



United Action Beats Bureaucrats' Sabotage

FIREMEN SHOW WAY

The recent victory won by the Glasgow firemen contains important lessons for the whole working class movement as it faces up to the task of fighting Phase 3.

The essential ingredient of the firemen's victory was united working class support. Rank-and-file firemen in many parts of the country ignored their union leadership and acted in solidarity with Glasgow. Trades councils across Scotland refused to obey the orders of the Scottish TUC not to support the firemen, and provided moral and financial backing.

By CHRIS BALFOUR

The entire Glasgow working class were behind the strikers. Workers in two of the city's largest factories voted overwhelmingly in favour of a levy to assist the firemen. Many smaller incidents - such as the success of collections taken at the university and the football grounds bear witness to the solid backing the firemen had.

They received this kind of support because hundreds of thousands of workers, housewives and students understood that the fight of the firemen against the Tories was their fight, and that this fight could only be won by united support.

This impressive display of unity carried the day not only against the Tory Government, but against its allies in the trade union bureaucracy as well: the leadership of the Fire Brigades Union, the Scottish TUC, and Len Murray of the British TUC. The trade union bureaucracy is not prepared to lead any kind of determined struggle against the Tory Government, and this rapidly leads them to take up an outright reactionary stance when confrontations such as this break out despite their manoeuvres.

Another step forward for rank-and-file unity was notched up in the struggle against the NIRC fine on the AUEW. The AUEW leadership also fears an all-out fight with the

Tories, and has thus repeatedly failed to offer any leadership in the fight against the NIRC and the Industrial Relations Act. This has threatened to demoralise many militants, who are coming to feel that one-day protest strikes are a waste of time, and could have undermined the stoppage called for 5 November.

This danger was overcome by the convening of shop stewards' meetings in many districts to discuss the fine and decide on the course of action to be adopted. These meetings had, in most cases, a record attendance and ensured the direct involvement of rank-and-file representatives in the decision to strike.

As a result more workers struck on the 5th than in previous anti-NIRC demonstrations, despite the fact that most of Scotland and some parts of South Wales are striking separately on the 12th.

An equally important development was the support of the strike by many workers not in the AUEW. Large numbers of building workers in London, Manchester and Birmingham struck on the 5th, and many of the Glasgow factories that have announced their intention to join the Scottish strike on the 12th have only a small proportion of their workforce in the AUEW.

The campaign of the AUEW against the NIRC must be continued and extended to draw in other sections of workers. The way to do this has been shown by the successful mo-

bilisations on the 5th: further meetings of engineering stewards should be organised in every district, to which representatives from other groups of workers are invited.

A call should go up from such meetings to both the AUEW Executive and the TUC for national industrial action against the Tory Government. A local campaign of mass meetings, mass propaganda and protest actions should be organised to make the entire working class aware of what is at stake in the fight against the NIRC. Preparations should be made to coordinate such actions on the national level, and to launch national action if the union bureaucrats are unwilling to take this step.

A second key job is to build a fighting alliance of miners and engineers for the struggle on the wages front. This must be done through a campaign in the NUM and the AUEW both to call for a national agreement on joint action between the union leaderships, and to organise, on a local level, joint conferences, mass meetings, and plans for action, that will bring the rank-and-file of the two unions together for the struggle.

If these two tasks are carried out, we will see the sort of working class unity that can smash the policies of the Tory Government and lay the basis for a general strike that will sound the death-knell of that Government.

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FUND DRIVE

The thousands of workers who spilled out of the factories and onto the streets on Monday gave the fight against the NIRC a good boost. You too have been given a good boost towards our target of £300 for the November Fund Drive with a cheque for £40 from a reader in the USA, who tells us that we are the best English language left-wing paper around. We wouldn't go quite that far, but we do claim to have consistently put forward the next steps necessary in the fight against the NIRC, the Industrial Relations Act, and the Tory Government. In particular, we have pointed out that the fight against the NIRC cannot be won through one-day strikes. The working class must follow through, by organising bigger and more sustained actions, striking out along the road of a fight to bring down the Tory Government itself. And we need you to follow through. One cheque, or passing the target for one month, won't solve our problems. We need bigger and more sustained donations if we are to expand and improve our coverage. Make our good start this month even better, send in a donation today - to: Red Weekly Fighting Fund, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

THOUSANDS BACK CHILE STRUGGLE



The rallies which took place in London, Liverpool and Glasgow last weekend, in solidarity with the resistance to the junta in Chile, showed the effect which the coup has had on the British working class movement, and the fact that Chile will continue to be a focus for political action.

In London, 8,000 marched from Speakers Corner. The trade union contingent included dozens of trades council and shop stewards committee banners, and groups of workers from every major union. The IMG mobilised 1,200 militants behind its banners, and made a powerful impact with its slogans of solidarity with the armed struggle, and demands for the blacking of trade with Chile.

All of the speakers at Trafalgar Square stressed the need to block the export of the naval vessels and

re-fitted by British firms. The IMG speaker Tariq Ali, (who was somehow omitted in the *Morning Star* report of the demo.), quoted Fidel Castro's statement that if every Chilean worker and peasant had been armed there would have been no coup. He called for solidarity with the growing armed struggle in Chile and criticised those groups which had chosen to stay out of the demonstration.

On Merseyside docks shop stewards have decided to ban the handling of any Chilean cargoes and in particular to prevent the shipment of the Hawker-Siddeley fighters now awaiting delivery to the regime. This action gives a lead to the entire trade union movement. Solidarity with the Chilean resistance must be translated into effective support through

Sandra Hortensia Allende, widow of Chilean...

National Front getting rattled?

The thugs guarding the National Front's election rally in Hove Town Hall last Saturday (3 November), and the leaflets, obviously prepared in advance, denying that they are fascists, indicate that the Front is rattled by recent counter demonstrations, and the routs they have suffered. They gave wide

publicity to their fears that the demonstration organised by the Brighton Ad-Hoc Committee Against Fascism would result in an attack on their meeting.

The Ad-Hoc Committee had chosen this NF election rally, the high point of the Front's

campaign, in order to expose the NF as a fascist and racist organisation, despite the 'respectable' image which it is trying to put over with its candidate, Squadron-Leader Harrison-Broadley, a former prisoner of war in Germany during World War Two. Speakers who addressed the demonstration

before it set out included representatives of the IMG, IS, Communist Party, and the Communist Party of England (M-L), a Maoist group who have put up a candidate in the by-election.

The Anti-Fascist Ad-Hoc Committee considers that it achieved its main objective in exposing the real nature of the National Front, but this demonstration was only the beginning of a campaign against the racist and fascist activities of the Front in the Brighton and Hove area.

LIVERPOOL

An attempt by the National Front in Liverpool to hold a private meeting for members and supporters was met by a picket of over 50 anti-fascists. A Front supporter who arrived in a car with two large dogs was surrounded and forced to drive away, and the fascists were only able to enter the meeting when the police arrived and escorted them through the picket. This anti-fascist mobilisation would have been much bigger if it had not co-incided with an important public meeting on Chile.

The picket was called by the Merseyside Anti-Fascist Committee, which is receiving broad support from the local labour movement. The Committee includes representatives from the Liverpool and Birkenhead Trades Councils, Merseyside Womens Liberation Group, and local student and political organisations. It is pledged to oppose fascism within the trade union movement, to respond actively to fascist meetings and demonstrations, and to respond to attacks by the fascists on any section of the population, political group, or individual. It recognises that anti-fascist action must go hand in hand with struggle against the problems of unemployment, bad housing etc, which the fascists exploit for their reactionary and divisive propaganda.



Part of Saturday's demonstration against the National Front in Hove

Photo: Ezra Nathan (Red Weekly)

NIRC: Sheffield debates way forward

In response to an almost unanimous call from a mass shop stewards meeting in Sheffield, the engineering industry in Sheffield was virtually stopped today (Monday 5th), to protest against the NIRC fines arising from the Con Mech dispute. But the failure of the AUEW executive to give a clear lead, and the Communist Party's reliance on a 24-hour protest, has led to important differences within the leadership of the rank and file and among the leading militants of the Communist Party.

At the shop stewards quarterly meeting the convenors of three important factories opened the debate with a call for an all out national strike, and attacked the executive for not taking a lead. This met with an enthusiastic response from the body of the meeting. In the end the intervention of the big battalions of the CP resulted in an endorsement of the executive and the call for a 24-hour stoppage, but a large section of the meeting remained unconvinced.

At the City Hall today after a demonstration of some 800 engineers, with support from building workers and other sections of the labour movement, the feeling in favour of a national strike call was clearly demonstrated. Although discussion from the floor was severely limited, two of the three speakers attacked the tokenism of the 24-hour stoppage.

The point was made that such a stoppage only made sense if it was used to build support for an all-out confrontation, and to demonstrate to the executive the need and support for a national stoppage. The CP convenor from BSC River Don went further than tactical opposition to the official line. He argued that although we were in favour of a recall TUC to unite the offensive of the working class, and were in favour of as much pressure as possible on the official leadership, this in itself was not the answer. Past experience must teach us the lesson, he said, that the General Council could not be relied on. The only way forward was to unite now, at rank and file level, the forces who were lining up for a struggle with the Tory Government, and this must be done whether the TUC was prepared to give a lead or not.

Those stewards and convenors who, through the events of recent months, have realised the need to organise for the coming struggles independently of the official leaderships must begin that task now. Over the NIRC fine individual stewards committees should campaign through leaflets and meetings to win the membership

for a national strike, and massive pressure put on the executive to this effect. For the coming wage battles conferences should be sponsored by shop stewards committees, inviting delegates from all sections of workers who will be going into struggle to discuss how to unite the full force of the working class against the Tory Government and how to prepare the labour movement to go beyond its official leadership and carry this struggle through to victory.

JIM WILSON

Challenge to anti-abortion rally

One of the most influential and rapidly growing organisations dedicated to the spreading of reactionary ideas throughout the working class, the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC), is planning a mass lobby of Parliament on 20 November.

SPUC is the anti-abortion group which organised mass rallies in Liverpool and Manchester earlier this year. Committed to keeping women tied to their traditional positions in the kitchen and nursery (where, it might be noted, they are less likely to be troublesome to the ruling class), SPUC - with the active collaboration of the churches - takes a special interest in working class women. They have already issued a special appeal for funds which will allow them to make up the wages of anyone who has to miss a day at work in order to attend the lobby.

SPUC has close working arrangements with other reactionary peddlers of ruling class 'morals': they have backed a 'petition for decency' sponsored by Mary Whitehouse's 'National Viewers and Listeners Association' and the 'Festival of Light', as well as Whitehouse's more recent Anti-Obsecenity Law petition. But of all these currents it is SPUC which has something of a mass influence and a working class audience.

The SPUC lobby will assemble at Central Hall, Westminster and groups of 200 will leave every half hour from 2.15 p.m. on for the House of Commons.

Discussions are taking place with a view to mounting some form of counter-demonstration. Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign (WACC) have proposed a motorcade leaving the South London Womens' Centre (14 Radnor Terrace, SW8) at 12.30. An important planning meeting will be held at the General Picton pub, (corner of Caledonian Road and Wharfedaje Road - near Kings' Cross) at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, 13 November to work out plans for further actions. Representatives from womens' liberation

groups, trade unions, student unions - indeed anyone concerned with breaking the hold of reactionary ideas over the working class - should attend.

Ruth Morgan

Last Saturday the anti-abortion group LIFE (set up by members of the Catholic Church) staged a 300-strong demonstration against the opening of a birth control centre in Leamington Spa. The demonstrators held a silent march to the Blackdown Clinic where they laid a wreath 'in memory of the babies who have died there'.

A counter-demonstration was organised by the Coventry and Leamington Women's Liberation groups, with support from local colleges and the Coventry IMG. 200 counter-demonstrators marched down the main street of Leamington, leafletting shoppers and performing street theatre.

Struggle is spreading against hospital food prices

Major developments have taken place in the fight against rising prices in hospital canteens.

An eight day boycott of the canteen was organised in Dulwich Hospital by the NUPE-branch committee, nurses, engineers and medical students. Other hospitals in the group have been contacted, and the struggle

has now spread to Kings College Hospital, where a committee of nurses and medical students has been formed. Co-ordinated action between the hospitals, in the form of boycotts and mass meetings, has been organised.

UNITY

The joint committee which has been set up met the management, and demanded a 25% decrease in food prices for all hospital workers, no further price increases, and workers representatives to inspect food standards and catering department accounts. Management refused all the demands, but subsequently sent a letter to the Department of Health and Social Security stressing that their canteen takings have been cut by two thirds.

Throughout the struggle the importance of the unity of all hospital workers, and the necessity for support from the local labour movement has been stressed. A picket outside Dulwich Hospital was supported by Southwark Trades Council, ASTMS, and local teachers. Doctors and medical students in Dulwich have boycotted their canteen. Patients at Kings College Hospital have set up a support committee, collected £63, and many patients have signed a petition in support of the struggle.

HEALTH SERVICE CRISIS

The All London Health Workers Alliance has called on trade unions in other hospitals to support the struggle, through messages of solidarity, by taking similar action and by sending delegates to other trade unions to explain the crisis in the health service and the need to build links with other workers in preparation for the struggles against Phase 3. The President of Southwark Trades Council echoed these points when he addressed a general meeting of the workers involved in the struggle.

The response of the workers at Dulwich and Kings, particularly that of the nurses (the vast majority of whom are unorganised), shows how deep the crisis within the health service has become, and the way in which traditionally passive sections of workers are becoming militant in defending their own interests.

The hospital workers strike earlier this year showed that the Tory Government's professed concern for the low-paid is a sham. The Phase 3 proposals, even with the extra money offered under the 'unsocial hours' clause, will not even enable hospital nurses and ancillary staff to maintain their present standard of living over the next year.

The next step at Kings and Dulwich should be the setting up of a committee to build support amongst hospital workers and the local labour movement for the demonstration which has been called for 1 December. This action can be an important move towards linking up these sections of workers in preparation for the struggle against Phase 3.

JANE SUTHERLAND



an evening of music and theatre for
John MacLean

at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C1. Friday 16th November, 7.30pm.

Peggy Seeger - Ewan MacColl
Karlton Kowns Revolution Theatre
The Exiles - Bobby Campbell
Gordon McCulloch - Trevor Hyett
Kevin Burke - Tom Madden
Jim Younger

Police versus blacks

The two faces of the Home Office

When the House of Lords ruled that the Immigration Act could operate retroactively, the Asian organisations were unable to sustain any consistent mobilisation against the Act, apart from the 22 July Demonstration in London. But the Lords ruling has had a lasting effect on the Asian community, the police, the Government and the racist right. A number of events in the last few weeks illustrate this.

TORY CONFERENCE

The Conservative Party Conference was a significant indication of the depth of the racist offensive being launched by the ruling class and its allies. The Tory leadership has attempted to carry out two political operations over the last year. Firstly, to stabilise the Tory vote amongst the working class by exploiting the racist hostility to immigrants felt by many workers. The second, and perhaps more important, was to try to retain the loyalty of the reactionary middle class layers who form an important part of the social base of the Tory Party, but who are alienated by the EEC and the Government's inability to control inflation.

But the conference showed that the tougher racist measures of recent months have not satisfied the Tory constituency right. When Robert Carr tried to claim that the Government had kept its promises on immigration he was heckled. William Deedes, Chairman of the Commons Select Committee on Race Relations, voiced the views of the hecklers when he said: 'If we want effective control we must think more seriously of internal control, and that means identity cards for all.'

The Party leadership managed to avoid an open confrontation by putting down a motion which could win support from all the different currents. Passed with an overwhelming majority, it embodied the demand that 'in the interests of good and better race relations, immigration must be even more strictly controlled, and that there must be no further large scale immigration into Britain of any kind.'

WIDGERY RULING

The Government was no doubt assisted in its bid to project an image of unity by the gratification felt by delegates at Lord Widgery's ruling in the High Court two days earlier. While Carr was speaking before the TV cameras at Blackpool about Britain's 'responsibility' to black passport holders in other countries, Lord Widgery had removed any legal responsibility by a simple ruling. When Powell argued at the 1972 conference that Britain had no legal responsibility to the UK passport holders from East Africa, Carr opposed him, and at the time Heath reminded the Monday Club of the legal position.

However, Widgery has now ruled that there is no legal right of entry, independent of the 1971 Act. Britain no longer has any legal obligation to accept UK passport holders unless they can claim specific ties of blood or birth with Britain. It is known that Widgery consulted the Home Office — and therefore Carr — before making this ruling.

Carr's promise at the Tory conference to take tougher measures against illegal immigration means more than just spectacular 'catches' in the English Channel by the Immigration Unit, as the experience of the last few weeks shows.

On 11 October, a squad of police descended on Whitfield Street in Camden, North London. They cordoned off the street, and conducted a house to house search in an entire block of houses and restaurants. Every Asian who could not produce a passport was bundled into a police van, and taken to Leman Street Police Station, along with fifty (some of them from similar raids in Tower Hamlets the same day) were held until their friends or relatives could bring their passports to the station.

photocopy to the Southall police. The only explanation of what happened next is that the police and immigration officials mistook the Abdul Malik sitting in front of them for another Abdul Malik, believed to be an illegal immigrant.

In an attempt to force him to sign a 'confession' that he was an illegal immigrant, the police subjected him to a series of assaults, including beating him on the knees with truncheons, pulling his hair, choking him, beating his



The racist forces have an effective ally in the press, as the *Newham Recorder* showed recently when in a front page story it tried to make out that Asian immigrants were responsible for the overcrowding of local schools. However, this did not go unchallenged, and last Saturday over 50 anti-racist militants mounted a picket followed by a meeting outside the newspaper's offices in East London.

Photo: Chris Davies (Report)

In this case the police, enforcing detention orders made out by Immigration officers against 14 named persons, used a dragnet technique, in which every black person who did not keep his or her passport with him at all times was rounded up. In other words, in both these cases every Asian in the area was presumed guilty until they could prove their innocence. Carr's promise that the black communities would not be harassed, which helped moderate black community leaders to damp down the rising struggle against the Immigration Act following the Lords ruling, clearly meant nothing.

Another recent case illustrates what can happen to an individual whom police and immigration officers believe to be an illegal immigrant.

ABDUL MALIK

In August, Abdul Malik, an Asian worker living in Southall, was taken to Southall police station and accused of being an illegal immigrant. He had submitted his passport to the Home Office, along with his application for British citizenship, and they had sent a

genitals, and hitting his head against a wall. He continually refused to sign.

Some days later he was taken on the orders of detention officers to the Queens Building Detention Centre at London Airport, without even being allowed to pick up any belongings from home. There he was given the Hobson's choice of either signing the confession or being 'removed' i.e. deported under a section of the Immigration Act which allows people believed to be illegal immigrants to be shipped out of the country without a hearing.

Had Malik signed the confession he would undoubtedly have been deported. He was only released when a cousin managed to obtain a writ of *habeas corpus*. The Home Office has since dropped all charges against him.

This case illustrates the possibilities open for collaboration and mutual cover-up between police and immigration officers. By getting an immigrant to sign a 'confession', immigration officers would score another 'success'. Charges of 'police brutality' made by a self-confessed illegal immigrant would not carry much weight

(assuming that he has time to make a complaint against the police before being deported). And if it turns out that the police do make a mistaken identification, immigration officers can cover up for police brutality by removal of the immigrant concerned from the country.

HOME OFFICE MOVES

Hand in hand with these new legal and police attacks on black people the Home Office is thinking of ways to 'improve immigrant-police relations' by 'liberal' measures. This is illustrated by its recent response to last year's Select Committee Report on Race Relations and Immigration, which put forward a series of proposals designed to reconcile the black communities to the repressive role of the police.

These proposals include the building up of a body of community and youth leaders to 'counter distortion and exaggeration', the extension of the police community liaison officer scheme, systematic pro-police propaganda in schools, the recruitment of more coloured policemen, and training for police officers in 'race relations' and a 'few simple words of Hindi and Urdu'. Most important, they propose 'independent tribunals' to consider complaints against the police. The Home Office agrees in general with these proposals.

A Runnymede Report, published last week for the Ealing Community Relations Council, makes proposals similar to those of the Select Committee. It sets out to prove 'a *prima facie* case against the police on charges of brutality and partial conduct against the immigrant community in Ealing.'

BREAKDOWN OF COMMUNICATION

Runnymede, whose personnel overlaps with that of the Select Committee, has shown through its study of Ealing that there exists a layer of black people 'predisposed to believe in the fairness of British institutions,' whose faith is being destroyed by 'a handful of errant officers' whose treatment of all black people with indiscriminate contempt will 'wreck the foundations of goodwill.'

They argue that this can be avoided through independent tribunals, youth leaders, a 'few words of Hindi and Urdu' and social science gimmickry for policemen: as if the entire problem of police-immigrant relations was, in the words of Runnymede, 'a breakdown of communication'.

The method used in the report, of separating 'police-immigrant relations' from the very real political and legal repression which these policemen are expected to implement, fits in with the strategy being employed by the state. The average racist bobby is to be taught to distinguish more carefully between the black militant, the illegal immigrant, the unemployed black youth, and the rest of the immigrant community, so that through reforms and smiling bobbies a portion of the immigrant community can be politically neutralised, or even won over as allies. This will effectively isolate the militants and the illegal immigrants. While any reforms of the police or the complaints procedure, won through struggle over the years, should be welcomed by black people, nobody should be confused by the Jekyll and Hyde games of the Home Office. Their two-faced policy is designed to divide the black communities so that racist laws can be more easily implemented. The white racists will thus be gratified, while at the same time opposition from the black community is dampened and co-operation promoted.

Any strategy for a renewed offensive against the racist immigration laws will have to involve a struggle against the political effects of this proposed 'new deal' as well as the Camden-style raids.

Dave Bailey

Provos give lie to British propaganda

The rescue by helicopter of Seamus Twomey, Kevin Mallon and J.B. O'Hagan from Mountjoy jail has had Republican song-writers dashing for pen and paper. But it should not be allowed to obscure the fact that it came as the culmination of a series of operations, carried out by the Provisional IRA, which have given the lie to the British propaganda campaign designed to convince the world that the Provos were dead. In over one hundred incidents in every one of the Six Counties, units of the Provisional IRA have thumbed their noses at the British Army. In Belfast two 25lb. mines were laid at the base of the giant 'Goliath' crane in the shipyards, and in Lurgan a British military intelligence agent was shot dead.

This could not have come at a worse time for the British army. For several preceding weeks there had been a decrease in the scale of Provisional operations, necessitated by a

reorganisation of the Provisionals designed to tighten security following some British successes in the summer. The British used this lull to step up the suppression of news about their casualty figures and 'incidents.'

Since most journalists operating in Northern Ireland do their reporting from the bar of Belfast's Europa Hotel, they are totally dependent on the British Army's Press Office for information. Systematic suppression of news is therefore not difficult.

The extent of this suppression can be gauged from an IRA Belfast Brigade communique issued in early October (and published in the 13 October *Republican News*). This details 10 separate attacks carried out by Republican forces against the British Army. Yet a close reading of the British press indicates that only one of these incidents was reported in this country.

A recent article in the prestigious Dublin journal, *Hibernia*, says:

'For some time, the Provisional IRA has been insisting that the British Army is now admitting only a small proportion of the casualties it is suffering. Alone, such suggestions might be dismissed as simple propaganda, but there are increasing reports from medical staffs and eye-witnesses which give credibility to Provo claims.

'One journalist with an English "quality" newspaper has established from non-attributable Army sources, that five soldiers were killed in a land-mine explosion for which the Army claimed only three. Another British journalist has tracked down the family of one soldier who died in Northern Ireland, and whose parents were not told the cause nor the place of his death "for security reasons."

'Several other points have emerged. Recently, the body of a male patient, admitted in the early hours of the morning to Ward 18 of Belfast's Royal Victoria Hospital, was removed by military medicals to the

morgue at Musgrave Park Military Hospital — which is a highly restricted area even for soldiers — and nothing has been seen or heard of it since. The Provisionals claim to have made 14 attacks with fragmentation grenades on British troops in Belfast within the last two months. They claim positively confirmed hits in ten cases — yet only once has the Press been told about an attack, and then it was described as a much less lethal "blast bomb."

'If indeed Provisional successes are being covered up "for security reasons," it will not be the first time this has happened. Earlier in the year, Lord Carrington disclosed at Westminster that on 14 separate occasions armour-piercing bullets had entered armoured vehicles but that details of this had been withheld "for security reasons."

British military performance in the battle to beat the Provos is far below official predictions. In September the *Sun* newspaper went so far as to run a centre-page spread claiming to describe 'How the Provos Were Beaten.' Now, less than two months later, the Army has been forced to adopt a new tactic to crush the Provo threat — a campaign of interning school-children.

GERY LAWLESS

Photos: Chris Davies (Report)



SPIES IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The Littlejohn affair has drawn attention to the disreputable activities of the Special Branch in Ireland, but this should not obscure the fact that by far the greater part of their dirty work is done here in Britain.

In major industrial disputes, for example, it is customary for government ministers to receive daily intelligence reports. They require accurate, first hand information on the morale of strikers, how long they are likely to hold out, and how much they would be prepared to settle for. And then a government agent working within a working class organisation can impede its efficient functioning. Address books can be lost, money mislaid, and confrontations with the police engineered at the least opportune moment.

Even more dangerous is the encouragement of serious crime. In 1917 one Alex Gordon sought to inveigle militants into a plot to kill the Prime Minister. They refused. He did however succeed in implicating Mrs. Wheeldon, a Derby ILPer. She got a ten year sentence and was released from prison a dying woman. In 1924, on an unemployed demonstration in Newcastle, strangers approached Edward Gibson and asked him if he would carry a parcel for them. He agreed. It contained gelignite, and he was charged with planning to blow up an electricity works and sentenced to four years imprisonment.

'UNGENTLEMANLY MEANS'

The Littlejohns are not the first criminals to have surreptitious meetings with Ministers of the Crown. One previous instance is Carl Graves, described at his trial by the Public Prosecutor as a 'menace to society', and a

'most dangerous man'. Within two months of his release, the same prosecutor (who had by then become Secretary of State for Scotland) was asking Carl Graves to work for the secret service, spying on trade unionists in Glasgow.

These facts were revealed in Parliament by J. King, MP, on 8 March 1917, when he was challenging the government's right to use £620,000 for its spying activities. The secret service, he said, 'employed immoral, disreputable and ungentlemanly means'. In the same debate, Ramsay MacDonald, the Labour leader, criticised 'agent-provocateurs who make their money by the manufacture of crime'.

Of course, information acquired by men of such calibre may well not be particularly accurate. As their wages usually depend on the news supplied, there is a natural tendency to exaggerate—or even invent. Another problem for the government is that if agents are to secure valuable information, they must first secure important posts within the organisation they are infiltrating. In order to do this, they must gain a certain credibility among its members. This means working hard for the cause. The amount of effort they might put in, say, to a socialist organisation may outweigh the damage done by the information they acquire.

HEARTLESSNESS

This appears to have been the case with W.F. Watson. During and immediately after the First World War, he was the most outspoken militant in London. He worked extremely hard, addressing meetings, organising rallies and writing for journals like *Solidarity* and *Workers' Dreadnought*. But eventually it was discovered that he—the chairman of the London Workers' Committee—was a police

spy, receiving a wage of £3 a week. The authorities showed little gratitude for Watson's efforts on their behalf (a point, perhaps, the Littlejohns should note): although the home secretary, Sir George Cave, acknowledged that he had given information 'found of value to the police' he was still sentenced to six months' imprisonment for sedition on 9 July 1919.

The home secretary displayed a similar heartlessness towards Harry Johnstone. When Johnstone's activities as a police spy in the Unemployed Workers' Movement started to come to light, the pressure became too much for him. He committed suicide, leaving a widow and four children. His wife wrote to the Unemployed Workers saying, 'I think you will recognise that the responsibility for my husband's action rests mainly on Scotland Yard? The Movement sent a letter to Scotland Yard. It called the attention of the police to the fact that one of their agents had died, leaving his family destitute, and asking them to face up to their responsibilities. The letter received no reply. As Wal Hannington remarks in his book *Unemployed Struggles*, 'Scotland Yard uses such persons as Johnstone like handrags and then throws them off without any compunction or feeling when they have no further use for them.'

CONFESSION

Once he is found out, a police spy is usually on his own. Useless to his employer, he has to endure the anger and hatred of those who previously regarded him as a comrade. Alex Gordon even had his epitaph written—a gentle hint that he should shuffle off the cares and woes of this world and make a quick entry into the next:

Stop! stranger, thou art near the spot
Marked by this cross metallic,
Where buried deep doth lie and rot,
The corpse of filthy Alex.

And maggot-worms in swarms below,
Compete with one another,
In shedding tears of bitter woe,
To mourn—not eat—a brother.

Eventually Gordon's self-control cracked. He turned up in a Derby newspaper office, brandishing a gun, and had to be removed with the help of the police. A few weeks later—on 28 December 1919—he made his confession to the *Daily Herald*. He told the paper his real name was F. Vivian. He had worked as a police spy for quite a time, receiving £2.10s

a week, plus an occasional £2 bonus. Among his assignments had been to visit the headquarters of the International Workers of the World in Whitechapel Road and the Communist Club in Charlotte Street prior to police raids.

BLACKMAIL

As with many others, the authorities had been able to blackmail Gordon. In his interview with the *Daily Herald*, he did not explain why they were able to do this: perhaps he had committed some serious offence—say, a bank robbery in Smethwick—and was liable to be sent to jail for many years if he failed to comply with their orders. All Gordon said was: 'the government agents had a hold over me which made it absolutely impossible for me to break away from them'.

Soon after he had given his interview to the *Daily Herald* Gordon vanished, never to be heard of again. The police did not seem to be too worried by his disappearance. Indeed, the police may have been responsible for it.

For the full facts about Alex Gordon and others like him, we will have to wait for the overthrow of British capitalism. Only then will the murky deeds of the Secret Service be fully revealed. Until that time, it is important not to be paranoid. While every effort should be taken to root out police spies in working class organisations, it must be realised that much more important is the question of sound policies and ideas. The Bolsheviks won—the Russian Revolution triumphed—despite the widespread infiltration of agents into the revolutionary movement.

The extent to which this had taken place—a really staggering extent—only became clear after 1917, when the secret files were opened. These revealed that a member of the Bolshevik group in the Russian parliament had been a police spy, that Father Gapon, who had led the peaceful protest which sparked off the 1905 Revolution, was also in the pay of the police; and—most remarkable of all—it was a police spy who, in 1907, threw the bomb which killed the Minister of the Interior—his employer!

So the lesson is: if you see someone about to throw a bomb at Mr. Robert Carr perhaps you shouldn't discourage him too much. . . you might be charged with obstructing a police officer in the execution of his duty.

Raymond Challinor

The prospect of a major battle over the national wage claims of two of the most important groups of workers in the country — the miners and the engineers — becomes more real as each day passes.

The decision of the NUM special delegate conference on 26 October in favour of an overtime ban is the first serious shot in the war. The going is slower over the engineers' claim, but some opening moves have been made. More important is the tremendous response of engineering workers to the NIRC fine: with more than a half million striking on 5 November, the decision of South Wales and Tyneside engineers to impose an extended overtime ban, and the decision of Scottish engineers to strike on 12 November, there can be little doubt that the membership is in a fighting mood.

Problems

Despite the steps forward that are being taken, huge problems still stand in the way of successfully carrying through the engineers' and miners' claims. Most of these are at present less due to the manoeuvres of the Government than the failure of the trade union leadership to make the necessary preparations for a fight.

In many areas of the NUM, for example, mass meetings have not been called to discuss the claim. Meanwhile Joe Gormley has been thrashing about trying to get every concrete proposal for action put off and raising the spectre of a Tory election victory to frighten his members away from the idea of a strike.

In the engineering unions the situation is even worse. The AUEW executive is not doing enough to fight for the claim. The National Committee has instructed the executive to carry out a publicity campaign to mobilise the membership around the claim, but all that has been done so far is the issuing of 200,000 copies of a leaflet — for a union with one million members and a claim that will affect three million workers!

Even with regard to the most elementary step of calling mass meetings of the membership, the Executive has done nothing. Where these have taken place it has been at the initiative of individual branches and districts, and not as part of a nationally organised campaign.

So far the Executive has avoided even talking about a national strike, much less taking concrete steps like organising local and national gatherings of shop stewards and stewards' delegates to plan such a strike.

The situation has become so ridiculous that John Foster (a national organiser of the AUEW) can write in the *Morning Star* (2 November): '... there are indications that some form of protest action will take place on the day of the reply (by the employers to the national claim). . . . Indeed such an action would be excellent — a mass declaration to the employers that the union means business and a big boost to the fighting mood of the workers. But who is in a better position to organise such a positive step than the leadership of the AUEW! That is what the Executive should be doing, instead of just passively noting that there are 'indications' that 'some form' of action will take place.

Possibilities

All this messing about by the AUEW executive is in complete contrast to what the response to the NIRC fine has shown is possible. Here mass factory meetings and local shop stewards' meetings were held to discuss the question and decide on action. The result was overwhelming.

Meeting after meeting decided to come out — in many cases unanimously. In Birmingham 400 shop stewards, representing 40,000 men voted to strike. In Glasgow close to 800 stewards (the largest turnout for a stewards' meeting in more than 10 years) voted overwhelmingly for unlimited strike action in the event of any further attacks by the NIRC. In Manchester 800 shop stewards, representing 250,000 workers, voted to strike on the 5th — with only 15 against.

It was this type of mobilisation which has given the strikes against the NIRC tremendous backing. A similar mobilisation — and more — is going to be necessary to win the engineers' claim.

The real question which everyone is asking is whether it is possible to win. Both the engineering and miners claims, if met in full, would punch a massive hole through the Tories' Phase 3. This would, at least temporarily, keep the workers ahead of inflation, send the Tories reeling, and quite possibly start a process that would force them from office. But isn't the



Above and left: Sections of Monday's 7,000-strong demonstration against the NIRC leaving Speakers Corner for rally at Tower Hill.

government too well prepared? Won't it always win?

The answer to this is a definite *no*: it is perfectly possible for the miners and engineers to win. The miners' victory against the old 7% norm and the Glasgow firemen's recent victory against Phase 3 shows that victory is quite possible.

It will be a real fight however. The special anti-picket squads of the police, the huge building up of strike funds by the engineering employers, the stock-piling of oxygen in power stations by the Central Electricity Generating Board so as to render picketing less effective, is not being carried out for fun. But even so, provided the most effective forms of struggle and organisation are taken up — flying pickets, factory occupations, elected strike committees and so on — it is still perfectly possible to win.

The decisive thing is whether the ruling class can take on the unions one by one, as it did when it defeated the hospital workers and the gas workers, or whether it will face a *centralised and united* working class attack. If the workers go into the employers and Tories sausage machine one by one the ruling class has a chance of success. If they go in united the working class is going to win.

General strike

Undoubtedly the best way to launch a centralised attack on the ruling class and its policies at present would be for the TUC to call a General Strike and have done with the Tories once and for all. Precisely such a demand must go up from the working class movement. But, given the present leadership of the TUC, such a strike isn't likely to be called by them. People who are still prepared to sit around a table with Heath while he works on his plans to attack the working class are hardly likely to organise a mass general strike to force the Tories from office.

But if the TUC is not prepared to act, it is still possible to forge links at other levels for united struggle. This occurred in practice during the last miners' strike — most notably at the Saltley Coke Depot where, after police harassment of miners' pickets, 40,000 engineers struck and organised a mass, united demonstration 10,000 strong which closed down this vital depot. This was the final straw for the Tories — they were brought to their knees and forced to give in to the miners' demands.

MINERS — ENGINEERS ALLIANCE: A FIRST STEP TO A GENERAL STRIKE

The mobilisations against the NIRC fines have seen a similar display of working class unity. All across the country other groups of workers — especially building workers in London, Manchester and Liverpool — have come out to support the engineers. In Glasgow firms committed to strike on the 12th include Goodyears, where 90% of the work force are in the T&G, and Cragneuk Foundry where there are only 6 members of the AUEW out of 244 workers.

What must be done in the present situation is to forge this unity, not just on a last minute, one-off basis, but as a key part of the planning for the struggle. This has already been recognised, for example, by the resolution of the West of England engineering council of the white-collar union APEX, which calls on the union executive to prepare proposals for fighting Phase 3 in concert with other unions. It is shown in the moves afoot in TASS, for example, at the Shardlow's factory in Sheffield, to submit the same claim as the rest of the AUEW and to wage a united struggle.

Miners-Engineers alliance

On this front of building maximum united action the miners and engineers have a key role to play. They are two of the most powerful groups of workers going into struggle against Phase 3, and their claims are coming up at almost exactly the same time. United action by them would be a hammer blow to the Tories, and would rapidly inspire the rest of the working class to join the fight.

By fighting for this united action — a miners-engineers alliance — the best conditions will be created for winning the struggle when it starts. Moreover it will raise the level of confidence of those going into battle: if the miners knew in advance they were going to be supported by the engineers, and the engineers that they were going into united struggle with the miners, both groups would feel sure of victory and the number in favour of striking would be enormous.

All this makes it vital that militants in the NUM and the AUEW fight for a miners-engineers alliance. This will push forward moves for the centralisation of the struggle of the whole working class and ensure the best conditions both for winning the claims of the miners and engineers, and getting rid of the Tory Government.

In some areas certain steps towards such an alliance have been made and some union executive members have raised the question. For example, Bill MacLean, General Secretary of the Scottish NUM, at a recent mass meeting of Kent miners in Aylesham, said that unity with the engineers was the 'central issue' facing the miners. In an article in the *Morning Star* of 6 November Eddie Marsden, General Secretary of the AUEW constructional section, points to the need for unity between all those now taking up the wage fight. Referring to the miners, engineers and postal workers he says: 'It will be difficult for any one of the above two struggles to succeed while they remain separate. But in a joint struggle they would be certain of victory and could rally the whole of the movement behind them. Surely this is the role of the TUC? If that is not a runner because of right-wing dominance on the general council, I believe the unions involved ought to consider joint action now.'

But what is needed is far more than speeches and articles: a concerted drive to build such unity must be launched immediately. Two steps

must be taken at once to forge this alliance.

First, the executive of the two unions should meet jointly to agree on a common plan of struggle. Militants in both unions can start this rolling by passing resolutions calling for such a meeting. Even before this, however, local meetings of engineering workers and miners can be organised, to which other unions can be invited also, to plan joint united action in each locality.

Communist Party

The Communist Party is in a particularly key position as far as all this is concerned. It has its strongest bases in the AUEW and the NUM. There is however one difficulty for the CP. Undoubtedly many militants want a united struggle, but the number one 'left' in the whole trade union movement with whom the CP seeks an alliance, Hugh Scanlon, has so far avoided coming out for even a national engineering strike, let alone joint action with the miners. At the Engineering Voice conference, Scanlon opposed any clear commitment to a national strike. By this he leaves the door open to a repeat of the disastrous tactics of the 1972 claim when each area was left to fight it out alone against the centralised force of the Engineering Employers. The inevitable result of that piece of nonsense was a big defeat for the engineers.

As a result of Scanlon's present policies CP militants find themselves in a huge dilemma. According to the 'British Road to Socialism', the key thing is an alliance with the 'lefts', of which Scanlon is the biggest. But at present the needs of the situation are in contradiction to Scanlon's policies. Are the CP members going to act to meet the needs of the struggle — for a national engineering strike and a miners-engineers alliance — or are they going to subordinate the needs of the struggle to unity with Scanlon?

As regards the CP itself — although not necessarily all its militants — we think their present position is clear. It did vote for a national engineers' strike at the Engineering Voice conference (against Scanlon) but this rapidly turned into a dead letter as far as the Party was concerned. By the time the lobby of the engineering employers came around the whole question of a national strike was 'forgotten' and the CP was calling for support of the Executive's position — which does *not* come out for a national strike. This is totally useless. In the present situation workers need, above all, a *clear* line on where they are going. As the CP carries out the policy dictated by the 'British Road to Socialism' it increasingly finds itself in an impossible position — voting against Scanlon one minute, but siding with his current manoeuvres the next. Anyone in the CP who is serious about the present situation *must* break with this type of policy.

At the present time the situation *could* be enormously favourable for the working class. But there is still the enormous danger that all this potential will be wasted and groups of workers isolated in the face of centralised attacks by the employers, the government and the state. This is the greatest danger facing the working class movement at present. The key thing is to prepare the working class for the coming fight and to unite all struggles. A miners-engineers alliance would be an enormously powerful impetus for the united action of the *whole* working class.

Alan Jones

WHY EVERY SOCIALIST SHOULD SUPPORT THE ARAB LIBERATION STRUGGLE

The following article appeared in the October 19 issue of *La Gauche*, weekly newspaper of the Ligue Revolutionnaire des Travailleurs (Revolutionary Workers League), Belgian section of the Fourth International. Nathan Weinstein, a leading member of the LRT, is the author of *Le Sionisme Contre Israel* (Paris: Maspero, 1969), the best available work on the Arab-Israeli conflict. (The translation of the article is by *Intercontinental Press*.)

1. The Zionist movement — whose end result was the creation of the state of Israel — had as its goal the establishment in Palestine, an Arab land, of a 'Jewish state' under the protection of the great imperialist powers.

That was the programme adopted by the Zionist Congress held in Basle (Switzerland) in 1897, the official date of the founding of *political Zionism* (as opposed to the earlier sentimental Zionism, whose aim was to create a Jewish spiritual home in Palestine and only incidentally to implant a few agricultural villages there).

Such a nationalist ideology that directly coincides with imperialism's game could obviously take root only in the consciousness of those who despaired of defeating the anti-Semitism that permeated the societies of Eastern Europe (where the great majority of Jews were concentrated during the nineteenth century).

SEEN AS HAVEN

Initially, Zionism remained a minority current among Jews, restricted mostly to the young petty bourgeoisie squeezed out by the chauvinism of the rising local non-Jewish bourgeoisie. The great majority of the Jewish masses remained hostile to Jewish nationalism, at least in its Zionist form, either out of religious traditionalism or out of ideological conviction. The Jewish bourgeoisie was hoping for a liberal reform of the Tsarist empire; the Jewish workers movement — especially the Bund — was struggling for socialism, which would abolish the structural causes of anti-Jewish racism.

The inability of the world workers movement to prevent the victory of fascism, and the Stalinist degeneration of the Third International had the effect of transforming the Zionist minority within the Jewish population into a nearly unanimous tendency. Moreover the Jewish masses concentrated in Eastern Europe were exterminated by Nazism. As for the survivors, in a state of shock as a result of the genocide and the masked anti-Semitism in the USSR, which dashed their hopes for a socialist solution to the Jewish problem, they saw no other means of salvation than the plan to set

up the Jewish state, a possible haven in case of renewed persecution; in short, Zionism seemed to assure their survival.

COLONISATION

2. Precisely because the Zionist movement aimed at transforming an Arab land, Palestine, into a Jewish state, it inevitably came into conflict with the local population (including moreover, the Palestinian Jewish minority of the time). In fact, transforming Palestine into a land with a Jewish population implied either displacing or expelling the inhabitants (and in his diaries the Zionist leader Herzl did not hide that) or, better still, setting up colonial relations between the Jewish immigrants and the Arab peasants.

This resulted in a programme that *necessarily* would involve:

- the opposition of the Palestinian masses (the leaders could possibly be won over);
- getting imperialist protection for the settlers against the native resistance.

The whole history of the Jewish colonisation of Palestine is the history of these processes. Zionist land purchases were accompanied by eviction of Arab peasants, and they provoked a vigorous opposition that crystallised politically as from 1911. In order to implement the programme of Jewish settlement, the Zionist movement relied on support from the dominant powers of the region, — first the Ottomans, then the British (during the period of the mandate), then the Americans and the Soviet Union in 1947-48, then Great Britain and the United States in 1956, and the United States ever since then.

ZIONIST PROGRAMME

3. It follows that the tragedy of the Palestinian refugees, and the succession of Arab revolts against the Zionist implantation, derive from the Zionist programme itself. As the fascist Zionist Jabotinsky lucidly pointed out in a work entitled *The Iron Wall*, there was no reason for the Palestinians to accept the fate that the Sioux had rejected. Hence, he wrote, differences among Zionists are secondary: 'Among us there are no "carnivorous" or "vegetarian" Zionists. We all know that the Zionist programme can be carried out only by force.' The only serious divergence was over the question of whether the Zionists should rely primarily on their owned armed militia or on the military force of imperialism.

Hence the formation of various Jewish military units during the years between the two world wars and after the second (Haganah, the Irgun, the Stern Gang), which later fused into the Israeli army. These units were especially strengthened by the support of British colonial

Statement by the Fourth International

The following statement was issued October 23 by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

For the twenty-five years that the Zionist state has existed in Palestine, the Arab East has been thrown into a permanent state of intermittent war. The whole responsibility for that situation rests on the role Israel plays as policeman for imperialism, combined with the particular aims of the Zionist enterprise in Palestine.

The fourth Arab-Israeli war of autumn 1973 is a new phase in the armed resistance of the Arab peoples to the counter-revolutionary policy of aggression systematically practised by the Zionist state. Even though this war pits the armies of bourgeois Arab regimes against the Zionist armies, its character is that of a struggle against Israeli colonialism and expansionism. It follows that revolutionary Marxists affirm the legitimate character of the struggle of the Arab states against Zionism and call for their victory.

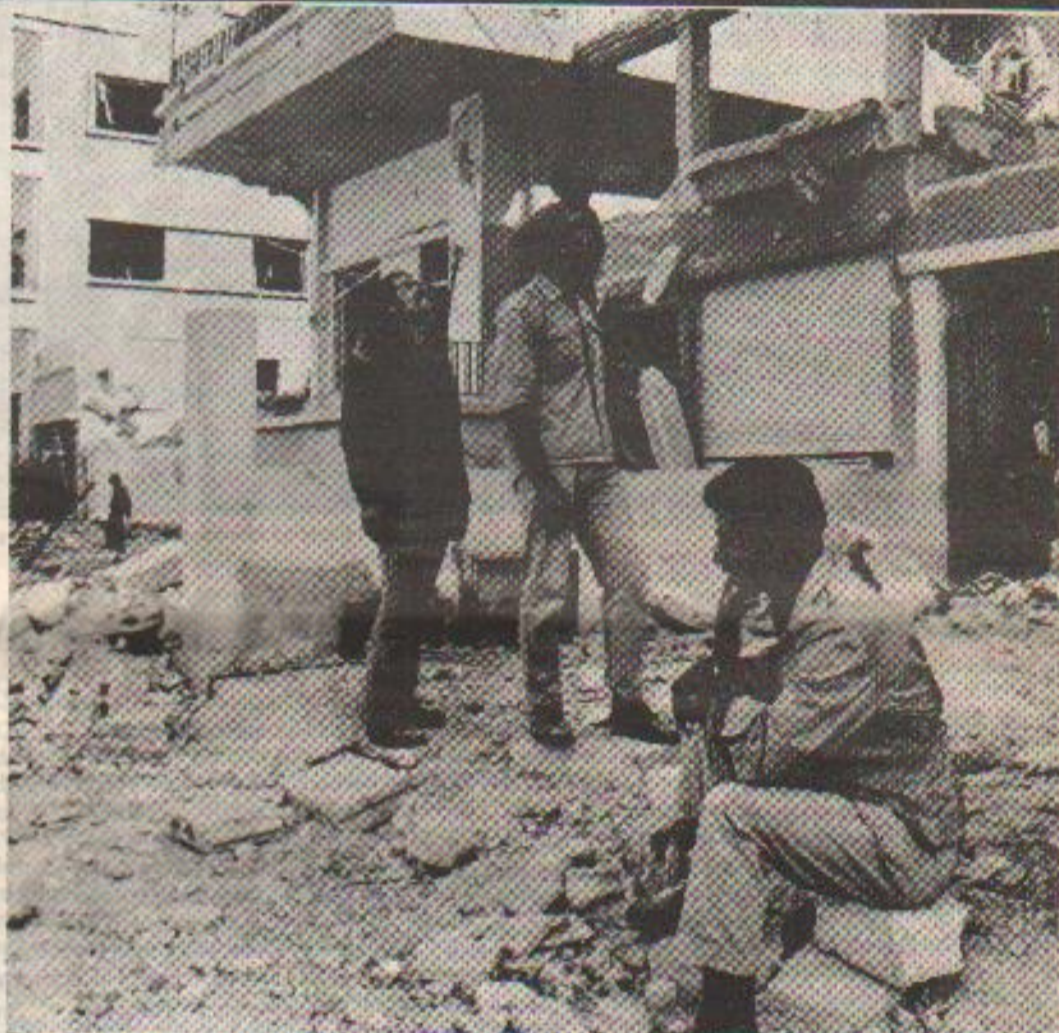
But any illusion about the ability of the Arab regimes to consistently confront Zionism and imperialism would be out of order. As far as Egypt, Syria, and the Arab states that are supporting them are concerned, the aim of the war is a compromise between Israel and the Arab regimes that would be less unfavourable to the Arab bourgeoisies and military bureaucracies; a compromise that would allow them to contain the mobilisation of the Arab masses against Zionism and imperialism within limits acceptable from the standpoint of their own economic and political interests.

Then recognition of the state of Israel, the Zionist colonial presence in Palestine, would become possible for the exploitative Arab owning classes, while at the same time the oppression and expulsion of the Arab people of Palestine would be maintained.

No peaceful solution and no measure appearing as such can ever be found to the Arab-Israeli conflict unless it recognises the right of the Arabs of Palestine to take back their lands. The origin of the conflict lies in the denial of that right, and so does the root of future conflicts. Because the struggle of the Arabs of Palestine is a basically radical anti-imperialist and proletarian one, it is a permanent threat to the Arab bourgeoisies just as it is to the Zionist state. It requires the destruction of the Zionist socio-economic structure and state, and can be achieved only through the socialist revolution in the region, based on a common fight of the Jewish and Arab working masses.

All the Arab regimes and Israel, along with their respective military and financial supporters, oppose this solution, the only one that can possibly establish real and durable peace in the Arab East.

A so-called peaceful solution imposed by Washington and Moscow would mean acceptance of the Zionist state. Revolutionary Marxists oppose this mystification and denounce the intervention of the great powers in the Arab-Israeli conflict. No accord arrived at by Washington and Moscow can bring peace to the Arab East or to the world. The policy of so-called peaceful coexistence can lead only to



Ruined buildings in Damascus after Israeli bombing.

power during the great Palestinian revolt of 1936-39.

FORCED EVICTIONS

In the course of the six-month-long Arab general strike and rural guerrilla war, Dayan's

militias aided the Royal Air Force and the British troops in raking through the Arab villages in Galilee and in guarding the Iraq Petroleum Corporation's pipeline.

The Israeli 'war of independence' of 1948-49,

Long Kesh Internee tells of British Army harassment

I apologise for the delay in writing, but circumstances beyond my control prevented me from doing so.

It may interest you to know that the British Army confiscated a letter I had written to you. On 30 October, our Cages were invaded at dawn, approx. 5.30 a.m., by hordes of marauding riot clad military. This is not unusual. It happens every three weeks. The purpose of the exercise is, I suppose, to exert their authority and to surprise any escape tunnel attempts — however, nothing was discovered.

The usual harassment, brutality and destruction took place just as expected. Men were spreadeagled against the wire for several hours, some were batoned, and much personal property was destroyed; but one grows accustomed to these tactics. One Cage in particular, number 8, was left in such a condition that it had to be condemned. The Internees from this Cage were re-distributed into other Cages, including my own, resulting in overcrowding. There are now approx. 640 men and children detained, with 80 men per Cage.

On discovering my letter to IMU, as I stated previously, it was confiscated along with a file containing back issues of *Red Weekly* and *Red Mole*, which I find interesting as references during political study.

Indeed the Imperialist Army is serving its masters well. It is interesting to note that the British Army are now operating as blacklegs against the Fire Brigade strikers. We have stated many times in the past that the use of British Troops in Ulster is but the thin end of the wedge, and that the British had better waken to the fact that before long the troops will be opposing workers on the streets of their own country.

Working class organisations are now being undermined — or attempts are being made to do this — by the State repressive forces. It is vital that comrades in Scotland, England and Wales oppose with all their energies this new evil. The firemen today — Fords tomorrow?

Political revolutionary socialism continues to be propagated behind the wire of Long Kesh, slow at times admittedly, but nonetheless valuable progress is being made.

Well, comrades, the lights in our hut are going out so shall finish for now. Do keep in touch as a letter from comrades anywhere helps lighten an otherwise dull day here.

In Solidarity with British Comrades — For a Workers Socialist Republic.

A Long Kesh Internee (name supplied).

WHAT'S ON

SOCIALIST WOMAN FORUMS: Second Wednesday in every month, starting 14 November with Linda Smith on 'The Family'; 8.00 p.m. in The Roebuck, Tottenham Court Road (Warren Street tube).

NAMIBIA: 'End British support for South Africa's illegal occupation' — public meeting with exhibition and film on Friday 16 November at 7.00 p.m. in Friends House, Euston Road (opposite Euston Station).

IMG RED FORUM: Series of introductory discussions for those in the London area on the politics of the Fourth International. Every Tuesday at 8.00 p.m. in the General Picton pub, Caledonian Road (5 mins. Kings X tube).

'STILL THERE!': An eyewitness account of the US in Indochina, by Chris Mullin, a freelance journalist who has just returned from the area — Monday 12 November at 7.30 p.m. in University of London Union, Malet Street, WC1 (Roper 3B). Meeting organised by Indochina Solidarity Conference.

NEWCASTLE RED FORUM: Norman O'Neill on 'Revolutionary Politics in the Trade Unions,' Wednesday 21 November at 8.15 p.m. in the Bridge Hotel.

MANCHESTER RED CIRCLE: Every Thursday at 8.00 p.m. in 'The Ancoats,' Great Ancoats Street. Thursday 15 November: Geoff Hodgson on 'IS and State Capitalism.'

NOTTINGHAM RED CIRCLES: Wide-ranging series of discussions based on the politics of the Fourth International. Every second and fourth Tuesday in the month, at 8.00 p.m. in the Lion Hotel, Clumber Street.

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partial compromises between the interests of American imperialism and the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy, compromises attained at the expense of the revolutionary struggle of the masses for socialism.

While revolutionary Marxists are obviously in favour of the unconditional and complete withdrawal of the Zionist armies from the territories occupied after the Israeli aggression of June 1967, they never separate that demand from the right of the Palestinians to regain their country. They denounce the attitude of the Arab regimes and of Arab reaction, which are prepared to compromise behind the backs of the Arab masses in general and the Palestinians in particular.

They call for the arming and organisation of the Arab masses to transform the present war into a revolutionary offensive against Zionism and imperialism, for total freedom of action for the Palestinian resistance to operate from and within all Arab countries. They call for support to the struggle of anti-Zionist Jews within Israel, that struggle being an essential component of the struggle against Zionism. The Arab bourgeoisies have neither the right nor the ability to substitute themselves for that struggle, which must be waged jointly by the workers and peasants of the whole Arab East.

FOR THE DEFEAT OF ZIONISM AND IMPERIALISM!

LONG LIVE THE STRUGGLES OF THE TOILING MASSES OF THE ARAB EAST!
LONG LIVE THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IN THE ARAB EAST!

which meant in reality Zionist military occupation of most of Palestine, rested on the same policy of force with the combined support of Truman and Stalin.

Likewise, the constant evictions of Arab peasants from the lands purchased by the Zionists between the two world wars — an inevitable consequence of pseudo-socialist-Zionism, which aimed at emptying the land of Palestinians in order to have it worked by Jews — culminated in 1948 in the expulsion and flight (consciously fostered) of the majority of Palestinians from the Hebrew state.

Thus, from the beginning, the dispossession of the Palestinians by force was the main political axis of Zionist practice.

IMPERIALIST SUPPORT

4. Zionist foreign policy has been conditioned by these basic facts. To survive as a state founded on the eviction of the native inhabitants, which in turn provokes hatred among the Arab masses and stimulates their anti-imperialist potential, Israel is compelled to rely on imperialist support and to make itself an instrument for imperialism against the Arab revolution. It must also seek imperialist support because of its economic unviability.

Thus, it carried out the Sinai campaign of 1956 (against the nationalisation of the Suez Canal); it supported the French in Algeria; it supported the South Vietnamese government; it gave military assistance to Ethiopia; it recognised the Chilean junta; and so on.

Economically and structurally, the Zionist state has been incorporated into the world imperialist system. Each of the Arab-Israeli wars has been aimed primarily against revolutionary ferment in the Arab world: Nasserism in 1956, Syrian radicalism in 1967 and today, and the Palestinian resistance from 1967 up to today. And conversely, between Israel and the reactionary Arab regimes there has always been a tacit accord, symbolised, for example, by Tel Aviv's threats to invade Jordan if the regime there is overthrown.

Thus, Israel is a state that can survive in the Middle East only through military terror.

UNCHAINED ENEMY

5. Israel's relation to the Arab revolution is very clear: Zionism is the unchained enemy of the popular masses, whose awakening could upset the existing relationship of forces that favours Israel. The question is more complex in relation to Israel and the reactionary Arab leaders, who are basically favourable to the status quo (since Israel also protects their own stability), but are forced from below to raise the level of their anti-Zionism to win over the masses.

This is what explains the ambiguity of the positions of these regimes, which is reflected in the current war. The Syrian and Egyptian leaders are fighting for the implementation of the UN resolution, that would restore the territories conquered by Israel in 1967 but would also recognise the right of Israel to exist as a Zionist state.

COLONIAL ENCLAVE

6. As an imperialist bridgehead and a colonial enclave, Israel must be combated by all revolutionaries. In the global context, Cairo's and Damascus's struggle against Tel Aviv is an integral part of the freedom struggle of oppressed third world peoples, even though the regimes in question are reactionary and petty-

bourgeois, even though these two regimes tolerated the crushing of the Palestinian resistance during black September in 1970 (Syria less than Egypt), and even though they muzzle the fedayeen in their own territory.

Furthermore, the policy of force that Israel must use to maintain itself leads to constant expansionism. The territorial annexations of 1967 have made Zionism a national question for the Egyptians and Syrians as well as for the Palestinians, because the liberation of their own occupied territory (Sinai and Golan) is now on the agenda.

Israel is too useful to the United States as the 'Prussia of the Middle East' for Washington to tolerate a challenge to its existence. Furthermore, Israel's military superiority is such that only a general revolutionary process in the region can bring about its defeat. Given the oil interests of the imperialists, this struggle would develop into a protracted struggle comparable to the Indochina war, with a massive Israeli intervention. Tel Aviv has already tried to drive Syria back into the Stone Age.

NO VICTORY

The fact that for the first time Tel Aviv has not achieved victory in a lightning war results from several factors:

— For the first time, the Israelis did not launch a preventive war (as Golda Meir declared).

— The United States and the Soviet Union have tolerated this clash in order to compel Israel, which had become too independent, to be more reasonable in the framework of a settlement. (But the pro-Israeli lobby in Washington is in the process of trying to change the American position.)

— The Arab forces are conscious that they are fighting to liberate their own territory.

— For the first time the Zionist troops are fighting far from their homes, and are therefore emotionally less concerned and committed. (The surrender of whole units in Sinai would have been unthinkable in 1967 or 1948).

INTERNAL STRUGGLE

8. The colonial origins of the Hebrew state are reflected in its internal structure:

— Continuation of the emergency regulations passed by British colonialism, which give virtually absolute power to the army.

— Systematised discrimination and oppression of the Palestinians inside the state's borders; they are denied any real right of organisation.

— Attempts at any price to maintain a 'sacred unity' so as to block any development of consciousness among the Jewish working class, the poverty-stricken and exploited Oriental Jews, the radicalised youth.

SOUTH AFRICANISATION

9. Since 1967 Israel has undergone a rapid process of South Africanisation:

— Organised super-exploitation of tens of thousands of Palestinian workers (including youth and children), who find themselves in a purely colonial situation, compelled to return each night to their reservations in the West Bank and Gaza after working all day in Jewish enterprises.

— Accelerated degeneration of the kibbutzim into collective societies resting on the super-exploitation of the colonial labour force and assigned to paramilitary tasks (as in Golan).

— Rapid emergence of an Israeli big bourgeoisie that is breaking the former political equilibrium, which was based on the hegemony of the Zionist labour bureaucracy.

MILITARISATION

— Spectacular militarisation of society, the generals possessing an unprecedented degree of independence from the civilian authorities, pressing a policy of their own, and methodically taking on the commanding posts of the country (in the economy, the universities, the political parties).

— Growing repression, which for the first time is falling heavily on revolutionary Jews as on

Arab militants.

— Frontal attack on trade union and political rights.

— Degeneration of the moral fibre of Israeli society, installation of Zionist satraps in the occupied territories, tortures, witch-hunts against nonconformists.

GENERAL STRUGGLE

There is no immediate solution to the conflict. To defeat Zionism requires a general struggle against imperialism and Arab reaction in the Middle East, that is, a rise of revolutionary struggles directed by a revolutionary leadership.

In fact, the Israeli problem is only one aspect of the general Arab revolution. Therefore, a revolutionary vanguard must be patiently forged uniting all the militants of the region, including those of the national minorities (Kurds, Israelis). It is only in the framework of the revolutionary reunification of the Arab world in a red Middle East that the Israelis can harmoniously integrate themselves.

But before the question of the future of the Israeli community can be posed (let alone resolved), the Palestinians must be able to reintegrate themselves into their homeland and exercise their right to self-determination; the Israeli working masses must opt for overthrowing the structures of colonial domination — that is, the Zionist structures — that constitute the specific form of capitalist domination of the country.

From this revolutionary perspective we support the liberation struggle of the Arab peoples, the fight of the Israeli vanguard against the colonial war of their leaders, and Jewish-Arab military unity against Zionism, imperialism, and Arab reaction in the struggle for a socialist future for the peoples of the region.

NATHAN WEINSTOCK

Namibia in revolt

Namibia is in the news again. This time because of the public floggings in Ovamboland — the arid, empty bush area on the frontiers of the Portuguese colony of Angola, which South Africa's ruling class has designated as the 'homeland' of the 300,000 Ovambo people.

The crime for which this medieval punishment was ordered was the refusal of young Ovambos to use the name 'South-West Africa' instead of Namibia. They also refuse to accept the apartheid system imported from the Republic of South Africa. For them, the whole of Namibia is their country, and the people of the other tribes — the Damaras, the Hereros, the Okavangos and the Tswanas — are their countrymen.

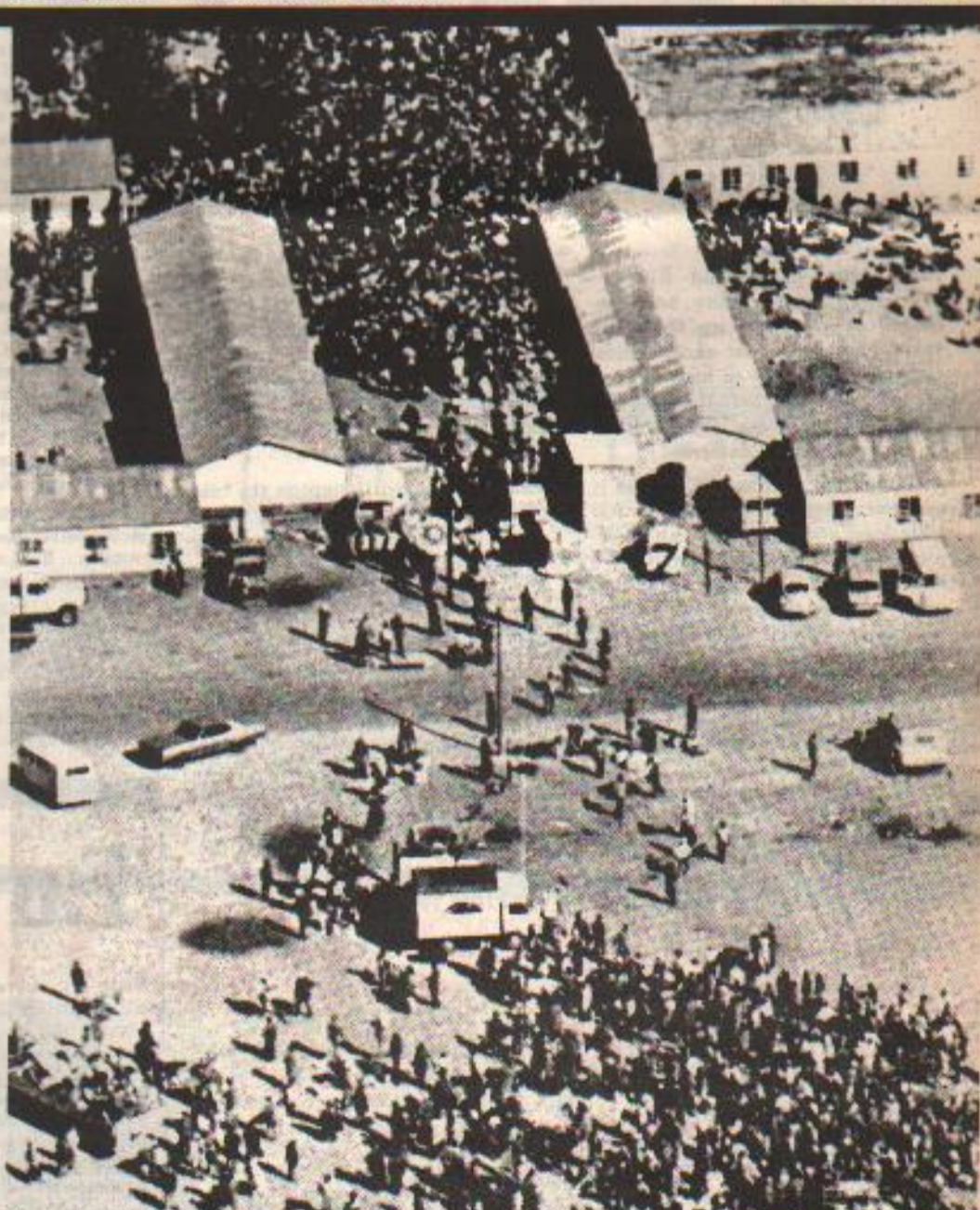
The Ovambos are among the most militant fighters against white rule and imperialist exploitation in Southern Africa. In December 1971-January 1972 they paralysed the country's economy by going on strike. It is because of this that the repression in Ovamboland is more savage than in any other part of apartheid-ruled Southern Africa. The reign of terror is co-ordinated by Chief Filemon Elifas, who was appointed to his office by the government in Pretoria.

The 'right' to rule this former German colony was originally granted to South Africa by the old League of Nations. In 1966, under pressure from the African and Asian states, the United Nations voted to terminate this mandate. But the South African government simply ignored the decision.

Since then the United Nations has maintained a 'dialogue' with the South African regime. But as a representative of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) recently told the UN Committee on Decolonisation:

'The niceties of drawing room diplomacy are a luxury that SWAPO cannot afford. . . We are against any attempts to foster false hopes that the South African government can be persuaded to withdraw its repressive administrative apparatus from Namibia through dialogue which is designed to achieve but one specific purpose: overcoming South Africa's global isolation. . .

'The Namibian people are already bearing the main brunt for their liberation. The year 1966 marked the initiation of armed struggle in our country. The change, from peaceful supplication



Beginning of general strike, December 1971 — workers refuse to leave Katutura compound for work to insurrectional struggle was a historic turn in our people's struggle. . .

'Armed resistance is the scaffolding of our struggle. Our armed combatants have learned invaluable strategic lessons through concrete experience during the last six years, so that they have now acquired an impressive capacity to inflict serious blows upon the South African troops of colonial occupation.

'While the armed struggle constitutes the key aspect of our struggle, it is not the only important aspect. It has come to be linked to the rapidly developing political struggles of the masses in South Africa, of which labour unrest

and mass demonstrations, demanding an end to terror and oppression, are important dimensions. While the urban workers have retained their militant stance towards the occupying state and its international monopoly supporters, the peasants also have marched on district and regional offices of the puppet chiefs and other colonial agents in Namibia.'

Namibia will be freed not by resolutions passed in New York but by the revolt of its black slaves, and the Ovambos will play a leading role in rallying these forces which will one day overthrow white minority rule.

GEORGE CUNVIN

FREE LUIS VITALE

An international campaign has been launched by the Fourth International, to free one of its militants, Luis Vitale, a prominent Marxist intellectual and working class leader, who has been arrested by the Chilean junta.

Although born in Argentina, comrade Vitale has been involved in the Chilean labour movement for nearly two decades. During the years from 1959-62 he was a member of the leadership of the CUT (Chilean Workers Federation—the Chilean equivalent of the TUC). He helped to draft the main resolutions presented to the first and second congresses of the CUT, especially the sections on agrarian reform, imperialism and the industrial development of Chile.

At the time of his arrest he was Professor of History and Geography at the University of Concepcion. The first three volumes of his six-volume book 'A Marxist Interpretation of the History of Chile' have been published. They have received wide acclaim, and have exerted a real influence on the teaching of history in Chile. It is feared that the junta—obsessed as it is with the purging of 'Marxist ideas' from Chile—may be out to punish Vitale for this achievement.

Comrade Vitale was initially held in the infamous Santiago Sports Stadium, but there is no information on his present whereabouts. The Fourth International will be campaigning for his release, along with the release of the other working class and socialist militants now held by the regime. They will be trying to gain the support of broad forces to demand his release, and call for the right of organisations such as the Red Cross, Amnesty International, and delegations from trade unions in other countries, to visit him, and to ascertain whether or not he has been subjected to torture, the state of his health, and the conditions under which he is being held.

This campaign is very urgent, and it should be taken up immediately throughout the trade union movement and in the Universities in this country. Letters demanding his release and permission for him to go abroad should be sent to the Chilean Embassy at 12, Devonshire St., London W1.

Demands should also be addressed to University administrations, that they offer Vitale a professorship, or a temporary academic post, and obtain from the British Government the right of political asylum for this victim of the Chilean military dictatorship.

Republican Trials : a defeat and a victory

Four of the Coventry Seven — Fell, Stagg, Lynch and Rush — have been found guilty and sentenced to terms of up to twelve years. The judge set the political context of the case in his summing up, when he said that the trial was about 'law and order'; the sentences he imposed were a 'deterrent.'

Although the British ruling class is not yet prepared to make a full scale legal attack on the Irish movement in Britain, such as imposing a ban on Sinn Fein, they intend to hand out vicious sentences to any Republicans convicted on conspiracy and other charges.

It is unfortunate therefore that the defendants failed to respond to the political nature of the trial or understand the nature of British 'justice.' Their line of defence, in fact, gave the British press a field day.

Rather than trying to win sympathy from the judge by denying their political beliefs, they should have

explained that they were in the dock as a result of the failure of the British government to find any solution to the struggle in the North, and its determination to break the Republican Movement by any means necessary. This was the basis on which they could have transformed the nature of the trial.

Meanwhile, in Northampton the case of Joe Gallagher came up last week. Joe was charged with demanding money with menaces, but the prosecution offered no evidence and admitted their inability to link him with the alleged offence.

The case was sheer intimidation, and an attempt to damage and discredit Republican activity in the area. If the Northampton Defence Committee had not kept up regular pickets and publicity over the case, the police would probably have attempted to get a conviction despite the lack of evidence.

WILLIAM THOMPSON

Red Weekly



Apart from taking part in Sunday's demo, the IMG has also initiated such actions as this picket of British Leyland showrooms last Saturday, in protest at the company's gift of cars to the junta.

Chile Demo: 'International' Socialists nowhere to be seen

The decision of the International Socialists not to take part in the Chile solidarity demonstration on 4 November, marks another step downhill for that organisation.

Ever since the coup IS has done nothing to mobilise its membership in solidarity with the Chilean struggle. Indeed the Communist Party, stalinist though it is, seems to have a greater sense of internationalism than IS. Take for example the first day of the coup. Every paper on the left, except one, led on Chile, (the *Morning Star* carried it for five days). *Socialist Worker* led on scabbing at Chrysler, and Chile was tucked away at the foot of the back page. Agreed, the Chrysler dispute was a major event in the British class struggle, but only an economist sect would accord it comparable significance to the Chilean upheaval.

This was followed by a humiliating experience for IS. Knowing that there was going to be a Chile demo., they decided to organise their own demonstration on the South African shootings. But, on finding 400 people behind the IS banners, and 5,000 on the Chile demonstration, they were forced to rapidly scrawl new slogans, and join the Chile demo instead.

IS claim that they did not participate on 4 November because they were denied a speaker. But no serious revolutionary organisation would abandon international solidarity activity over an organisational question such as this. The International Marxist Group was refused a speaker on the first Chile demonstration, but we did not walk away in a huff. We continued to carry out our responsibilities to the Chilean workers and peasants, and estab-

lished a position in the solidarity movement which made it impossible for the sectarians of the Communist Party to exclude us from Sunday's platform.

But everyone knows that the IS is doing nothing about Chile — except moralise. They were not even present at the Chile Solidarity Campaign Committee meeting at which the question of speakers was discussed. This made it easy for the CP to exclude them.

Nor does their claim that participation would have meant: 'accepting conditions preventing us from putting forward revolutionary politics,' stand up. The main slogans of the 1,200 strong IMG contingent were: 'Down with the Military Junta — Forward to Workers Power,' 'No Aid — No Trade; Black all Chilean Goods,' 'Solidarity with the Armed Resistance,' 'Armed Road Only Road' and 'Only Solution — Revolution.' We sold 500 copies of *Red Weekly*, 200 pamphlets, and 100 copies of our theoretical magazine *International*, all of which discussed at great length the role of the CP in Chile and its reflection in the politics of the CPs internationally.

Comrade Tariq Ali in his speech made it clear that there was no general political agreement amongst those involved in the demonstration, and that if every Chilean worker and peasant had had a gun there would have been no coup.

IS does not see the need for *solidarity actions* with Chile, because their only concern is with the short term capital they can make out of the Chilean catastrophe against the CP. As one Labour Party branch secretary said at an IMG public meeting on Chile: 'The attitude

of the IS and the SLL is that they are glad the coup has taken place, so that they can take a few digs at the CPGB. This makes me sick. What I am concerned about is how to solidarise with the struggle which still goes on in Chile, and ensure that if they have lost the battle, they win the war.'

Part of the task of revolutionaries is to draw out the political lessons of Chile for the vanguard, and this must include a critique of the CP, but the pre-requisite for being able to do this is to be involved in *active solidarity*.

IS does not have the politics to deal either with the events in Chile, or the reaction to them in the international working class.

It is beyond IS's comprehension that an international event like Chile could produce a massive working class reaction like the 4 November demonstration, which was composed in its majority of workers, and contained a larger number of trade union banners than any other demonstration in recent years, apart from those against the Industrial Relations Act.

Immediately after 1968 IS's ideas might have had some slight connection with reality — the working class was mobilised mainly on trade union questions. But that situation is changing fast, and workers are now taking up a whole range of political issues. IS will be left tailing behind this process, as it is today on the question of Chile.

John Marshall

Exam schools occupied in Oxford

In Oxford University, normally a bastion of reaction, over 400 students are occupying the central Examination Schools. Mass meetings of more than a thousand people have been held in support of demands for a students union building.

Support has been pouring in from other colleges around the country, and at Oxford Polytechnic a mass meeting of over 350 students voted unanimously to support the occupation, with a big contingent marching to join it. However the students' own so-called Representative Council executive has scabbed on the occupation. It has even gone to the extent of organising strongarm squads, largely composed of local Communist Party members, which have assisted the police in attacking students trying to join the occupation.

The University is using legal threats and victimisation attempts to defuse the struggle, surrounding the building from time to time with police — both the special University police (known as 'Bulldogs') and the more ordinary variety. But the students have not been discouraged either by these legal threats or by the scabbing of the Student Representative Council. Support continues to grow, and a national demonstration is planned for this Saturday, 10 November.

Tariq Ali fined £50

Tariq Ali, who was arrested with several others on the anti-Caetano demonstration in July, was fined £50 last Wednesday, 31 October. The fine was imposed by a Mr. Jobling, a Wells Street magistrate who studiously disregarded all the photographic evidence disproving the police case, which alleged that Ali had managed to assault two constables while holding a beer case in his hand.

Throughout the trial — which lasted almost a day — the magistrate was at pains to prevent defence lawyer Rook Tansey from breaking down the police evidence. Indeed, he partially took over the role of prosecutor and was heard to murmur encouragement to the police witnesses (all members of the Special Patrol Group).

However, on the following day even Jobling found it difficult to convict NUS Secretary Steve Parry and Communist Party member Paul Fauvel on similar charges, so glaring were the inconsistencies in the police evidence, and they were eventually acquitted. Because all the charges flowed from the same alleged series of incidents, Ali's lawyers are making a close study of the evidence in the Parry/Fauvel case before deciding whether or not to appeal.

In any case, the trial of the five militants arrested on the recent London demonstration against the National Front is still pending. Money is urgently needed to cover expenses in all these cases. Please rush donations to: IMG (Defence Fund), 182 Pentonville Road, London, N.1.

The politics and activities of the International Marxist Group will be featured as part of a BBC-2 television programme this Saturday 10 November. The programme, for some reason entitled 'Westminster', starts at 6.35 p.m.

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