Walsall was arrested along with me and was subjected to the most vicious racist jibes from the police. Remarks like 'you may be an illegal immigrant for all we know' and 'it's people like you

who make this country not worth living in' were constantly hurled at him. This really shows how we can expect the police to act, given the new leeway they have to persecute black militants after the recent House of Lords ruling. It makes it very clear how urgent it is to fight back against this new attack.'

IMG militants waiting at Paddington Green police station for Ali's release reported that jokes about 'illegal immigrants' were rife among the police on duty.

Tariq Ali in front line of IMG contingent on last Sunday's demo.

Photo: Peter Harrap (Report)



With only a little more than 10 days left until the end of the month the Fighting Fund has received less than £50 so far! Last month we were more than £80 short of our £300 target. At the present rate we will be even further behind this month.

This is a serious situation. We need to meet our Fighting Fund target both to cover the operating costs of the paper and to allow us to improve the quality of the paper. Every week there are important developments in the class struggle which we cannot cover adequately: either because we have too little space in the paper, or because we are short of the human and technical resources necessary for the job.

Red Weekly aims to provide you with information and analysis of value in your struggles. You must provide us with the cash we need to do this job properly.

We reprint below a slightly shortened version of a statement issued by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on 10 July.

Meanwhile the international campaign in defence of the Communist League continues. Demonstrations in solidarity with the League have been held in fifteen cities across the United States, in a number of Canadian cities, and in Quebec. Five thousand people in West Berlin, and another 2,000 in Frankfurt, turned out for protest meetings against the banning of the League, addressed by Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Rudi Dutschke.

In France local protests have been held in a number of provincial centres, organised by the local branches of those organisations which are supporting the League nationally (Communist Party, Socialist Party, United Socialist Party, the trade union federations). Last week mass public sales

of the newspaper *Rouge* (formerly the organ of the Communist League) were organised throughout France, with great success. On 10 July a French court ruled that Alain Krivine, a leading member of the former Communist League, should be released from custody pending his trial. This decision was immediately appealed by the Government, and Krivine remains in prison until the appeal is heard. Another militant of the former Communist League, Pierre Rousset, is also still in prison.

Here in Britain new signatures have been obtained for the letter of protest to French President Pompidou over the banning of the League. These include John Gollan, national secretary of the Communist Party; Monty Johnstone, prominent Communist Party intellectual; Ernie Roberts, Assistant General Secretary of the AUEW; and Peter Doyle and John Forrester of the Labour Party NEC. A local demonstration against the banning of the Communist League is being organised by IMG militants in Merseyside for this Saturday, and another is planned for the Midlands on 28 July.

Communist League-Statement from FI

The 'dissolution' of the Communist League, the arrests of Alain Krivine and Pierre Rousset, the police raids, and the sacking of the League's headquarters, should not be seen as extraordinary events, mere interruptions in a 'normal' situation. They are well-thought-out actions of the capitalist order, taken in response to the rising tempo of the class struggle both in France and throughout the other countries of Western Europe...

The machinations of the government had two main aims. Firstly, to strike a blow at the Communist League. Secondly, to strengthen an 'independent' trade union within the police force, which is favourable to fascism, at the expense of the autonomous union, which organises the majority of the police force and has increasingly come into conflict with the present Minister of the Interior's ideas on law and order.

The call put out by the Communist League for an anti-fascist counter-demonstration was not aimed at sparking off street fighting, or 'urban guerrilla warfare', in which the revolutionary vanguard would substitute itself for a mass demonstration of the working class. Quite the contrary. The Communist League's initiative was aimed at drawing the attention of workers to the growing threat of the fascist groups, developing under the cover of government cooperation. The purpose was to show that the only way to defeat fascism is through organised and effective self-defence of the working class, rather than futile appeals to the capitalist state.

The Order Nouveau organisation is only the tip of the iceberg. Beneath it lie more ominous dangers, such as the so-called 'trade unions' of the French Confederation of Workers, supported by the bosses in order to sow terror in certain factories. Moreover, the present decomposition of the UDR [the governing Gaullist party—eds.] is giving rise to a series of dangerous developments, notably displays of racism and anti-semitism. From these fascist currents are beginning to emerge, which at a later stage could become a threat on a mass scale. The Government set up by Messmer [Gaullist Prime Minister of France—eds.] is now straining to gather together the energies of a decrepit capitalist class. At the same time it is confronted by a powerful upsurge of the mass of the working class, who are moving towards a socialist solution to the crisis of the capitalist political order.

In the course of less than six months, a series of mass movements have shown that the elections were a hollow victory for the Gaullists. Hundreds of thousands of secondary school and college students poured into the streets, challenging the purpose of the capitalist army. Tens of thousands of women, supported by the vast majority of the population, defied the oppressive anti-abortion laws. Intellectuals and artists have gone into struggle against the 'moral order' proclaimed by the Minister of Culture. Most importantly, in every region of France, the working class—including unskilled workers, immigrant workers, and the most highly skilled—are fighting not only for better conditions of work and a better standard of

living, but against the capitalist system itself. This mass upsurge was for a brief period bottled up by the hope of an electoral victory for the 'Union of the Left', but is now breaking out again with even greater force...

It was in these conditions that the Government, worried about the growth of the League (limited as it was), decided to launch its operation. The idea was to crack down on the strongest organisation of the far left, in what could be described as a 'preventative' operation. The success of the operation was to be assured by the isolation of this group from the masses.

The French Government's calculations failed all along the line... the entire working class movement and alongside it broad democratic forces denounced the Government's manoeuvre and took up the defence of the Communist League and its militants...

The French labour movement and the mass of French workers have responded with a unanimity that has rarely been seen in the past. Internationally, demonstrations of solidarity have taken place, particularly in those European countries close to France, where the example of May '68 had the greatest impact, and where it was most clearly understood what was at stake in this situation.

The Communist League remains 'dissolved', Alain Krivine and Pierre Rousset are still in prison, and many Trotskyist militants are still being harassed. Solidarity must therefore be stepped up both in France and internationally, to obtain the lifting of the ban, the release of those in jail, full freedom of expression, organi-

sation and action for revolutionary organisations (in particular the right of the Trotskyist press to appear without hindrance), and the ending of all anti-democratic measures taken by the French Government since May '68.

But the struggle will not reach its conclusion in the restoration of the rights torn up by the arbitrary actions of the Government. The class struggle in France is moving towards decisive trials of strength. For the international revolutionary vanguard the fight to drive back the Government's repressive offensive will be just a first step in preparing for the great struggles to come, in which the working class will face capitalist forces defending their profits and privileges by every means at their disposal, and fighting more ferociously than ever because their backs are to the wall.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International pledges its full solidarity with the French militants who have been subjected to this repression. The French Trotskyist movement, born in 1929, has known many set-backs. It met the bloody trials of the Nazi occupation and the Petain regime [pro-Nazi wartime government—eds.] with courage. Dissolved after May '68, it bounced back stronger than ever with the creation of the Communist League in the following year.

We have every confidence that this latest test will undoubtedly likewise end in the further strengthening of the Fourth International in France.

10 July 1973

United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Thousands march against Caetano's visit

Several thousand people marched from Charing Cross Embankment to Hyde Park (via the Portuguese Embassy) last Sunday to protest against the visit of the Portuguese dictator Caetano to Britain.

There is no doubt that this was the largest anti-imperialist demonstration in recent years. Left organisations on the march included Labour Party and Young Socialists branches, the Communist Party, IS and IMG, the Portuguese Workers Coordinating Committee, and various black organisations. Also represented were several trades councils, the London region of the Transport and General Workers Union, the Royal Group of Docks Shop Stewards Committee and other trade union organisations. There is little doubt that the IMG contingent was the most cohesive and combative contingent on the demonstration, being surrounded by extra policemen throughout the march.

A few weak points, however, need to be stressed.



Part of the mass rally in Hyde Park at the end of the demonstration. Photo: Ezra Nathan (Red Weekly)

Sheffield conference defends pickets

Bob Murphy

Over 70 trade union delegates attended a conference last weekend called by the Sheffield and Rotherham Shrewsbury Defence Committee. It was, explained chairman Gwyn Read,

a delegate from Rotherham Trades Council, the latest of the committee's attempts to publicise the issue and to plan practical measures to defend the pickets.

Jim Kemp, of the London building workers Joint Sites Committee, emphasised that the law is based not on judicial niceties or on debates *inside* the courtroom, but on the balance of class forces *outside*. And the State's preparations for the inevitable clashes under Phase 3 of its income policy entail smashing the most important tactical development in the labour movement over the past 18 months — the mass flying pickets, first used by the miners and building workers last year, and most recently put into effect by the Chrysler workers. The answer to the Government's attacks he said, depends on the ability of the rank and file to lead mass mobilisations of the working class. As John

Lebor of the Labour Research Department told the conference: 'All laws are good for the capitalist class and bad for the workers.'

Two building workers from the Shrewsbury area also spoke at the conference. Alan Abrahams, a UCATT regional official and member of the editorial board of *Charter*, the building workers' rank and file paper, detailed the problems of organising in an industry with a large element of casual labour. As he said, even after the great steps forward in last summer's strike North Wales remained one of the weakest areas for union organisation, which no doubt explained why this area had been chosen for the attack. Des Warren, one of the Shrewsbury 24, described the harrowing experiences of the pickets since their arrest in February: telephone calls late at night, threatening letters, and continual police harassment.

In the first instance, the dominance of left-Labour/CP on the organising committee meant that the demonstration had a certain bias, namely towards pressure on Parliament (in other words, it was a by-product of the political strategy of the Tribunes and the CP). This meant that 'respectability' was a major criterion for the organisers. In the view of the IMG, the focus of the demo should have been the Portuguese Embassy, and that is where it should have culminated with a mass rally.

Secondly, the lessons learnt in the days of the Vietnam mobilisations have to be re-learned: demonstrations above a certain size have to exert their authority over the streets and challenge the right of the *police* to organise the demonstration. The demonstration, and the various pickets that have been held during the Caetano visit, show that this is an absolute necessity if the movement in solidarity with the struggle in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau is to develop further in this country.

The main resolution preparing the way forward was carried unanimously. Moving it on behalf of the committee, Rotherham building worker Ian Stevenson stressed the need to extend the campaign throughout the whole of Yorkshire, and for delegates to raise the issue in their organisations. It was agreed to work for a mass mobilisation for the rally to be held in Trafalgar Square in September.

The conference also recognised the wider issues of repression, nationally and internationally, discussing and unanimously carrying emergency resolutions in defence of the five Birmingham building workers on trial for their activities in fighting against the lump; in support of the three members of the NUT in Wandsworth, under attack from their union leadership; and in solidarity with the militants of the former Communist League, banned by the French Government.

800 at Women's Liberation Conference

Over 800 women attended the Women's Liberation National Conference in Bristol last weekend. The size of this gathering and the level of debate both indicated the positive development of the movement in the present period. The conference focussed on some of the most important questions facing the movement at this point in time, and some of the most important debates were conducted within a generally Marxist framework.

The structure of the conference, however, placed some serious limitations on its political effectiveness. Each day was divided into one plenary and two workshop sessions, with a total of forty workshops on different topics. The workshops did not report back to the plenary sessions but simply duplicated and circulated their minutes to the whole conference.

This tended to fragment rather than unify the different experiences and plans that exist within the movement. For example, the campaigns that are taking place around racism, family allowances, and housing should be linked up. But this was something which the structure of the conference made very difficult.

CAMPAIGNS

The main need of the women's liberation movement at present is to develop campaigns which can unite those women who are already politically involved and forge links with other organisations actively engaged in the struggle against various aspects of

capitalist oppression and exploitation. This is the way the movement will be able to reach more than just the most politically aware, and gain an audience among the mass of women.

Some of the activities in which the women's movement are currently engaged could have great potential — in particular, the Family Allowance Campaign. A weakness in the present conduct of the campaign, however, is the attempt to link it with the demand 'wages for housework.' This demand does not reach the root of the problems facing women who are trapped in the home.

There are three separate problems involved here: (1) the need to shift responsibility for providing the resources necessary for the care and upkeep of children from the individual parent or family on to the capitalist state; (2) the need to end the crushing burden of individualised housework on women; (3) the need to ensure some measure of financial independence for women.

Neither of the first two needs is adequately met by 'wages for housework.' The social responsibility for the care and upkeep of children is not just a matter of providing the necessary cash, but is one of actually carrying out the various tasks connected with child raising in a social fashion: demands such as subsidised, socialised child care facilities are the main ones in this respect. The same applies to the problem of housework. What is needed is not cash compensation to women for having to bear this burden, but steps to actually relieve them of the need to bear it at all; the need to establish subsidised and

socialised facilities to take over as many as possible of the tasks presently making up 'housework.'

REAL QUESTION

The problem of financial independence is a real one. But the formula put forward by some, 'money is power,' confuses rather than illuminates the real question. Working women do not have 'power' simply by virtue of their separate income. The oppression of women is a feature of the capitalist system, and the only means of acquiring 'power' for the oppressed is through organisation in the fight against that system.

Financial dependence is not a problem limited to women: it is, for example, shared by all the victims of the welfare state — the old, the low paid, the unemployed. What is needed is not a demand that separates the problem of housewives off from other oppressed groups, but a set of demands around which all the victims of the 'social security' system can be brought together in the fight for financial independence. The demand for an end to all forms of discrimination against women in social security benefits would be central to this.

This is the type of problem which the movement has already started to debate. But what must be done now is to develop a clear perspective for the political activity of the movement. The 22 September conference of socialists in the women's liberation movement should turn the debate in this direction and start to solve these problems.

Dodie Weppier

CURRENT ACCOUNT

HOT CHOCOLATE

Last Thursday Rowntree Mackintosh announced a loss of £20 million incurred in dealings on the cocoa futures market. This will be reduced to £10 million because of tax relief.

The unprecedented upsurge of world commodity prices therefore has now reached the point where the dealings of a few days by a large and experienced company can wipe out roughly two years' profits. The company has not yet declared bankruptcy but was forced for a time to suspend dealings in its shares, whose price collapsed when dealing was resumed.

Rowntree's error was probably in expecting a few weeks ago that the recent surge in the raw cocoa price would not last. Cocoa bought in West Africa was therefore sold on the cocoa futures market (for future delivery). This technique is used to protect companies against price falls during the period of transport of the material. When it arrives they can then buy it back at the current price. What happened was that prices continued to rise and Rowntrees were forced to buy back cocoa at much higher prices than they had earlier sold it for.

NOT THE FIRST

Rowntrees are not the first dealers to be caught out recently in the cocoa market. And, since other commodity markets are behaving in the same way, they will not be the last firm to be hit by the same problem.

Viewed in relation to any time period the 100 percent rise in commodity prices in the last 15 months is phenomenal. It is now close to surpassing the famous Korean inflation of 1949-51. When that inflation ended, prices remained fairly stable until 1964 when there was a surge in metal (but not other) prices which collapsed in the world-wide economic recession of 1970-71. What distinguishes the present runaway inflation is that it includes almost all the major commodities — metals, fibres and food.

There are three causes of the present price boom. Least important is the emergence of certain specific shortages in foods because of bad world harvests last year, and in metals because of factors such as the recent copper workers' strike in Chile. A second cause is the rapid increase in demand for raw materials produced by the present economic upturn in nearly all the major capitalist countries, combined with a shortage of productive capacity resulting from the abandonment of expansion plans in the producing countries during the recession of 1970-71.

MONETARY CRISIS

If these were the only causes then Rowntree's gamble might have paid off. They lost their £20 million through ignoring the third most important cause — the world monetary crisis. This has meant a monumental flow of speculative funds into commodities as a protection against general inflation, which is producing a general decline in confidence in paper money. Most of this move of course is out of the sickest currencies, dollars and pounds.

The subsequent effect of this speculation is to worsen the position of these weak currencies even further, so that the process feeds off itself. Because the pound and dollar are being rapidly devalued relative to other currencies, the overall inflation of commodity prices is magnified in Britain and the US. For instance, in the last six months the price of copper in Britain has doubled; in Switzerland it has only risen by one third. As a result the British trade balance suffers a tremendous trade deficit (last month's remained terrible at £138 million) and costs of industrial raw materials and of food are going up faster than anywhere else.

As yet there is no sign of any break in the commodity inflation. But all speculative inflations have to end; and normally they do so rapidly and produce effects which will make Rowntree's lost £20 million look like a dropped penny.

Michael Price

Scabs attack picket line



Sheila Cohen is taken away.

A member of Women's Liberation in Manchester was arrested last Friday during a further mass picket outside the Salford Electrical Instruments factory, where clerical workers are still on strike for a rise of £1 + 4% and a reduction by one-third of the male/female differential.

The first sign of trouble came when the senior police officer present, an Inspector Swithenbank, told the union official (APEX organiser Ian McLean) that the picket line was illegal and constituted 'harassment'. The picket, he said, could only try to persuade the scabs (production workers) not to go in. McLean replied that in that case the inspector should send the scabs through one by one, so that the picketers had an adequate opportunity to attempt peaceful persuasion.

There was no immediate reaction until shortly before 8.00 a.m., when some of the scabs, heartened by the behaviour of the police on previous pickets, began to break through sections of the picket line. Simultaneously, Ian McLean was assaulted; one member of Women's Liberation had her glasses broken by a stray fist; and police jumped in and crushed some of the picketers against a gate. Moments later they emerged dragging with them Sheila Cohen, a member of Women's Liberation, who had brought her three year old son along for some basic education.

Later that morning she was charged with assaulting Inspector Swithenbank 'in the execution of his duty' and remanded until 17 August. Strangely enough, a man who repeatedly threatened to assault one of the pickets was not arrested for threatening behaviour but merely moved on.

Meanwhile, after seven weeks of strike action, management are offering increases of 40p to 90p. At first they denied that equal pay had anything to do with the claim, but they have now conceded the 'principle'. In other words, the claim does concern the reduction of the male/female differential, and they are talking about men and women doing the same jobs but at different rates of pay.

JOE ROBERTS

50 YEARS ON

The recently enacted Northern Ireland Constitution Bill... is merely a redecorated version of the undemocratic partitionist settlement of 50 years ago.' So a former internee, Paddy Joe McClean, told over 250 people on a demonstration in London organised by the Irish Civil Rights Association (ICRA) last Sunday.

The march was supported by the Anti-Internment League, Clann na h'Eireann, the International Marxist Group, the Belfast 10 Defence Committee, People's Democracy and the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Movement. Other speakers included Mrs. Eowina Stewart, Secretary of NICRA and a leading member of the Communist Party of Ireland. She, unfortunately, simply repeated the well-worn formula that what was needed was the institutionalisation of democracy. This despite the fact that if the last five years have shown anything it is that any movement for democratic reforms inevitably challenges the whole sectarian basis of the Orange State, and there-

fore any talk of a democratic state is illusionary.

Also among the speakers was Bob Purdie, national organiser of the AIL. He concluded by saying that:

'When the Whitelaw settlement collapses, and the Irish problem confronts the British people once more, those who told them that it could be solved by military intervention will have been discredited. The demand for the withdrawal of British troops will become irresistible.

'Here in Britain the Irish organisations and the British left must turn their attention from a concern solely with what the British war is doing to Ireland, and see what the Irish war is doing to British society. If we throw our weight behind the demand for troop withdrawals we can ensure that there is a growing realisation in Britain that the conflict in Ireland is a result of British imperialism's intervention, and can only be solved by a total British withdrawal, and self-determination for the Irish people.'

Photo: Mike Newton (Red Weekly)



What is ahead for the working class?

PHASE 3

Last week's conference of the Transport and General Workers' Union marked the end of this summer's round of major trade union meetings. Now that they have these 'troublesome' events out of the way, the trade union bureaucracies are hoping that the meeting between the TUC and the Government on 27 July can begin the serious business of putting together a sell-out deal on the question of incomes policy.

However, as the recent conferences clearly show, there is a big gap between the hopes of the bureaucracy and the realities of the present situation. It is not an era of bureaucratically-concocted 'class peace', but a new period of mass upsurge and class struggle that we are about to enter.

THE TRAP

In order to understand the unfolding situation we must take a look at what is going on in the world capitalist economy. The most important imperialist economy, that of the United States, has been plagued by runaway inflation for some time now: by May this had reached the phenomenal rate of 20% per year. The American government has been forced to adopt a series of drastic measures which will send the economy into a recession. A similar fate awaits the West German economy, where the government has had to face the same problems. Under these circumstances, 1974 will almost certainly see a world economic recession. Such a recession will be a big headache for most capitalist countries, but it will be a positive disaster for Britain. Even in the midst of a boom in the world economy, the big problems of British capitalism remained unsolved. As a result the living conditions of the working class have been seriously worn down. With retail prices up 10% and food prices up 20%, the big wage rises won by the best organised sections of the working class in 1972 have been almost completely wiped out. Obviously the capitalist class is not likely to become any more generous in conditions of recession.

The ruling class will find itself trapped between the growing crisis of world capitalism and the rising discontent of the British working class. Their only way out is to impose a series of major defeats on the working class and force them to bear the brunt of the economic crisis.

1 Two fronts

The ruling class is fully aware of this situation, and has been laying the groundwork for big attacks ever since the defeat of the working class movement over Phase II in the spring. These attacks are directed at two fronts.

IN THE FACTORIES

The first front is in the factories and on the shop floor, where the ruling class has two main objectives. First, to break up the organisation and self-confidence of key sections of the working class before the major national struggles break out. In Chrysler's, for example, where a key new pay agreement is pending, the management decided to provoke a show-down on a flimsy pretext now, rather than allow the wages struggle to erupt at a point where the Engineers and other major groups would be going into national struggles.

The second aim is to squeeze more production out of the existing workforce through speed-up, increased supervision etc. The Confederation of British Industries has made this perfectly clear with its call for an all out attack on 'restrictive practices'.

SHOP FLOOR UNDER ATTACK

In order to succeed in this objective the bosses have got to attack and weaken the traditional shop-floor organisation of the working class. As a result we have seen a whole series of such attacks since the spring. The most noteworthy include the Tillotson's factory in Liverpool, Timex in county Durham, Bason-Pascoe in Stockton, Triang in Merthyr, and Coles Cranes in Sunderland. These all involved attempts to weaken the position of shop-floor representatives. The real purpose of these attacks can be seen in the case of the Manchester firm, Gardner's. There, management opened up with an

attempt to sack a steward last year and went on to an all-out attack on piece work this year.

Once again Chrysler's shows the whole thing up very dramatically. Even after the strike management attacks are continuing, and a disciplinary system has been introduced which creates a new tough work regime and in addition completely bogs down the stewards with minor problems so that they have no time to organise an effective counter-offensive. This is explained by the fact that management is demanding an increase in production from 48 to 50 cars an hour.

These ruling class attacks on shop-floor and factory organisation are meeting fierce resistance, however. At Coles Cranes a 13 week occupation ended in victory for the workers. At Tillotson's Gardner's and Bason-Pascoe there were also occupations. Timex and Chrysler's saw major strikes. These actions, and especially the aggressive use of flying pickets by the Chrysler workers, shows how determined the working class are to preserve their hard-won gains in this area.

STATE ATTACKS

The working class is at its strongest on the shop-floor and factory level. So the capitalist class is seeking ways of centralising its own forces while at the same time isolating individual groups of workers. The most effective weapon they have for this is the state machine.

This is precisely the second front on which the ruling class is attacking—through the use of the repressive state machine against working class organisation. They attempt to exploit the misguided respect for the 'law' held by many sections of the working class movement, and the real threat of the repressive instruments of the state machine (the police, prisons) to confuse and demoralise the working class. In this manoeuvre they have the full backing of the trade union bureaucrats, who refuse to condone any action that smacks of 'illegality'.

This is the front on which the ruling class has been most successful. Effective picketing is crucial to the victory of working class struggles—this was shown in the miners' strike, the building workers' strike, and the recent Chrysler's strike. The ruling class understand this and are centring their fire on pickets at the moment. Yet so far the mobilisations around the defence of the Shrewsbury 24 have been tiny. The International Marxist Group was agitating almost alone for a national campaign on this question. Only the steel workers at Shotton and the Liverpool dockers have taken any real industrial action against this ruling class attack.

2 Ruling class prepares

The ruling class, on the other hand, have been making preparations for the coming showdown for a considerable period of time.

In last year's engineering dispute Manchester firms set up a fund which paid out more than £2 million to individual employers to help them resist union demands. Already they have raised a further £3 million to clear-off last year's deficit and start another fund for future struggles.

Special strike breaking forces are already being assembled, drawing on the scum of British society. These *private* capitalist squads will be backed up by the *public* capitalist squads recently created by the police.

LEGAL CRACKDOWN

Steps are being taken to tighten up the legal system so that it can better serve the repressive purposes of the ruling class. Moves which allow jury decisions to be made by majority vote, rather than requiring unanimity, and the widespread use of open-ended 'conspiracy' charges have been recent steps in this direction.

Cases like that of the Shrewsbury 24 are designed to roll back the leeway allowed by the law in the past to such activities as picketing and require enforcement of the strictest legal

limitations. A number of court rulings have had a similar purpose.

Increasingly even the rules of capitalist legality are being ignored by the state machine. Lawyers are regularly denied to people who are being held for political reasons.

CARD OF RACIALISM

Steps are being taken to play the card of racialism. The 1971 Immigration Act gives the ruling class a great deal of ammunition for this. The recent ruling of the House of Lords endorsing the use of the deportation provisions of the Act, even in cases in which an 'offence' was committed before the passing of this Act, shows the determination of the ruling class to exploit every potential weapon. Every section of the state machine is now rushing eagerly to take advantage of the climate of fear that this decision has created in the immigrant community: police harassment, intimidation of blacks trying to claim social security, use hospitals facilities, etc., are being dramatically stepped up.

This naturally spawns such fascist groupings as the National Front, who for a long time have sought to acquire some popular base by exploiting the racialism that permeates British society. Now they get a pat on the back from the capitalist state, who they will certainly repay by stepping up such 'services' as the recent attacks on black trade union militants in the Mansfield Hosiery Strike.

3 Bureaucracy - the faithful servant

In times of trouble such as these the ruling class is always able to count on one old, faith-

ful servant—the trade union bureaucracy. In 1972, after the miners' strike, the victory of the railwaymen, and the freeing of the Pentonville Five, the Tory Government was reeling. One more good push would have sent it flying. Instead the TUC and the trade union leaders put out the steadying hand of class collaboration, by agreeing to talks with the Government. Within six months, the offensive of the working class had been sidetracked into a blind alley by the bureaucracy and the Government had recovered sufficient strength to unilaterally impose Phase I of its incomes policy, despite TUC disagreement.

The Tories then proceeded to stamp out any resistance to Phase II. Again the TUC handed them victory on a plate, by failing to organise any effective solidarity with the gas workers or the hospital workers. Having engineered these defeats, the TUC has now proceeded to prepare the ground for another sell-out to the Government.

Even while a great song-and-dance was being whipped up about the May 1st 'Day of Protest', a team of negotiators, including the 'lefts' Scanlon and Jones, were secretly meeting with the Government to work out the terms for the present incomes policy negotiations.

TROUBLED WATERS

Over the summer, however, the bureaucracy has begun to run into some trouble. Its plans for a grand autumn sell-out have met with big opposition. The most notable set-back for them was at the AUEW conference, where Scanlon was forced to withdraw from the TUC-Government talks. At the NUR conference a motion opposing any talks between the TUC and the Government was defeated by a very narrow margin. At both the Transport & General and the General & Municipal conferences a quarter of the delegates voted against the negotiations. The National Conference of Trades Councils has come out against the talks, and the ASTMS conference voted to reject any incomes policy, no matter who is in government.

Only in the National Union of Teachers can it

Part of solidarity demonstration during Gardner's occupation in Manchester.





ROUND 2

by
Alan Jones

be said that the bureaucracy got anything like all that it wanted. There the Communist Party blocked solidly with the bureaucracy to force acceptance of an agreement in line with Phase II, to prohibit local branches from calling strikes, and to abandon the young teachers' conference.

SUCCESSFUL CHALLENGES

There have also been some important signs of reviving militancy among rank-and-file trade union activists, and, as a result, a weakening of the control of the bureaucracy over important trade union policies. The conferences of the National Union of Journalists, NUPE, and the ETU all saw successful challenges from the conference floor to the policies and actions of the leadership. Important victories were won by the rank-and-file on such key questions as the establishment of a national strike fund, rejection of productivity agreements, and total rejection of the Industrial Relations Act.

Such defeats as these make it all the more urgent for the trade union bureaucrats to step up attacks against rank-and-file militants. Red-baiting demagoguery is being tried in the UPW, victimisation of individual militants in the NUT, attacks on rank-and-file organisations in APEX and UCATT. But in all these cases the aim is the same: to strengthen the grip of the bureaucrats to eliminate any opposition to the present trade union leaderships.

But these agents of the ruling class in the trade union movement are encountering the same sort of resistance as their masters. There is no possibility of any Phase III agreement being accepted by rank-and-file trade unionists with as little opposition as was Phase II.

Under these conditions the ruling class cannot afford to rely solely on one tactic or course of action. They are continually forced to change their tactics in response to determined working class opposition. For example, at one time their central tactic was the use of the Industrial Relations Act. Now, however, working class resistance has made it impossible to use the Act. So instead they are carving out a new tactic — a combination of Incomes Policy

legislation and the existing criminal law. The only fixed point on the horizon of the ruling class is the need to use the state machine for a centralised offensive against the whole working class.

4 Government is the key

But the ruling class is not yet ready or able to set up a military dictatorship and rule directly through the repressive instruments of the state machine. The government remains the manager of the state machine, and thus the manager of the ruling class offensive. This makes the government central both for the ruling class and the working class.

Given that it is the government which has the responsibility for leading the attack on the working class, it is important from the standpoint of the ruling class to have the correct government in power — one which will have no difficulty in coordinating and directing various lines of attack, changing policy as and when it suits the ruling class, and taking up the appropriate new lines of attack.

A government that has links with the workers' movement is not entirely reliable, no matter how faithful it may be to the capitalist system. There will always be the danger of such a government making concessions to pressure from those it claims to 'represent' at crucial turning points. For these reasons it is a *Tory government* which is sought by the ruling class to most effectively direct their attack.

THE TORY OCTOPUS

The Tory Government operates rather like an octopus. It grabs hold of its victim with one tentacle; when that tentacle is lopped off it then applies a second one, to carry on the job from a slightly different angle, and so on.

Faced with such an enemy, the approach of fighting one policy, one 'tentacle,' at a time is completely insufficient. The only way out is to attack what co-ordinates all of the tentacles: to cut out the brain of the monster.

Otherwise there is always the danger that if a mass mobilisation is centred against only one policy of the ruling class, the working class will find itself unprepared and confused when the ruling class switches tactics.

Thus there was a mass mobilisation around the case of the Pentonville 5, but, when the ruling class switched from the Industrial Relations Act to the criminal law, the arrest of the Shrewsbury 24 was not met with anything like a similar response.

TORY GOVERNMENT CENTRAL

This fact is understood by the most politically aware workers, and finds a reflection in the consciousness of the mass of workers. The practical experience of coming up against policy after policy, tactic after tactic, of the Tory government eventually teaches the masses that it is this government which is at the centre of *all* their struggles. This creates a continual tendency for all struggles to be centralised around the Tory government, both because of the reality of the situation and because of the awareness of the masses. This is true no matter what the particular question is at issue — the Industrial Relations Act, the Freeze, the Immigration Act, etc.

The necessary step which must be taken to carry the struggle of any section of the masses forward to victory is the removal of the Tory government. The means to do this are at hand — the mass strike struggles of recent years have shown them to us. The central strategy for the working class movement in the coming period must be to extend, unify and generalise all particular struggles into a united struggle against the Tory government — into a general strike to bring down the Tory government. This is the essential lesson which has to be hammered home and applied in the new wave of mass struggles which will break out this autumn and next spring.

5 A plan of action

Revolutionaries have to work out a plan of concrete demands and concrete action in response to this situation. They must seek to develop the present struggles of the working class in such a way as to take greatest advantage of the practical realities of this situation. What should such a plan propose?

SMASH THE OFFENSIVE

First of all, the present ruling class offensive — both within the factory and that being carried out by means of the state machine — must be smashed.

Struggles must be developed within the factories around such demands as a shop-floor veto on speed up and on all manning changes, no reduction of rest breaks, etc. The forms of struggle necessary to win such fights — occupations, flying pickets — must be perfected and popularised.

A national campaign in defense of picketing must be mounted throughout the working class movement, with the aim of involving all the most politically aware workers and gaining support from the mass of the class. The defence of the Shrewsbury 24 must be the first task of such a campaign.

The attempts of the bureaucracy to tie the trade unions to the capitalist state must be defeated. A campaign must be mounted within the trade unions to put an end to the TUC-government talks. All trade union activists should be won to the slogan 'No incomes policy under capitalism,' and the need for an all-out fight by the trade union movement for repeal of the Industrial Relations Act.

UNITED COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

In the coming wage struggles revolutionaries must do everything possible to unite the widest layers of the working class for the fight against the employers and the government. Trade unions whose wage demands were blocked by Phase II should put forward claims co-ordinated with the Engineering or other major national claims. Other trade unions with claims in the pipeline should do the same.

Concrete links should be forged between the struggles of all these different groups of workers. Mutual support, joint campaigns and joint industrial action should be developed on the local, regional and national levels.

As part of the struggle for such a broad unity of the working class a co-ordinated claim and campaign of action for all public sector workers should be hammered out. Equal pay for women should be taken up as a central demand in all trade union claims.

Local, regional and national organisations of rank-and-file representatives (shop stewards, convenors, strike committee delegates, etc.) should be set up to co-ordinate this campaign of struggle. They should ensure that the most effective tactics — flying pickets, occupations, solidarity strikes — are used everywhere.

Organisational measures should be taken to ensure effective self-defence of pickets and working class organisations against the police attacks which will inevitably come in such a period of struggle.

DEFEND CLASS RIGHTS

All attempts by the trade union bureaucracy to crack down on militants should be resisted. Every attempt at the victimisation of individual militants, red-baiting, or banning of rank-and-file groups within any union should be met by a united response from all militants within the working class movement. A counter-offensive to extend union democracy and strengthen rank-and-file control over trade union struggles should be launched.

All moves towards the erosion of legal concessions won by the working class in the past, and all attempts to deprive the working class movement of even the limited protections of present-day capitalist law must be fiercely resisted. All moves of legal repression must be fought through mass action. Attempts of the fascist groups to hold public meetings and demonstrations, and to conduct racist propaganda, must be prevented.

It is through these struggles and these campaigns that the working class can defeat the present offensive of the ruling class. These campaigns will revive the self-confidence of the working class and its readiness to struggle, and encourage the creation of action committees, defence committees and other rank and file organisations necessary to lead the struggle forward.

It is out of these struggles that a decisive confrontation with the Tory government will grow. It is around these issues that a mass struggle to bring down that government can be launched.



Particularly significant in the past period have been the attacks by the trade union bureaucracy on rank and file militants. One of the most important cases, where the Communist Party has actively co-operated with the bureaucracy, is that of the 'Wandsworth Three' teachers, victimised after a mass meeting in London last February openly challenged the failure of the NUT bureaucracy to organise a meaningful fight against Phase II. Picture shows part of the 500-strong picket outside NUT headquarters for the hearing last Saturday; defence solicitor is announcing the postponement of the hearing after the three refused to give any guarantee that they would respect the secrecy of the proceedings.

Photo: Chris Davies (Report)



Striking children in a scene from the play. (Photo: Pamla Toler)

Reviews

'Do you have riots?'

The book: *Children's Strikes in 1911* by Dave Marson (History Workshop Pamphlet No 9 - 30p)

The play: *Fall in and Follow Me* by Dave Marson & Billy Colville. Half Moon Theatre, Allie St., London E1.

In the year in which one of the most significant mobilisations in Europe since 1968 was by school students in France against the militarist laws, it is refreshing to discover that Britain has had its own mass mobilisations in schools from which experience we can draw today. The fascinating details of the mass strikes and demonstrations by working-class youth in September, 1911, in at least 62 towns, long since forgotten by the labour movement (and no doubt thankfully suppressed by the bourgeois educational establishment) have been resurrected and compiled by an ex-docker, Dave Marson, in this recently published pamphlet.

Based on the incidents chronicled in this publication, the Half Moon Theatre Group from the East End has also produced a short play, *Fall in and Follow Me* (the title of the most popular marching song of the jubilant striking students). This production admirably dramatises the incidents surrounding the mobilisations in London, using six school-boys (whose acting and ad-libbing is a joy to watch) to personify the striking masses.

1911 was the year of the first wave of mass industrial struggles, around the issues of unionisation of sections of unskilled workers and better wages and conditions. These grew in scope, militancy and organisation right up until 1914 when the working-class was disarmed and its united strength dissipated by the national chauvinist and collaborationist policies of its Social Democratic leaders, on the issue of support for the imperialist war. It was also the year in which two striking miners were shot dead by troops in the streets of Llanelli.

Against this background, at the end of a freakishly hot summer, thousands of school-students, learning from the experience and example of their parents, threw themselves into the cauldron of the class-struggle and took to the streets.

To begin with the pamphlet describes and the play vividly demonstrates the awful deadness and repression of school-life, as the schoolmasters attempted to instil into their charges the Victorian 'virtues' of passivity, honesty, respect for authority and above all cleanliness and discipline - "Wash behind the ears if you want to defend the Empire" they are told.

We see the change from sullen acceptance of this situation, to an open fight against it, around the slogans of *Shorter School Hours* and *No More Cane*, though other students elsewhere had far more elaborate programmes, including *Steam Heating Apparatus in Schools* (frequently unheated), *Free Pencils and Rubbers* and *Payment for Schoolchildren* - the last two of these

not yet won! We see a growing, collective solidarity, completely at odds with their previous fragmented consciousness (which again prevails today), whereby they stand behind their victimised peers against authority, rather than ridiculing them along with the teacher.

Also we see and read about the use of advanced forms of struggle, which the working-class has only just re-discovered, such as 'flying pickets' and 'rolling-columns' of school-children through town-centres, which were able, partly by their sheer exuberance and confidence, to suck in and win over ever-growing sections of students. Those who 'scabbed' on the struggle and continued to attend, met hails of abuse and often more concrete objects, and had at times to be escorted to and from school by parents or the local police.

Of course the consciousness and militancy of the students on a national scale, was uneven - some came out only for a few hours, some for days. Some were easily driven back into school by the headmaster, others stoned the school-staff and had to have their pickets broken up by dozens of police, specially brought in. In many places schools were attacked and their windows smashed. While students in some towns spent their time picketing, demonstrating and generally attempting to organise the struggle, others simply used the unexpected free time to go swimming in the river. In a small number of localities, Birkenhead for example, the parents at least tacitly supported their sons, though on the whole they were antagonistic to the idea, fearing the loss of the much-prized attendance-medals, which were often necessary to get jobs. Mothers in particular feared the future loss of another pittance of a wage-packet and the presence of another non-earning body to feed, and were most decisive in bludgeoning their offspring back to school.

It is in the beautifully acted, extremely telling scenes within the working-class home of one of the young strikers that the play scores over the book in vividly showing the confused and contradictory consciousness of the people involved and the forces acting on them, through the nuclear family. We see the class-conscious docker kick out his elder son who has enlisted in the army, recognising it as the arm of the ruling-class's state, but then beat up his wife for complaining that she can't keep them fed when he's on strike, thus intensifying her resentment against the organised working-class and driving her further into isolation.

The scene portrays quite clearly how the isolation and double oppression of women, in the family, actually drives them into the arms of reaction, as they attempt to defend what for them is the preferable, if miserable, status quo, rather than rely on the seemingly uncontrollable and dubious outcome of a strike. Such oppression and self-definition begins early - this is underlined by the fact that girls took little part in the strikes, except in Scotland.

There are amusing, if pointed, scenes too. The teacher fearing the loss of his authority, goes to the educational supply shop, which contains only a showcase full of canes. The shopkeeper asks him casually, like someone enquiring after another's health, "Do you have riots?" and proceeds to describe the riot-quelling properties of one of his 'special' products. The portrayal of the teacher, by Tony Meyer, is particularly noteworthy - we see the classical vacillation of the liberal, from what he imagines to be progressive tolerance, to attempted repression under pressure and then faced by an unfavourable balance of forces, the capitulation: "Caning is too hard - we must find a more amenable method of keeping control. With our English moderation and niceness, I'm sure we'll find a way."

Partly because of the isolation of school-students and their lack of any means of subsistence, and also the pressures arising from the family situation we have described, the strikes were broken. However part of the responsibility for this must lie with the revolutionary socialists and syndicalists of that time, and the trade union leaderships, who refused to take this mass upsurge of 'the kids' at all seriously or to give it leadership or support. We can learn our lessons from this. If the revolutionary organisation is going to take seriously its duty to 'organise the spontaneity of the masses' and intervene amongst all strata of the oppressed, then it must take any future incidents or upsurges in schools (and the potential for such movements still exists) very seriously and attempt to lead them. The winning of sections of workers to revolutionary politics, before they actually become part of the work-force and come under the sway of traditional social democratic ideology could be a tremendous factor in the growth of a revolutionary leadership of the working class.

Carl Gardner

LETTERS



I am an actress at the Half-Moon Theatre, and, while I am pleased to see that *Red Weekly* considers the Half-Moon worthy of a theatre review, I was nevertheless distressed at the tone of your reviewer, who failed to consider what might have been the motives of the Half Moon in putting on this play in the first place.

I can assure him that no one concerned with the production thought of it as an 'interesting historical curio,' nor were these their motives for accepting the invitation to perform it at the Round House.

The Half Moon may be a theatre but it is not an 'archaic palace of culture,' nor does it present works which are 'the glorified portrayal of the values of the ruling class.'

It is situated in a working class area of London and one of its prime concerns is to attract and involve the people living in the district.

While I consider it right and justified to devote a paragraph of your review to the Round House audience and its reaction to the play, I find it disappointing and unfair to all concerned in the production that your reviewer dismisses the whole performance with the words 'this is an excellent production' and leaves the Half Moon to stew while he fulminates about the 'bourgeois theatre' and its 'castration' of Brecht. As for the potential audience, this single sentence is no encouragement to go and see the play.

I wonder what you see as the function of your reviews: if as I suppose in this case, it is to encourage people to come into contact with political drama, your reviewer has failed.

I hope that if the *Red Weekly* intends to review the Half Moon's present production, 'Fall in and Follow me,' or indeed those of any other theatres, they will take what the play is saying and how the production says it as a starting point for their review.

I believe that it is only from this basis that interest will be aroused.

I read Nick Adams' review in your No. 4 issue and found its approach much more acceptable.

Ruth Saglow

Morris Blake Replies:

My article on Brecht was not intended as a conventional review. *Red Weekly* already published such a review of the earlier production of this play. 'Communique from the Army of the Arts' will try to deal with the problems of the relationship between art and class struggle in a variety of contexts. Last week's column was meant to be a fairly general appraisal of Brecht in relation to the traditional role of the theatre in capitalist society.

These are important questions and require serious discussion. How political can so-called 'political' theatre really be, given the social context in which it is presented. There may be particular exceptions, but in general theatre does present ruling class values (it is a vehicle of capitalist ideology). Even when intensely revolutionary works appear, the capitalist theatre (again in general - I exempt the Half Moon) co-opts and neutralises the content of these works, precisely by exploiting them for profit.

The fact is, the working class, who have the most to gain from the content of Brecht's work, rarely sees it performed because they experience the theatre as something traditionally reserved for the 'upper classes.' (In his review of 'The Mother' Nick Adams commented that even the Half Moon audience - despite the location of the theatre in a working class area - was predominantly petty-bourgeois. We must face up to this problem!)

These problems of the relationship between the content of art, its form and the social context in which it is created cannot be reduced to the 'motives' of the people who are engaged in the creative work. The individual attitude of the writer, actor or producer may be important - but they cannot decisively affect the social role art plays in society. The most important 'motives' that we should be worrying about are those that keep the working class from attending revolutionary theatre. Unless we are able to crack this particular nut, our best intentions will be of limited effect.

Red Weekly will be reviewing 'Fall in and Follow Me' and will of course take up the content of the play. However the problems of form and social context are also ones that all revolutionaries in the 'army of the arts' must deal with in a serious way.

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In the late fifties and early sixties the African continent commanded wide attention. The ending of direct colonial rule over most of its territory began in 1957 in Ghana and was continued with extreme rapidity throughout the continent. For a whole period the leaderships of the new states were given favourable publicity particularly in the liberal and social democratic press.

In his 1962 book *African Socialism*, Fenner Brockway made a kaleidoscopic tour of the newly independent states of black Africa. With a variety of qualifications every one of them was labelled as developing in a socialist direction. The writings and speeches of figures as diverse as Senghor (Senegal), Mboya (Kenya), Lumumba (the Congo) and above all Nkrumah (Ghana), were lauded as embodying a new and specifically African socialist ideology. On the international plane the policy of 'non-alignment' with either of the power blocs and 'positive neutralism' were heralded as constituting a breakthrough for world peace. Such ideas were particularly prevalent amongst activists in that early manifestation of the British youth radicalisation around the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

The stain on this generally optimistic canvas was of course the continued existence of the white racist power bloc in Southern Africa. But even here there were hopes that a unity would be found amongst the states of black Africa sufficient to ensure the rapid destruction of this 'relic of the colonial period.'

MILITARY COUPS

Some ten or more years later the picture has radically altered. Military coups swept virtually all the states of West and Central Africa in the

middle sixties. Continued imperialist control of the key mining industries combined with the worldwide depression of commodity prices to hammer home the realities of neo-colonial dependence. Burgeoning groups of politicians, army officers, administrators and officials constituted an elite minority, with living standards dramatically in contrast to those of the majority of their populations. While the Portuguese colonialists were faced with a mounting guerilla war in each of their three territories, a highly co-ordinated repression by the South African government succeeded in dampening down all internal resistance for a lengthy period from the early 60s. Above all, the crucial factor of massive and co-ordinated assistance in the liberation of the white enclaves was absent.

But if the 1960s saw Africa temporarily lapsing into the role of the 'forgotten Continent,' we can safely say that the future now threatens to see the re-emergence of significant mass struggles on the Continent. The 'independent' states dramatically illustrate the truth of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution: that in the era of imperialism there is no way forward for the masses of the exploited countries except through the socialist revolution. All over Africa the ruling groups are increasingly revealed as the agents of external imperialism, dependent in the last analysis on their masters in London, Paris, Washington, Bonn, etc. The Nigerian civil war which saw both sides equally dependent on rival imperialisms was clear confirmation of this. All over Africa there has been a failure to achieve sufficient economic development to satisfy even partially the rising expectations of a fast expanding population.

The contradiction is seen most acutely in those countries like Kenya and Nigeria where

a measure of economic development has taken place, highlighting the wealth of the imperialist corporations and the conspicuous consumption of their local agents in contrast to the desperate poverty of the mass of the population. Undoubtedly the stage is set for the re-emergence of massive social struggles inside the neo-colonialist countries of black Africa.

STRIKE WAVE

Meantime too the white South has seen a recent sharp escalation of struggles - notably

which will be the flashpoint for revolution in Africa in the immediate future. But it will be equally necessary for the masses of black Africa to confront imperialism and its local agents head on. The joining together of these two processes will constitute the coming African socialist revolution.

One of the clearest indicators of the relative underdevelopment of the revolutionary process on the continent to date has been the lack of influence wielded by any of the

Tony Southall introduces a new series on **AFRICA IN STRUGGLE**

the big strike wave which occurred in South Africa amongst black workers at the beginning of this year, demonstrating the failure to create a permanently quiescent labour force for exploitation by the fast expanding industrial economy. The rebirth of mass struggle inside this bastion of imperialism's influence in Africa adds a new dimension to the whole anti-imperialist struggle on the continent.

Clearly it is this battle against the naked racism and oppression inside the white enclaves

important tendencies in the international workers' movement. The comrades of the Fourth International see the development of revolutionary theory and organisation in Africa as a central task of the coming period, without which the revolutionary process is certain to be aborted at an early stage. The present series will examine the situation in a representative sample of states of black Africa and the white South, with the intention of making a contribution to that process in however modest a way.

Peron moves first

On 13 July, as Peron was explaining on TV why Campora had renounced the Argentinian Presidency in his favour, the CGT union federation was sending out the order: 'No strikes, no demonstrations - you can show your support at the polling booth.'

Peron is taking over the Presidency, as we predicted some weeks ago, in a bid to keep control over the Peronist movement. The military dictators accepted his return rather than launch into civil war against an undefeated working class movement; they will keep him just as long as he has the power to suppress the independent struggles of the working class.

But such a programme cannot be implemented without tearing the Peronist movement apart by a vicious attack on the working class. The mass of workers have high expectations from Peronism - witness the mass attack on the jails

on the night of Campora's inauguration on 25 May, and the wave of factory and work-place occupations which followed.

The army and the traditional ruling class parties, far from fading from the scene as many bourgeois commentators have suggested, are at the centre of the government changes. Balbin of the Radical Civic Union, the strongest of the traditional parties and one of the main targets of Peronist demagoguery in 1943-55, is likely to be vice-president. What is more, the announcement of the 'restoration' came only after several days of talks between Peron and Carcagno, commander-in-chief of the army, and other military leaders.

The programme of the Peronist government is the 'social pact' agreed between the employers' federation and the CGT leadership. It consists of a few gestures against the US monopolies,

warm encouragement to European capital, and a two-year wage restraint which would, in the present inflationary situation, mean further cuts in real wages. The first aim of all this, Peron said in his weekend speeches, is to restore the confidence of investors - which is why he is also bent on wiping out the guerrilla movement.

Within the organised Peronist movement there is already a deep split between the left of the Peronist Youth and the leadership, including the CGT bureaucrats led by Jose Rucci. It became apparent even before Campora's accession, when the Youth declared in favour of popular militias, and their leader, Galimberti, was at once replaced on Peron's orders. The Ezeiza airport massacre in June was the most dramatic episode of all: while the massive crowd was assembling to welcome Peron, the CGT gangsters controlling the platform mounted a series of provocations against the youth and the left-wing guerrillas, culminating in the shooting in which 20 people died.

Peron's witch-hunt against Trotskyism and the ERP guerrillas has failed to close the ranks of the Peronists. Sections of the Youth continue to denounce the McCarthyite campaign and the CGT leaders. Peron had to take over the Presidency to outflank the left and prevent the bureaucracy from losing its grip on the unions. The announcement of Campora's resignation was preceded by ten days of campaigning by the trade union bureaucracy on the slogan 'Peron to power'. The decision came in time to prevent the campaign from unleashing mass mobilisations, the first of which had been planned for Saturday.

Peron's manoeuvre shows the danger of the illusion-mongering of the Peronist left. The Peronist guerrilla groups (FAR, FAP, Montoneros) declared a month ago that if they could not get their demands satisfied by Campora, they would turn to Peron. Peron has moved first.

Jane Frazer

Uruguay: CP breaks the General Strike

The Communist Party leaders of the banned Uruguayan trade unions this week called off the general strike against the recent military coup.

Days before, they had rejected government wage offers of 25-50% and reiterated the demand for restoration of democratic rights and for wage increases of 70-80% to counteract inflation. The CNT union leadership now claims that 'the workers could not go on for more than ten days without pay', and that the strike 'has anyway made real progress against the regime and weakened President Bordaberry internally and internationally.'

In the factory occupations and the massive demonstration against the regime on 9 July, the workers of Montevideo gave the lie to the Stalinists' claim that they would not fight on. In some factories, the CNT bureaucrats have had to use strong-arm tactics against militants to force a return to work.

On the day after the confrontation with the 9 July demonstration, army chiefs issued a communique blaming President Bordaberry for the events: the policy of force, it said, was the government's, and the army was only 'obeying orders'. To the CP this was confirmation of their strategy of 'pushing the army to the left' of Bordaberry. But the coup of 27 June and the new dictatorship are above all the work of the army. By calling off the strike, the CP has allowed the counter-revolutionary regime to remain intact.

Peron (left) and Campora - the front man steps aside.



International Marxist Group (British Section of the Fourth International)



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Nothing short of complete reinstatement without loss of pay is being demanded for 13 scaffolders sacked last week for alleged 'restriction of output' at the Imperial London Contractors' site in Bedford Way, London.

A call for strike action was narrowly defeated at a mass meeting of all the men on the site last Thursday. Nevertheless the majority of them did not cross the picket line mounted by the scaffolders on Monday morning. But the 25 or so who did have since been treated with loving care by the site management. Each morning they have assembled in Russell Square, just down the road, to hear the bosses thank them for their 'loyalty' and offer them full pay even if they don't work the hours.

They have also been recommended to elect a new works committee and site convenor. In fact it is the extremely efficient and democratic self-organisation of the men, in which the scaffolders have been prominent, that lies behind the management's attacks. 'If we take these men back,' the site manager told a T&GWU official, 'we'll have nothing but problems until the hotels are finished.'

HIT WHERE IT HURTS MOST

This fight will only be won if the employers are hit where it hurts them

most. So far the men have effectively shut down the site (with the help of two men permanently stationed at the top of the cranes), and are now picketing the five completed hotels owned by the same company. All the residents now have to come and go by bus, as the taxi drivers have agreed to a complete boycott. In return, the building workers have pledged their support for the cabbies' efforts to do away with their own version of the 'jump'-mini-cabs.

Approaches have also been made by the strike committee to the International Workers Branch of the T&GWU to get support from the hotel workers themselves, who know the meaning of victimisation only too well.

It is this kind of practical solidarity, discussed and organised by a democratically elected strike committee, which the management fear most. On the other hand, a defeat for the strike would mean not just the sacking of 13 men but the end of effective organisation on the site, paving the way for the return of the 'jump' and further victimisations. This would have repercussions well beyond just the ILC site. That is why it is so urgent to maintain and extend the fighting solidarity which has already been won.

Nick Adams

HOTEL SITE MEN WIN SUPPORT



Early morning patrol of hotel dining room by striking building workers.

Photo: Ezra Nathan (Red Weekly)

PD men still on hunger strike

Mike Farrell and Tony Canavan, the two members of People's Democracy held in Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast, are continuing their hunger strike; so far the authorities have not responded to their demand for political status. Mike and Tony are still being held in a basement cell for 23 hours every day, and the abuse and threats from the loyalists goes on.

After representations made to him by the Anti-Internment League, Stan O'Connell MP took up the case with Whitelaw's office. This led to a letter from Whitelaw's Private Secretary, claiming that, 'I understand that these two men are being held in a wing of Belfast Prison which is not occupied by "Loyalist" prisoners' (emphasis in original). The facts are rather different. Farrell and Canavan are in 'D' Wing; and it was through the roof of 'D' Wing that loyalist prisoners broke on 12 July to demonstrate their allegiance to the Protestant ascendancy before the television and press cameras of the world.

If Mike and Tony have to continue their hunger strike for much longer, the position will become very serious indeed. The campaign on their behalf must be stepped-up. A special statement giving the facts of the case has been issued by the Anti-Internment League and can be obtained from Robin MacGovern c/o Red Weekly.

The acquittal of eight building workers on charges of causing an affray and intimidation at Mold Crown Court last week marked a step forward in the defence campaign for the Shrewsbury 24. Five of the eight will be reappearing at Shrewsbury Crown Court when the case against the 24 opens there, probably in October.

The trial at Mold was in many ways a test case in the use of the criminal law against pickets, in preparation for the major Shrewsbury case. Although there were some minor charges of damage to property, on which five of them were found guilty and fined between £15 and £50, the efforts of the prosecution were concentrated on proving the charges of causing an affray and intimidation. These were the big ones, with the prosecution alleging that only the vaguest evidence was necessary to prove the charges. For instance, it was claimed that on the charge of causing an affray, the prosecution had only to show that the accused were 'present, adding to the numbers and encouraging a show of force'.

SCEPTICAL

But the jury were understandably sceptical about all this. After all, even Mr Maurice Drake, QC, for the prosecution had to admit in his summing up that, 'one element in the affray may be missing, I deny this but you may think it so'. The jury had to weigh against the 'evidence' of the prosecution the claims of the building workers that they had been con-

tinually harassed by police, that once arrested they had been kept in the police station until they agreed to sign statements, that it was the police who had worked out the contents of some of the statements, and so on. And it was not one of the accused, but a prosecution witness, who told the court that his interrogation by the police had been 'like being in front of the Gestapo during the war'.

As some of the accused told the court earlier, it was trade unionism which was on trial in Mold Crown Court. And, despite all the efforts of the prosecution, it was trade unionism—and particularly the right to picket which emerged triumphant at the end of the day.

NO GUARANTEE

However, a single battle won is no guarantee of final victory. At this very moment a further trial is taking place at Mold in which two more building workers face charges of intimidation during last year's strike. And there is still the major test of strength to come at Shrewsbury, when the prosecution will be attempting to prove conspiracy with the help of no less than 250 witnesses, in a trial that may last for as long as five months.

The need to build and extend the defence campaign is therefore as urgent as ever. A priority must be the establishment of local defence committees which can organise and coordinate the activities of local trade union militants on this issue. The

Victory for Mold men



conference held last weekend in Sheffield (see page 3) is an excellent example of what can be done. In London a mass meeting to organise the campaign has been called by the Joint Sites Committee for Friday, 17 August. All these activities will lead up to a mass rally in Trafalgar Square some time in September, from which the 24 will set out on a ten-day march to Shrewsbury to gain the widest possible publicity for their case before the trial opens.

MARTIN METEYARD

Dave Jackson (right), chairman of the North Wales Defence Committee, receiving the collection of £413 taken at the SLL-IMG meeting in defence of the Shrewsbury 24 from IMG national secretary, Bob Pennington.

Jackson said: 'I would like to thank both the Socialist Labour League and the International Marxist Group for their jointly organised meeting. This money will push the campaign forward.'

'Workers Press and Red Weekly have also played an important part in bringing our fight to the attention of the labour movement.'

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WHAT'S ON

FREE THE COVENTRY 7 and all Irish political prisoners: demonstration in Coventry, Sunday 12 August, Assemble at Hearsall Common, Earlsdon, Coventry at 2.30 p.m., before marching to Precinct for rally with national speakers. Information from Defence Committee, 27 Paynes Lane, Coventry CV203 5B991.

CEYLON SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN: Public meeting 7.00 p.m. Friday, 20 July, at Conway Hall - 'Legal reform as an instrument of repression: today's experience in Ceylon and Ireland.' Discussion with other groups struggling against repression. Speakers include: Brian Ross-Smith and Rook Tansley (Haldane Society) and a practising lawyer from Ceylon.

IMMIGRANT WORKERS AND RACISM: Leeds IMD public meeting, Wednesday 25 July, at 8.00 p.m. in the Trades Club.

IMG RED FORUM: Series of introductory discussions for those in the London area on the politics of the Fourth International. New series starts this Tuesday, 17 July, at 8.00 p.m. in the General Picton pub, Colindale Road (5 minutes walk from Kings X tube).

INDOCHINA SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE: Demonstration outside 'Tiger Cage' manufacturers, Brown & Root Inc, 82 Pall Mall, London, S.W.1 - 12.30 p.m., Saturday 21 July.

REQUIRED URGENTLY: Fast accurate typist - 35 hour week. Flexible hours, wages negotiable. Write to Carl at F.I. Litho, 182 Pentonville Road, London, N.1, or phone 01-837 9887.

CENTRAL LONDON A.I.L.: Forum by Robin Blackburn - 'Cuba and the Logic of Permanent Revolution.' Friday, 27 July, at 8.00 p.m. in the General Picton pub, Colindale Road, London N.1. 15 minutes Kings X tube.

DEFEND THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE: Demonstration in Liverpool, 11.00 a.m., Saturday 21 July. March from Blington to the French Consulate at the Pier Head.

LIVERPOOL SHOW: Picket Army Recruiting Tent, 2.00 p.m., 21 July. Organised by Merseyside Irish Solidarity Committee.

ANTI-INTERMENT DEMO: Sunday, 12 August, starting from Speakers Corner at 2.30 a.m. Organised by Anti-Internment Ad Hoc Committee (includes Sinn Fein, Clann na nEireann, A.I.L., ICRA, PD, IMG, IS etc.).