

DEFEND PICKETS

On Friday, 18 May, five of the 24 North Wales building workers facing charges of conspiracy for picketing last summer appear in a Shrewsbury court.

We can imagine the scene. The courtroom will be heavily guarded. Special contingents of police will be brought in from throughout the North-West to seal off this small provincial town, to stop and search all vehicles entering, and to ring the courthouse in a massive display of force.

All this just for five workers? The capitalist legal system does not usually honour its working class defendants with such a display of might (unless they happen to be Irish).

NOT ALONE

But although the five may be in the dock alone, they are not in Shrewsbury alone. Delegations of workers from all over the country are demonstrating outside the court. This is the reason for the massive concentration of police. These demonstrations are the beginning of a movement by important sections of the working class, alerted to the danger of increasing state attacks of pickets.

In a letter received by *Red Weekly*, trade unionists in Rotherham and Sheffield explain the political issues involved and the sort of initiatives they are taking in defence of the Shrewsbury workers:

'Last summer, when the forces of the state attacked trade unionists and sent them down, it wasn't with some law dragged up from the last century. No, last

summer they had their brand new law, specially prepared - the Industrial Relations Act. The magnificent response from militants throughout the country secured the release of the Pentonville Five. Now, the government has been forced to put the Act on ice - it's just too dicey to use at the moment. But just wait - if they're successful at Shrewsbury with the 1875 job, they'll be back with their 1972 Act sooner rather than later.

We in Sheffield and Rotherham have formed a committee, with delegates from local branches of UCATT, T&GWU and AUEW, Rotherham Trades Council and from shop stewards committees. We have held collections, public meetings and we have organised a coach to join the mass picket outside the courtroom on May 18th. This is only a small beginning but support is picking up.'

CAMPAIGN

This example must be followed by workers in other localities. The remaining defendants come up in court on 15 June, and after that, if massive mobilisations fail to get the charges

dropped, they will go on to the Crown Court. The campaign must therefore be continued and extended. Because the UCATT and T&G leaders have refused to finance the defence, workers throughout the country must take on the task of raising the necessary money. Not only has the trade union bureaucracy completely failed to mobilise support - the UCATT leadership has even issued a circular instructing its branches to ignore the case.

Shrewsbury is of vital concern to all workers because if legal precedents are set in this case they will be used against other pickets. This is particularly the case in the building trade, where picketing is an essential part of the fight against the lump. Already the London Joint Sites Committee has decided to build a committee for the defence of picketing.

Successful defence of the Shrewsbury 24 and preparations for the defence of picket lines in the localities are essential. We must make sure that in future no worker has to face the repressive machine of the capitalist state alone.



OPEN LETTER TO ERIC HEFFER

The 'lump' as you know is the curse of organisation inside the building trade. It is clear therefore that every trade unionist in the building industry supports the initiative that you have made in Parliament. We therefore call on all Labour MPs to support the Labour-only sub-contracting Bill.

We are also sure that you agree that parliamentary initiative must go hand in hand with the broadest possible action at site level by building workers themselves. So far, such action has depended on the hard-won right to picket 'lump' sites. In most cases picketing represents the only means to defend organisation and living standards of workers in the trade. Even with the passage of your Bill, picketing and other activities at site level to enforce compliance with its provisions would be necessary.

Now the right to picket is being attacked by the Tory Government. In Shrewsbury 24 building workers face a total of 210 charges including conspiracy for following their unions' official policy on picketing during last year's national building strike. These workers are guilty in the eyes of the Tory Government for pursuing their normal and vital trade union activity. If the attack on picketing at Shrewsbury is successful, the ability of building workers to fight the lump, in an industry notorious for its extensive blacklisting and other anti-union activities, is seriously jeopardised.

The Shrewsbury trial is no isolated example, but one among several. For instance, from the pickets on the St. Thomas's Hospital site, which is only a few hundred yards from the House of Commons, arrests have been made in an attempt to find new legal precedents to use in the crushing of picketing.

So far the leadership of the two unions involved, have not taken up a national campaign in defence of these workers and their rights. But such a campaign is vital. We can begin now, in London, by building a committee for the defence of picketing. We ask Eric Heffer in particular to sponsor this body and to speak at its founding meeting. Its main aims would be to prepare a public tour for the Shrewsbury workers in London, and to prepare action for the opening day of the trial in the High Court.

At many trade union rallies Labour MPs have spoken of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, who also faced the conspiracy laws. The key test of all the leadership of the labour movement is the defence of those who face similar charges today.

Yours fraternally, JIM KEMP,

On behalf of the London Joint Sites Committee,
15 May 1973.

Turn the Tide - Three Tasks

Once again talks between the Government, the TUC, and the CBI are under way. But things are not the same now as last autumn. Then the rank and file of the trade union movement was confident after the great victory of the miners' strike. The trade union bureaucracy knew it couldn't sell any deal to the membership, and it was neither surprised nor, particularly worried when the talks broke down.

The bureaucracy was unable to sell out completely to Heath, but it certainly didn't lead any fight against Tory policy either. The results were predictable: a few hard struggles by weak sections fought in isolation and leading to defeat, followed by widespread acceptance of settlements within the Phase 2 guidelines.

After leading the movement to defeat, these same bureaucrats will now pose as the great 'statesmen' of trade unionism in negotiating with Heath.

LIMITED

But the defeats suffered so far have been limited ones. They have not produced any dramatic changes in the overall strength of the movement, or

in the power of the bureaucracy, compared with that of the rank and file. Many militants have drawn important lessons from the events of the past few months. Rank and file bodies are springing up to defend the Shrewsbury 24, and even the right wing executive of the EPTU had difficulty in controlling its recent conference. This means that the trade union leadership, if they are to do a deal with the government, have to strengthen the hand of union executive bodies and declare war on the militants. This explains the growing witch-hunts in unions like the NUT and APEX.

But no deal will stop the rank and file from 'making trouble.' This is why we are seeing the present campaign of state repression, designed precisely to curb those forms of struggle (such as flying pickets) which the rank and file will have to rely on in the event of a deal.

Three main tasks therefore face militants in the coming months:

1. To launch a campaign immediately throughout the movement opposing the talks and any surrender to the Tories' Phase 3 wage restrictions.

The biggest unions will be holding their conferences over the summer, and the TUC itself meets in September. We must make sure these bodies are flooded with resolutions against the talks and against any deals: militants should stand for election as conference delegates on the basis of such opposition.

2. To defend union democracy, fight all attempts to victimise militants, defend the right of militants to organise in order to present their views to the membership (a right the bureaucracy wants to keep for itself), protect and extend the already limited controls the rank and file have over the bureaucracy.

3. To develop the broadest united movement against state repression and in defence of picketing continue the campaign for the Shrewsbury 24, which must be central to such a movement.

The fulfilment of these tasks can create the conditions in which a new struggle will produce new victories for the working class, rather than the bureaucratically engineered defeats suffered recently.

PROMISES, PROMISES!



Eric Heffer, whose anti-lump Bill gets its second reading this Friday.

- * Heffer's Bill sets up a register for builders.
- * This register is not compulsory.
- * There are no penalties for builders who do not register.
- * Building workers remain the only force who can make employers drop the 'lump'.

See 'HEFFER'S TOOTHLESS BILL' on page 3 of this issue.

Rotherham Workers Vote for Council of Action

Seven hundred Rotherham workers have voted to set up a Council of Action in the town. This important decision was taken at the end of Rotherham's biggest May Day rally since the pre-war years.

This alone would make it a significant event, but it becomes even more important in the light of recent developments in the Rotherham labour movement.

CONFERENCE

The ball was started rolling as far back as last Christmas, when a motion from the local UCATT branch proposed that the Trades Council should hold a conference to work out what steps could be taken by the Rotherham labour movement to back the AUEW in its fight against the recently-imposed NIRC fines.

By the time this resolution reached the Trades Council, however, the question of the AUEW fine was dead. The IMG members on the Trades Council argued that the fine was merely one example of the kind of attack the Tory government was making on the working class. They stressed the urgent need to go ahead with the conference on the basis of opposition to the Tory government, and with the aim of organising the forces of the labour movement to resist any form of attack from this government. On the basis of these arguments the resolution was carried.

When the Conference met on 14 April, there was one obvious task facing it — to organise for May Day. On the initiative of the IMG delegates present an Action Committee was elected to organise a May Day demonstration 'as the first step in a real campaign for the removal of the Tory Government...'. The Conference also committed itself to 'taking the necessary steps towards the formation of a Council of Action...'

The real importance of the demonstration is that it was worked for and understood, at least by the leading militants in the area, precisely as a 'first step'. The 700 who attended the rally at the end of the demonstration unanimously passed a resolution calling for the Action Committee to remain in existence and to continue the campaign against the Tory Government. The main topic of debate amongst

militants in Rotherham now is what is the next step?

GOVERNMENT

The IMG will be agitating for a recall local Conference to extend the basis of the Action Committee — for the creation of a real Council of Action. No matter what particular problems face different sections of the population, they must all deal with the same enemy — the Tory Government. It is an understanding of this that has allowed the movement in Rotherham to continue to develop in spite of specific problems changing from one month to another.

This is why the basis of the proposed Council of Action must be opposition to the Tory Government, if the movement is to continue and the Council is to become a permanent force in the life of the Rotherham labour movement. By organising all the different sectors of the population on this basis the way will be open for the establishment of a permanent united front which can provide real support to any section which goes into struggle. With this kind of organisation no one should need to fight their struggle alone. It will become possible to transform the sympathy that exists for victims of the Tories' attacks into action; the kind of action which, if taken up by the whole working class, can be unified into a movement with a decisive conclusion — the downfall of the Tory Government.

Mick Blane

Thatcher Throws Sop to Students

Students are to get an extra £40 on their grant instead of the £20 originally offered, it was announced on Tuesday. This is in reply to the claim for £105 from the National Union of Students. Six days before the NUS-designated 'Deadline Day', therefore, the government has attempted to set its seal on a dying campaign.

The NUS campaign is on its last legs, with the Executive unable to mount any reply to the now generalised offensive of the college authorities — our erstwhile 'friends' — against militants active in the campaign. Rent strikes have collapsed at Keele and Surrey as a result of legal threats, and demoralisation is growing as nothing but a farcical 'picket' outside the Department of Education and Science has come from the Executive. In this respect, the Executive's immediate response to the government's offer that 'the campaign will continue' is no more than a sick joke.

It was timely, therefore, that delegates from over 50 colleges came together last weekend

at the LSE as a result of an initiative by the IMG and militants in several colleges to plan how to reverse this state of affairs. The retreat by the NUS before the college authorities was catalogued and their lack of support to the rent strikers condemned.

For its part the conference voted overwhelmingly to defend those under attack by setting up a steering committee to centralise and co-ordinate activities in the colleges. It



Outgoing NUS president Digby Jacks — the picket outside the DES was hardly worth taking seriously.

was also agreed to mobilise for a massive show of force on 21 May, the day when the NUS ultimatum to the DES runs out. The absence of any clear way forward, plus the government's offer, means that there is a danger that a whole section of students might see this as the end of the campaign. It is therefore vital to transform the nature of the picket called by the NUS outside the DES on that day, to show Thatcher exactly what is thought of the offer and to revitalise the struggle. To this end the Grants Conference will be organising a mass rally beforehand at LSE at 12.30 p.m. with speakers.

The conference also unanimously agreed to mobilise for the demonstration called in Shrewsbury in defence of the 24 building workers, recognising that our allies in the fight against the Tories' attack on student living standards are those struggling against them, not those implementing and aiding their policies.

The ability of the steering committee to carry out this policy could be weakened by the position taken by the IS delegates, who refused to commit themselves wholeheartedly to the policy decided by the conference. A Special Recall Conference to consider the future of the Grants Campaign has been called by the NUS Executive. Failure to take up the problems tackled last weekend will leave the field open for a sell-out by the Executive and the stepping up of the assaults on the rent strikes. Jim Clynes

New Strike by Asian Workers

Thirty five Pakistani and Indian workers are on strike at the elastic braiding factory of E. Jaffe & Sons in Nottingham in another major dispute over 'sweatshop' conditions and racist practices in the area. This follows the recent disputes at Crepe Sizes and the Mansfield Hosiery Mills on the same kind of issues.

The workers at the factory have been 'expected' up till now to work a 72 hour week with no overtime rate. In addition, conditions at the factory are appalling, training contracts are manipulated to obtain skilled work at apprentice's rates, it is impossible to work out how the wages are made up, and so on. Ten months ago the first steps to change this were taken when the workers voted to join the T&GWU.

Management have consistently refused to recognise the Union — it would be 'illegal', they say, because the T&G 'is not registered with the Government'. At the same time they have tried, largely unsuccessfully, to split the workforce by offering the higher paid jobs of gang leader and foreman to selected Pakistanis.

All this came to a head when a section of the workforce decided to strike on May Day. Management were enraged, and decided to 'teach the Pakis a lesson'. Next day one of the strikers, Sarwar Mohammed, was sacked on the spot for allegedly 'finishing early'. After

attempts to get him reinstated had failed, a strike was called to start the next morning.

However the Union, as in other recent cases of this type, was hardly enthusiastic about supporting its members. In fact the local official, Reg Harris, flatly refused to make the strike official and instead suggested that the workers go back, 'then we can talk things over'. But the workers, encouraged by the Crepe Sizes and Mansfield strikes, are having none of this. Indeed one of the shop stewards, Mushtaq Hussain, has stated that unless the strike is made official there will be a continuous picket and possibly occupation of the local T&G offices (a tactic used successfully in the Mansfield strike).

SUPPORT

Apart from the Pakistani community and its organisations, support is coming from Bennie Bunsee of the Mansfield Hosiery Strike Committee and the local Solidarity Committee. An attempt is also being made to involve the Trades Council, and an important step here was the support gained from an East Midlands Area meeting of the Communist Party at which both Hussain, from the strike committee, and an IMG militant-spoke. A large public support meeting is also being organised. Messages of solidarity, donations, etc. should be sent to M. Hussain, 15 Goldswong Terrace, Nottingham.

It is also generally recognised by all concerned that this strike is neither the first nor the last of its kind, and that the whole question of black workers and trade unions has been sorely neglected by the left; unfortunately the same cannot be said of the right. Therefore the conference called for 2 June on Racialism and the Trade Unions should be seen as of key importance both for this strike and for the many similar disputes which will inevitably follow.

Mike Hamlin

STOP PRESS: A meeting of 250 Reading students called the Government's bluff when they voted overwhelmingly on Wednesday to occupy the University Administration building. This action was taken after solicitor's letters threatening some 100 students and their parents with legal action to collect outstanding rent. These students have been on rent strikes since last term, and have recently been joined by an estimated 60% of all students in residence.

JANE MEYERS

Members of the IMG have recently learned of the death over the Easter weekend of comrade Jane Meyers.

Jane joined the IMG's London Irish Cell through her work in the Irish solidarity movement, where she is remembered as one of the most active members of the Central London branch of the Irish Solidarity Campaign and then of the same branch of the Anti-Internment League.

After she joined the IMG, comrade Meyers went to the U.S. where she helped to spread knowledge of the 'Irish problem'. Jane was also active in the National Union of Teachers and 'Rank and File'. Her former comrades in the IMG, the NUT and the AIL have launched a Jane Meyers Memorial Fund, the proceeds of which will be sent in her name to aid the Irish struggle. Contributions, which will be acknowledged, should be sent to: The Secretary, Central London AIL, c/o 76 Portland Road, Holland Park, London W.11.

CONFERENCE ON TRADE UNIONS AND RACIALISM

June 2, Digbeth Hall, Birmingham, 11am-6pm.

Called by the Mansfield Hosiery Mills Strike Committee

Speakers include: Benny Bunsee, Mike Cooley, Tom Sioley, Winston Pinder, Ernie Roberts.

Full details, delegates credentials, etc. from: B. Bunsee, 20-03 Victoria Centre, Nottingham, Telephone (0602) 46307.

CURRENT ACCOUNT



FALSE PROPHETS OF BOOM

The spring seems to have brought capitalist euphoria. Anthony Barber has been boasting about the size of his growth rate; the CBI reports its members more chirpy than ever before; and most of the bourgeois press has joined in the mutual congratulation.

This surge of public optimism (significantly not matched by any surge of share prices) was based on the flimsiest of evidence — the official figures for the growth of the economy and the CBI's quarterly industrial trends survey. What, in fact, is the overall growth rate of the economy? The answer is that nobody knows. The three ways of measuring it (based on calculating output, income and expenditure, respectively), which should in theory give exactly the same results, have in the last year been diverging strangely. In fact between the second half of 1971 and the second half of 1972 the economy grew 4.1 per cent according to the output estimate and 1.1 per cent according to the expenditure estimate. The government, without much justification, has simply been taking the highest of the available estimates. The CBI's survey adds no hard information to this since it is an entirely subjective happiness poll of businessmen; its results have never borne much relation to what actually goes on in the economy.

OUTPUT

Nonetheless there is some hard evidence that output has grown much faster in the last year than in the previous few. Since September industrial production has been growing at 6.4 per cent a year, manufacturing output alone at 8.4 per cent, and engineering output at 14.4 per cent (a reflection of the car boom and perhaps a slight recovery of investment). The level of unemployment has dropped from its 1972 peak. And this year consumer's expenditure has been rising at 10 per cent a year.

This is an economic upturn, all right — but a fragile one producing, or helping to produce, forces which could quite suddenly bring it to a halt. One of these is the increase in imports, which has led to a balance of payments deficit now running at the immense rate of £1000 million a year, though its worst effects have been hidden so far, largely by heavy borrowing by the nationalised industries in the Euro-markets and in Japan.

There are also many signs of 'overheating' in the economy — shortages of skilled labour and of capacity, especially in the engineering industries and especially in the South East. That these limits can show themselves so soon with three quarters of a million people still unemployed is a mark of how the last few years of low investment have whittled away the ability of British capitalism to produce a sustained boom. The upturn has still resulted much more in the fuller use of existing capacity than in an increase of investment.

The present expansion is also threatened by the expected fall in the growth of consumption as the effects of falling real wages appear. Continued inflation and the wage freeze have cut real incomes of working people by about 3 per cent since November, and will knock them down by probably another 2 per cent by the autumn if Phase II is successful. Consumption growth is now being maintained mostly by a leap in hire purchase debt.

NO IMPROVEMENT

So the upturn is not the beginning of a new period of capitalist health. In fact the first two and a half years of Tory government saw no improvement at all in the basic measure of the health of capitalism — profitability. And now many of the hopes that a period of simultaneous economic expansion and wage freeze would help profits have been dashed, as capitalists have escaped for a time from the frying pan of rising wages into the fire of rising raw-material costs.

However, even if the upturn hasn't made things much better for the capitalists, there is no doubt that a new downturn would make things much worse. So behind the CBI's euphoric propaganda for the boom lies real desperation.

Michael Price

HEFFER'S TOOTHLESS BILL

Thousands of building workers will be striking against the lump this Friday as Eric Heffer's Bill to 'outlaw' labour-only sub-contracting (the lump) in the building trade, is given its second reading in Parliament.

Building workers have been fighting the lump for many years, a system of self-employment which undermines union organisation and allows big profits to be made by contractors who are under no obligations to their "self-employed" employees. However, many workers would be surprised if they knew just how ineffective Heffer's bill really is, even assuming it were to be passed by Parliament.

REGISTER

The main body of the bill is concerned with the creation of a Register of building contractors by the Government. Only those who are not engaged in labour-only sub-contracting are eligible for registration. However, there is no provision in the Bill compelling contractors to register, and no penalties for failing to do so. And there are no advantages to being on the register, except receipt of a certificate. Only a company which either applies for registration and is refused, or has been registered and is then removed from the register for illegitimate practices (such as labour-only sub-contracting), is liable to any penalty at all. But the contractor who has never bothered to apply for registration in the first place is totally immune.

Eric Heffer and others have claimed that this Bill 'outlaws' lump labour. What the Bill actually says is that: 'It shall be illegal for any person or persons to enter into a contract invol-

ving the practice of labour only... Now it may be made 'illegal', but this statement is quite meaningless: it is not made an offence under the Bill, carrying definite penalties. If this were done, then a contractor working the lump could be taken to court, tried, and punished. But under this Bill, only those who have applied to register can be guilty of an offence: the unregistered contractor remains free to work the lump without any worries. All that happens is that his contract is 'illegal' - that is neither he nor the workers he takes on under a labour-only sub-contract are able to take any action against one another in the courts.

MORAL SUPPORT

The Bill, then, is little more than an invitation to the building industry to register and thereby draw a public distinction between those contractors who are unregistered (and therefore likely to be engaging in the lump) and those who are registered (and therefore unlikely to be using the lump). The Bill gives moral support to those who already refuse to make contracts with lumpers. But, as the Islington Labour Council recently discovered, this can be difficult: faced with an organised boycott of contractors they have recently dropped their policy of refusing to make contracts with firms that use lump labour. The Bill will not sort out this type of problem at all.

Heffer's faith that the Bill, if passed, would have an immediate effect on the lump is mistaken. He seems to be hoping that many of those who hire building contractors (such as local authorities) will automatically adopt a policy of making contracts only with registered contractors.

reminder to the notoriously forgetful investor who so often absentmindedly sinks his hard earned money into new stock flotations. But coming when it did it was guaranteed to get all the publicity with the minimum possible effect on the actual course of events, because Rothschild had already lined up various City interests to take all the shares that were not placed by application. So Tony was able to get his picture in the paper without in any way interfering in the carve up of Rolls Royce. A love for the limelight coupled with an equally deep passion for irrelevance have long been qualities of the Labour 'left'.

If things had stopped there Tony might have been able to wash his hands of the matter and walk away from the fray with another feather in his cap, even better prepared for his next heroic struggle with the capitalist octopus. Unfortunately this small comment evoked positive hysteria - predictably from the ranks of the Tories, but also from within the ranks of Labour MPs (whose proletarian image might suffer from the acquisition of a Rolls Royce car, but could easily weather the purchase of a nice slice of its maker). At the same time Harold Wilson, obviously frightened at the prospect of a future Labour government having to justify its activities in terms of Tony Benn's press releases, decided that the time had come to bring some order into the chaos.

SPECIAL MEETING

Accordingly, a special meeting of the shadow cabinet was convened and after a 2½ hour debate, Mr. Wilson issued a 'clarifying' statement. Like most such 'clarifications' its effect was to thoroughly confuse things. He reassured Rolls' new shareholders that the Labour Party would not deprive them of their property without compensation, and that Wedgwood Benn had,

abolished because 'a separate women's organisation was no longer necessary'. Homosexuality was outlawed, virginity was extolled, abortions were made difficult to obtain and motherhood was celebrated. Maria Loftus admitted that the nuclear family was still the basic economic unit in Russia. Women still have two jobs, one in the home and one outside it. Male chauvinism remains unchallenged. What she failed to explain was why fifty years of so-called 'socialism in one country' have done virtually nothing to liberate women.

Maria did not accept the official CP position that the family is a natural and perfectible institution unfortunately tainted by capitalism. But she attempted to explain away the 'glorious socialist family' as a product of the 'peculiarly Russian mentality' of Stalin, an explanation which convinced nobody.

She made no mention of one of the most significant pieces of Stalinist legislation. In the early Thirties the Bolshevik laws severely restricting inheritance were abolished, so that the bureaucracy could perpetuate their privileged position by keeping their wealth within the family. Stalin strengthened the family as an institution of social control in order to maintain the authoritarian social order upon which the existence of the bureaucracy depended, and depends today. Maria lamely pinned her hopes for the future on the emergence of a women's liberation movement in Russia. In



Workers on McAlpine's site seize crane in lump protest.

But this assumes that at least a part of the industry accepts the Bill and applies for registration. However the National Federation of Building Trade Employers has already made its strong opposition to the Bill quite clear; if most of its members should decide to black the Bill and refuse to register then the Bill would become a dead letter - and nothing could be done about it!

Despite these crippling weaknesses, such a Bill could serve a useful purpose in developing the workers' struggle to smash the lump. If passed, the present site-by-site struggle against the lump could then be co-ordinated into a united national campaign to force all contractors to register. If a national building strike took place around this question, it might well succeed in breaking the resistance of key sections of the employers. But some problems would still remain: workers could not put their faith in government-appointed tribunals and the capitalist courts to deal with their case.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

If the bill were amended to force all contractors to register, with stiff penalties for failure, it might then be a reasonably effective measure as far as attacking the lump goes. The central point, however, is that there can be no substitute for the effective organisation of the mass of building workers. A campaign for effective legislation, or to ensure enforcement of such laws, will only achieve what we all want - the smashing of the lump - if it goes hand-in-hand with a campaign of industrial action against offending employers.

Ultimately, however, the lump can only be rooted out by destroying the conditions on which it feeds. This requires a total decasualisation of the trade, with a system of registration of all building trade workers, and a guarantee of five days full pay for all registered workers whether work is available or not.

Wilson Rolls Benn

Rolls Royce certainly has come down in the world. This once great manufacturer of cars, by appointment to the capitalist class around the globe, in the course of one week has seen itself put up on the auction block and then withdrawn because of a lack of interest, then cold-shouldered by the stock market, and finally reduced to the status of a well-kicked political football.

Fortunately someone who is still the right side of solvency retained a measure of loyalty to this symbol of faded capitalist glory - the generous intervention of N.M. Rothschild & Sons saved this staggering giant from still another embarrassing fall. But it was not only Rolls Royce's image that emerged from the events of last week rather tarnished. Anthony Wedgwood Benn, self-proclaimed crusader for workers' rights, was also left with his weak flank exposed to public view.

PUBLICITY

It all started when Benn sallied forth to publicly remind prospective investors of official Labour Party policy to 'renationalise without compensation public assets which are sold off by the present government'. Perfectly reasonable of course: just a public spirited

mondo, never said they would - indeed he had expressly said they would not. Neither the closest reading of the Benn statement by the members of the press nor their intense questioning of Labour Party spokesmen succeeded in uncovering the precise words in which Benn is supposed to have said all this.

Having sorted out this little business, Mr. Wilson obviously took to heart the old saying that 'idle hands make work for the devil', and sent Benn charging off once again, but this time in the much safer direction of the House of Commons and with his lance well-blunted. His latest assignment was simply to propose a motion in the Commons censuring the Tories for their handling of the Rolls Royce business and calling on them to nationalise it.

What is the moral of this little drama (or should we say farce)? For Mr. Benn it would seem to be: it is unwise to draw your sword for combat when you've long ago flung the blade. For us: the next time Mr. Benn puffs out his chest, pats us on the back, and starts talking at length about 'workers' control' and 'socialism' we might just lean over and softly whisper in his ear: 'By the way, just what are you going to do with Rolls Royce?'

REPRESSION: Joint Declaration

We publish below a joint declaration by the Socialist Labour League, the International Socialists, and the International Marxist Group pledging defence of the democratic rights of the working class against the increasing repression. The Communist Party has refused to add its signature, justifying this on the grounds of the alleged 'disruptive policy and actions' of the other organisations concerned. The IMG for its part sees the publication of this statement as the first step towards joint practical activity on specific questions, in which we hope that Communist Party militants will nevertheless be involved.

The three organisations below pledge themselves to jointly defend the democratic rights of the working class against the legislative attacks of the Tory government which seriously affect the trade unions and the working class as well as all groups on the left of the labour movement.

We believe the threat against democratic rights arises from:

- (i) Raids carried out by the police, the purpose of which they do not feel obliged to explain. These raids generally lead to large quantities of documents and addresses being taken away under conditions in which the work of the organisation can be disrupted.
- (ii) Holding suspects for lengthy periods before they are brought to trial.
- (iii) The secret decision to arm the police.
- (iv) The use of telephone tapping, tape recording and letter opening by the police to illegally incriminate those on the left who are under surveillance.
- (v) Planting spies and provocateurs within the working class movement. This is based on the so-called theories of counter-insurgency developed by Kitson, Calvert and Clutterbuck with the support of the Tory Cabinet.

We believe that the fight for democratic rights must become an integral part of the struggle of the trade union movement and the working class to expose the operation of the Industrial Relations Act and all activities of the Tory government through laws which are directed against the democratic rights of the working class.

In the event of an attack involving democratic rights by the Tory government or its agencies against working class organisations, we will together organise such public campaigns as are considered mutually necessary to protect these organisations and their membership from such attacks.

The fight to end all bans and proscriptions in the trade union and labour movement is an essential part of the struggle to defend democratic rights against the attacks of the capitalist state.

Socialist Labour League
International Socialists
International Marxist Group

Leeds Conference on 'The Family'

Four hundred people from all parts of the country came to the conference in Leeds on the family last weekend. The discussion ranged over such topics as the family during the rise of capitalism (introduced by Sheila Rowbotham and Linda Smith), the family in advanced capitalist countries (Lee Sanders and Margaret Coulson) and the family in post-capitalist society, in which a discussion on the development of the family in post-revolutionary Russia was introduced by Maria Loftus.

Three main political currents emerged during the conference: the libertarian, the revolutionary socialist (represented almost exclusively by IMG members and supporters), and that of the Communist Party. The different positions were most clearly evident in the discussion on the family in Russia. Maria Loftus, a CP member, began by describing the immense gains for women produced by the Russian Revolution and their erosion by the growth of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Genotdel - the equivalent of the women's liberation movement - was



Sheila Rowbotham (centre) and Linda Smith (right).

fact a struggle by women in Russia against their oppression at work and in the family would directly challenge the Soviet state and the bureaucratic Party which controls it.

The conference was a useful step towards developing an understanding of the real nature and importance of the family. Further analysis of the international experience needs to be complemented by three campaigns that directly confront us now. The new tax credit system which will replace Family Allowances deprives women in the home of the only direct payment they get, however paltry. The right-wing defenders of the family are mobilising massive support for their anti-abortion lobby. And the new Anti-Sex Discrimination Bill not only completely fails to abolish sex discrimination but opens up the dangerous possibility of women choosing to ally themselves with the bourgeois courts against the trade unions. All these questions must be taken up by socialist activists if the discussion on the family is not to remain at a purely academic level.

REPRESSION IN IRELAND

Since 1968 Britain has made five major attempts to impose its own solution on the Irish people. First came the piecemeal reforms under O'Neill, while at the same time the Ulster police forces continued their harassment of the nationalist minority. When this piece of trickery failed, the British Army was sent in.

But the power of the gun proved no greater than the power of persuasion, and so Britain considerably stepped up its terror methods — internment, large scale use of torture, constant mass intimidation, etc. This also failed to destroy the resistance, leading to the suspension of Stormont and the introduction of Direct Rule in March 1972. Finally we have the White Paper, an elaborate piece of legislation setting out yet more plans for dealing with Britain's 'Irish Problem'.

Holding Operation

It is easy for the British ruling class to pass legislation at Westminster and to draw up schemes for 'power sharing' between different sections of the ruling class in Ireland. But to impose them presupposes the completion of one gigantic task: repression. This is what Britain has pursued since the troops first moved in in 1969. The failure of the repression so far means that today the White Paper can be little more than a holding operation while the repression continues under a new legal facade. The White Paper therefore highlights the choice facing the anti-imperialist minority in the North. If their resistance fails they face the same exploitation by British imperialism in a restructured Ireland. If they resist they can expect no respite from Whitelaw and his allies in the North.

The long promised White Paper was originally intended to be something more far-reaching than is actually possible for the British now. When Direct Rule was introduced Whitelaw thought that two things could be achieved in a very short time.

First, he thought that the IRA could be defeated within a few months. Second, he believed that with the IRA defeated he could isolate Craig and the extremists in the protestant camp and build up a strong party of moderate unionists more pliant to Britain's will. From such a position of strength Britain could then start to negotiate with the South and achieve its aim of restructuring Ireland in the interests of British capital.

But Whitelaw was wrong. So what now is the significance of the White Paper? It has two essential aims. First, it is an attempt to strengthen and step up the repression while at the same time giving it a more 'legal' appearance. Second, it tries to alter the balance of forces within the protestant community in favour of the moderates and against the extremists.

Concentration Camps

The White Paper makes provision for the passing of more repressive legislation, the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, based on the recommendations of the Diplock Commission.

With Direct Rule, Whitelaw promised 'the speedy end of internment'. This was based on the assumption that the troops could defeat the IRA. But even with 20,000 soldiers, torture, intimidation, bribery and murder, Britain has not succeeded in destroying opposition. The Army's chief theoretician, Kitson, has repeated-

ly said that if Britain wants to impose its solution any remaining qualms about civil rights and juridical processes have to be dumped. So the new Bill will provide for:

1. Continuing internment — but under a different name since those involved will reach the camps via a 'special court'.
2. End of trial by jury.
3. New bail restrictions so that it can only be granted by a High Court judge.
4. In arms and explosives cases the onus of proof to be shifted to the defendant, who will now be presumed guilty unless it can be proven otherwise.

So the concentration camps, a bit of an embarrassment within 'the territory of the United Kingdom' are given a legal window-dressing. The camps, the special courts, the plain clothes assassination squads and the British Army — all these remain. This is the 'solution' of the White Paper.

Loyalist Terror

By refusing any important concessions to the nationalist population, and by holding out a vague prospect of protestant domination in any new power structure, Whitelaw hopes to isolate Craig and the extremists who feed on the fear of a British 'sell-out' to the South. These elements are an obstacle to the long term plans of British imperialism in Ireland.

But that does not mean that they do not have certain uses at the moment. For so long as the main task is to repress and defeat the nationalist minority, then the loyalist murder squads are a useful instrument, along with the activity of British Army plainclothes assassination squads. Britain's role is one of repression, not arbitration between two communities. The sectarian murder campaign has the effect of further terrorising the nationalist community. But while using the protestant extremists in this way, the main aim of the White Paper policy is actually to isolate them and diminish their weight in the community.

Coming Crisis

With the White Paper Britain is indeed playing the last of its political cards. Already, less than two months after its publication, the chances of the White Paper actually achieving some sort of political success for imperialism have diminished.

Despite the intensity of repression and the massive number of arrests, the resistance of the nationalist population has not been seriously undermined. The Provisional IRA still has the capacity to carry on a guerrilla war against the imperialist army effective enough to disrupt Whitelaw's timetable for stabilisation.

Within the British Army, the crisis of morale continues. The troops see no end to the political crisis, and the Army has been unable to reduce IRA activity to an acceptably low level.

And within the Unionist bloc, Faulkner has until now failed to consolidate the Unionist Party around his own leadership and acceptance of the White Paper proposals. The moderates

are therefore unlikely to be in a majority in the new assembly, where the Craigites and the nationalists will vote down the White Paper.

Very clearly then the White Paper is failing. If it does fail it seems likely that the next step for Britain would be all-out repression of the nationalist minority. The British have so far felt restrained only by the possible effect that such a move might have on the Irish working class in the South, and on the small but potentially important anti-war movement in Britain itself.

Illusions

At every step the British ruling class has had to camouflage the real nature of its role in Ireland, above all the real role being played by the Army. This was particularly clear after the massacre on Bloody Sunday. The nakedness of the repression was revealed and provoked an immediate reaction from the workers and students in the South and in Britain. Large demonstrations, occupations and protests took place. The suspension of Stormont, the so-called 'pacification' attempt, and now the White Paper have temporarily blunted the growth and impact of the anti-war movement, and have helped maintain confusion about the 'neutrality' of the British intervention.

But this situation will change. The failure of the White Paper will lead to increasing repression in Ireland. Already, the Army seems to be shooting suspected IRA men on sight rather than arresting them. And in Britain, the ruling class is increasing its harassment of Republican supporters, left wing groups and, in parallel, working class militants.

Repression

An increasing recourse to repression is taking place in most of capitalist Europe. But what is significant about Ireland is the fact that it is a workshop. For both Britain and other NATO countries, Ireland is a laboratory for new methods of counter-insurgency and civil control. The Army of the future is being trained in Northern Ireland. At present, in Britain itself the state is not yet ready to shoot British workers. But there is a continual erosion of bourgeois democracy already taking place.

The main brunt of this increased repression is being felt by Irish organisations in Britain and socialist groups in solidarity with them. The savage treatment meted out to the Belfast Ten is only one example of a method which is already being used on a scale which is approaching the mass frame-up of the Shrewsbury building workers. The interpenetration of the army and the police, already achieved in Ireland, can be seen developing in the Special Patrol Group which specialises in anti-picket activities and was also responsible for the deaths of the two Pakistani workers in the Indian embassy.

Armed Men

The British are demonstrating in Ireland that in the last analysis the state is bodies of armed

men. As Wing Commander H.R. Allen said recently in the *Sunday Times*: 'No government can rule without an ultimate deterrent to civil disobedience'. Ireland is a key struggle which can bring this point home to British workers to prepare them in advance. And they must prepare. The use of repression in Northern Ireland is not an isolated phenomenon but a growing threat in Britain which the left and the working class organisations can ignore only at great peril to themselves. Repression must be fought at the beginning, it must be resisted at every point!

Revolutionaries must take initiatives immediately to unite all possible forces in action on this question — to bring together all organisations and tendencies of the working class movement

NEW ATTITUDE by Bob Pennington

At the beginning of May 200 soldiers in riot gear accompanied by alsatian dogs and English prison warders made a savage attack on detainees at the Long Kesh concentration camp. One prisoner, George Gillen, had to receive treatment for head wounds after being batoned by soldiers.

The soldiers and guards took a particular delight in smashing up prisoners' possessions.

One warder, a well known bigot from the protestant Sandy Row 'broke many models including Irish Harps, Celtic Crosses and plaques'. This same warder was renowned for his beating of defenceless prisoners when he was on the Maidstone.

The Committee in Cage 2 report: 'We came in to find our huts wrecked with our clothing strewn all over the place. Food parcels were also spoilt. Sugar was scattered over meats, washing powder into butter and cakes were squashed.'

CONFINED

For over seven weeks now detainees have been confined to their cages. The area of each cage allows approximately 15 square yards of space to each prisoner. Mail has been withheld and there is no means of contacting warders if a prisoner is taken ill in the rat infested cages during the night. Late-night raids are a refinement eagerly pursued by the guards and soldiers. Three weeks ago the men were wakened at 3.00 am and made to strip naked by gloating soldiers. This raid lasted for six hours. A complete ban has been put on all food parcels for

ARMY MURDER

The day after the Provisionals declared their cease-fire last June, a gunman opened up on a bus queue in the Glen road, Andersonstown area of Belfast. Three men fell wounded, and a man in a house behind the bus stop was hit by a stray bullet. The weapon used was a Thompson sub-machinegun, and the car carrying the gunmen sped away.

On the surface, the incident appeared to be part of an internecine IRA feud. But the car carrying the gunmen was stopped by the RUC and the policemen began to ask questions. Their questions led to an Army statement on the following day which read: 'Shortly after midday a mobile patrol wearing plain clothes and on surveillance duty was travelling eastwards on the Glen road. A group of men standing at a bus turnabout opened fire on the patrol and shot through the rear window of the vehicle, narrowly missing a soldier. The patrol immediately fired back and the men were seen to fall.'

But the RUC was not satisfied with the Army statement and was not going to allow the matter to rest there. The Civil Rights Association and the Association for Legal Justice also questioned the accuracy of the Army story. The men had not been armed, they claimed, and no shots had been fired at the car.



LAND STEPPED UP

in a common struggle against repression, victimisation, and the erosion of hard-won civil liberties. This is our immediate task.

Fairy Stories

But we must also seek to win British workers to the defence of those militants in Ireland who are also fighting our common enemy — the repressive machine of the state. We have been told time and again by politicians and by the capitalist flunkies of the press that the Industrial Relations Act and the NIRC are 'impartial', that they are there to 'keep the peace' and re-

present us all. But every class-conscious worker knows this is a lie. Yet how many of these very workers believe *exactly* the same fairy stories when they are used to describe the role of the British army in Ireland?

We must fight to convince them of the *truth*: the British Army is neither neutral nor impartial; it is not there to 'keep the peace' nor to 'stop the paddies murdering one another'; it is a brutal instrument for the repression of the legitimate national aspirations of the Irish people, and for the defence of British imperialism. Working class militants who are fighting for the interests of their own class here in

Britain must support the 'enemy of their enemy' and demand the **immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.**

Solidarity

But at the same time as working for effective united actions against repression, and working to win British workers to take up the demand for withdrawing the troops, revolutionaries must also work to deepen the understanding of the situation in Ireland and the nature of imperialism among the most politically aware

militants. This demands that we continue to make clear our unconditional solidarity with those forces who are actually fighting the British Army and British imperialism in Ireland.

We must continue to stress the central importance of the IRA's struggle. For the nationalist minority understands that if they can maintain the resistance to imperialism, particularly the armed resistance, they can rob imperialism of its most tried and true weapon in the north of Ireland — the ability to make a deal with the protestant working class by shifting the *worst* aspects of capitalist exploitation onto the backs of the catholic minority. It remains essential that we keep up our full support for the national struggle in Ireland and continue to put forward the demand for **solidarity with the IRA.**

Gus Fagan

ATTEMPTS TO INTIMIDATE PRISONERS

Cage 4 and both detainees and visitors have to remove footwear for official visits.

The repressive conditions, the use of batons and the consistent attempt by Camp Governor Truesdale to intimidate the men has evoked a protest from visiting tutors. Thirty teachers who voluntarily visit the camp twice a week to hold classes have issued a statement saying that the policies presently being pursued there by the Whitelaw regime 'offend against basic humanitarian principles' and could well result in a confrontation situation.

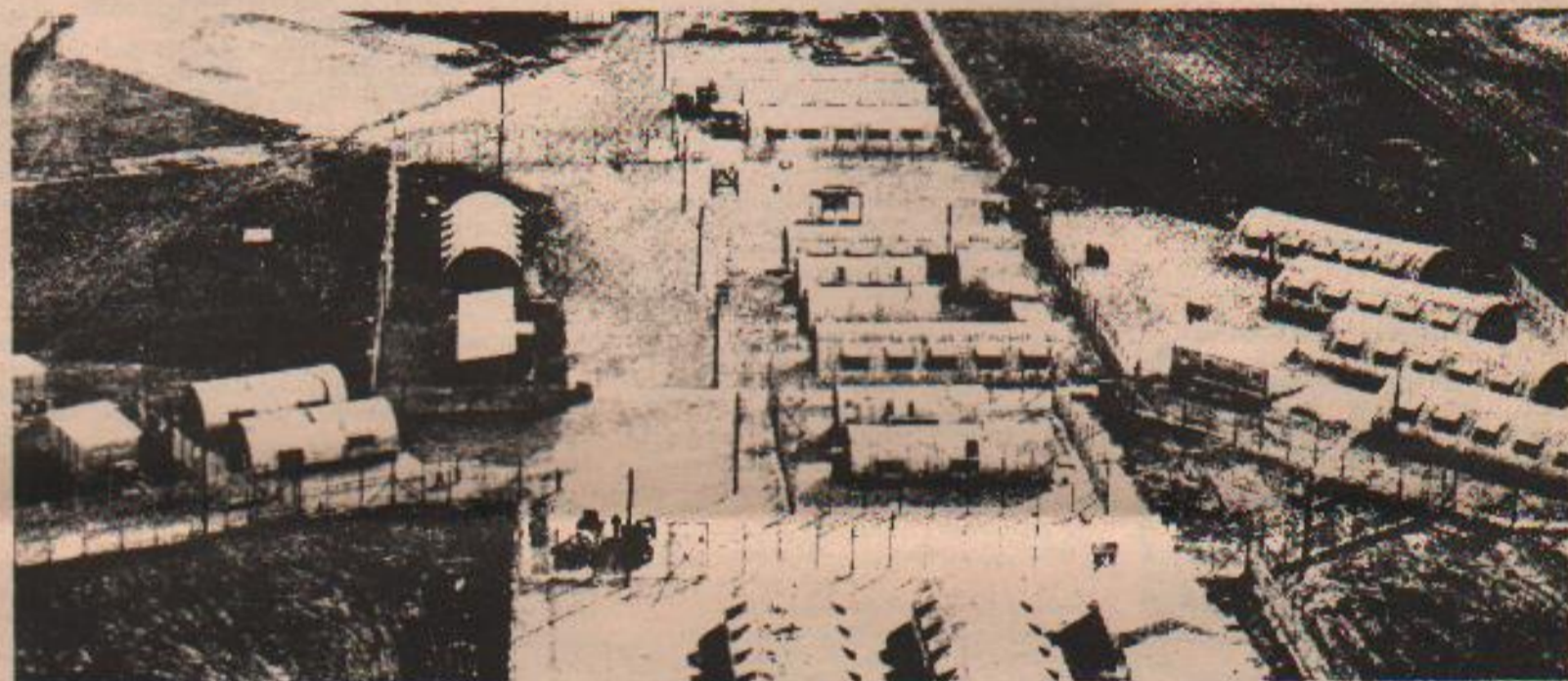
WOMEN

At the women's prison in Armagh conditions are equally deplorable, as the following letter sent to *Red Weekly* confirms:

We the women political prisoners of Armagh would like to make it known to the public about the cramped conditions in which we have to survive. In the wing there are 25 women and there are inadequate facilities to accommodate them all. The bathroom consists of two baths, two toilets, and four small wash hand basins. The only sink available for washing clothes in is the one that has existed since the prison was built. The railing round the cat walk serves as a substitute for a clothes line thus making the wing even more cramped.

Also with so many women in the wing it is necessary to have a sick bay because in the case of an illness peace and quiet is needed. In the recreation yard there is a hut which is supposed to be a TV room but it is used for crafts, games, discussions and a rest room. Time and time again we have been promised netball posts and other games equipment but as yet we have received none of these.

We must point out that this is a women's prison but



Long Kesh concentration camp—or, as it is supposed to be known, the Maze Prison.

yet we occupy only one small wing of the building. There is a gym and a huge recreation yard over in 'B' wing but these facilities are closed to us as they are used by Borstal offenders. We know our needs are small in comparison with our comrades in Long Kesh but there must be room for improvement when we have women serving sentences from five to twelve years.

Liberty and Strength,
The women political prisoners of Armagh Gaol.

STOP IT!

This savage campaign against the prisoners must be stopped. Trade unionists and members of the labour movement should write to the Home Office protesting at the actions of Truesdale, the soldiers and the prison guards. As a gesture of solidarity Student Unions should consider nominating prominent Republican prisoners for official posts inside the Union. Presents of

books, food parcels and tobacco should be sent to:

Cumann Cabrach, 2A Lower Kevin Street, Dublin, Ireland. — Provisional Support Organisation for Prisoners in Ireland.

Saoirse, 32 Gardiner Place, Dublin, Ireland. — Officials Support Organisation for Prisoners in Ireland.

MURDER MEN CAUGHT

Following eight months of internal wrangling between the Army and the RUC, the police had their way. Sergeant Clive Graham Williams (25) was taken to Townhall RUC Station and charged with the attempted murder of Hugh Kenny, Joseph Smith and James Patrick Murray, and with maliciously wounding Thomas Gerard Shaw. Both Sergeant Williams and a Captain James Alistair McGregor (29) were charged with possessing a Thompson sub-machinegun and eight rounds of ammunition 'under suspicious circumstances and without the authority of the Secretary of State'.

When arrested and charged Captain McGregor replied: 'That ammunition had nothing to do with me. The ammunition belongs to the police at Castlereagh and was issued by the Special Branch.'

That was on 26 February. Both men appeared in a Belfast Magistrates Court on 28 February and were remanded on bail of £1,500 each after the British Army gave an assurance that the men would turn up at any subsequent court hearing. The British press reported that the men would be held under open arrest at Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn.

A pall of secrecy surrounded the origins of both men, and the British Army refused to say what unit they had been attached to on the day

of the shooting. But the Army List, which names all British Army officers and gives their regiment, states that Captain McGregor was commissioned in the Parachute Regiment on 2 August, 1969. The Army spokesman at Lisburn was adamant that no unit of the Parachute Regiment was stationed in Northern Ireland on 22 June.

The Ministry of Defence in London still claims that no unit of the S.A.S. has operated in Northern Ireland. It is now known that at no time were either of the two men under any form of arrest and, in fact, both have been engaged on active duty since their arrest.

The reason given by the Army for not releasing the name of the regiment of the two men was: 'It is a policy of the RUC and the Army not to disclose the unit because in court cases the prisoner is to be regarded as an ordinary serviceman, and not an officer, until the case is completed. After the investigation is completed the name of the unit may be released.'

DISCOVERY

Let us look at what, in fact, happened. On 3 May the two men appeared again in a Belfast Magistrates Court, and it was suddenly discovered (despite the eight month investigation by the RUC before the charges were brought) that the Thompson sub-machinegun had, in

fact, been carried with the authority of Mr. Whitelaw. The brave (and still unidentified) Captain was allowed his complete freedom, but the Sergeant was remanded on bail on charges of attempted murder, causing grievous bodily harm, malicious wounding and with possession of a Thompson sub-machinegun 'under suspicious circumstances'.

Mr. Alasdair Frazer, for the Crown, told the Magistrate, Mr. John Adams, that information had been provided by the British Army Authorities to the Director of Public Prosecutions, which showed that a Thompson sub-machinegun was officially held and accounted for as an item of Army equipment.

Why was the 'suspicious circumstances' part of the possession charge dismissed against Captain McGregor and retained against Sergeant Williams? Why was there no information regarding the complicity of the Special Branch at Castlereagh?

The Sergeant will appear again in court later this month. The whereabouts of Captain McGregor, who was awarded the Military Cross for valour, are not yet known.

Gery Lawless



British Army gunmen at work. Shown here is Sean Rowntree, uninjured, being searched by British soldiers. An hour later he was in hospital with serious gun shot wounds inflicted by his captors. His friend 'Mundo' O'Rowe lay shot dead after allegedly 'resisting arrest'.

Reviews

LOST VOICES

Strike—A Live History 1887-1971, by R.A. Leeson (George Allen & Unwin, £3.75) [Richard Neubauer]

A chorus from the working class. Despite a cover strangely featuring an SLL banner, this instructive book simply records the spoken memories of 85 trade unionists about strike actions, compiled by the literary editor of the *Morning Star*.

Broadcasting voices otherwise restricted to narrow audiences by the difficulties militants often experience with written expression, this publication reflects the trend towards 'oral history' and re-affirms the immense potential value of the tape-recorder to labour historians. The problem is that the author, Bob Leeson, refuses to exploit that potential by systematically examining the information he has salvaged.

JIG-SAW PUZZLES

A rain of fascinating descriptions of industrial action falls upon the reader, with the minimum of explanation of context and circumstances. The contributions range over eight decades, 180 strikes, 20 industries, both sexes, and widely differing levels of political consciousness. Leeson denies using any questionnaire in his interviews, thus rendering serious comparisons between the descriptions hazardous. No clues are supplied as to the extent of editing, nor to the method of selection of contributors. The stated, modest, aim of 'giving something of the flavour' of strikes is substituted for any attempt at analysis. The reader is abandoned, like a child, with the scrambled pieces of twenty jig-

saw puzzles, to assemble clues and discern patterns.

Yet practical lessons are to be found. At the purely trade union level, Dai Dan Evans and Edgar Evans, from the South Wales pits, detail precisely the reconstruction of the miners' union in separate localities after the rout of 1926 (in the vicious circumstances of 'company unionism'). On strike strategy, Dick Etheridge briefly argues:

'No strike is ever lost, unless it is led to the point of annihilation. You gain in the long run, even if you are apparently beaten in the short. You have to have a long view: it is a strategy, to know when to retreat, if necessary, for the employers will often let a strike go on to the point of annihilation.'

Linking the unemployed to labour struggles is documented very usefully in connection with the great engineering lock-out of 1922. Strike tactics described run from sit-ins (Daimler, Coventry, 1916), mass picketing, farmworkers turning horses loose, building workers nailing up their manager's office door, woodworkers banging on metal at 5.00 p.m. to activate a demand for a 44-hour week in 1920, to actual sabotage of equipment. It is, however, the limitations of trade union action which the book illustrates most vividly.

VIOLENCE AND POLITICS

The rise of union bureaucrats, and their activities, are not forgotten. Seaman Pat Murphy recalls NUS racism against striking Chinese and Arab seamen to break the 1911 strike, and one contributor is ex NATSOPA General Secretary George Isaacs, explaining how — as Minister of Labour under Attlee — he sent the troops into strike-bound docks. And the violence of the capitalist state cannot be excluded, as in another example from 1911:

'There were thousands out, it was like a Sunday outing, all in their straw hats. The mounted police sailed out of the station and drove them right off the Plateau (Lime Street, Liverpool) so that they ran into the troops coming up Dale Street. The fighting went on all Sunday night and the best part of Monday.'



Three blackings escorted by police at Garw, South Wales, in 1929.

Dramatic episodes of that nature demand that the political consequences of strikes receive full attention. Leeson leaves this task to the heavy contingent of Communist Party members among his chosen interviewees, or sometimes simply abandons it. So, very valuable information is given about the Councils of Action during the 1926 General Strike, in Lambeth, St. Pancras and Durham, clearly demonstrating their revolutionary potential for workers' power. But not one attempt at explaining their subsequent defeat is offered, for that would necessitate criticising the reliance on the 'Left' TUC leaders (reflected in some of these reminiscences) fostered by the political strategy of the industrially powerful CP.

Also, the anti-strike policy of the Stalinist-led shop stewards during World War II is upheld by a whole series of contributors praising the

imperialist war effort, with no real dissenting voices included. The famous struggle of the Betteshanger miners in 1941-2 is just not mentioned.

Only a few clues emerge as to the revolutionary potential of the working class. The socialist traditions of Jewish garment workers in London in 1912 are remembered, and the development of nascent transitional demands in certain strikes can be traced — the Coventry strike against profiteering in 1917, work-sharing to combat redundancies, etc. All of this demonstrates the inadequacy of simply recapturing the lost voices of militants on tape, arduous as that may be. Their experience will remain a loss, in real terms, to the working class, until it is analysed and re-analysed. Ironically, this volume, in its political straitjacket, may open more eyes to that lesson.



Dear Red Weekly,

The question of the role of the trade unions in northern Ireland is really coming to the fore these days. All the steel workers in Harland & Wolffs are on strike for a pay increase. Mortar-bombs have been fired from the shipyards into Catholic areas. And over Easter, supporters of the *Militant* at the LPYS conference at Skegness passed a resolution calling for a trade union peace-keeping force for the six counties. This got wide coverage in the British and Irish papers.

What attitude are socialists in Britain going to take towards the trade unions in northern Ireland? The LPYS resolution is just the old *Militant* three-card trick — imperialist politics dressed up in trade union verbiage.

Just as they showed in their London debate with the IMG in March, *Militant* do believe there is a progressive role for British imperialism in Ireland since they refuse to call for the unconditional withdrawal of the British army. The main issue in Ireland is not 'peace' (what a miserable lot of pacifists the *Militant* are). The main issue is complete and total victory for the war against British imperialism, and the destruction of British imperialism in all its forms.

Militant are being deceitful again. They won't support self-determination and secession for the Irish people.

EDITORIAL COMMENT:

We have published the above letter because we feel that the views it expresses are both important and generally sound. It is indeed regrettable that such harsh words should have to be said about a political grouping that can lay claim to Trotskyist origins. But there is no purpose in letting sentimentality cloud the truth: the criticisms which these comrades make of *Militant* are, for the most part, painfully self-evident.

The record of the British revolutionary left with regard to the national struggle in Ireland (either today or in the past) is hardly one of vigorous struggle and unbroken solidarity. The *Militant* is no exception to this, but certainly takes its capitulation further than any other group, with the exception only of some Maoist sects, and to a lesser extent, the Communist Party. So far *Militant* have not openly adopted the "Two Nations" theory of the Irish Communist Organisation. But *Militant* has systematically distorted the nature of the struggle in Ireland and provided a left

Don't they know that the overwhelming majority of trade unionists in the six counties are Protestants — i.e. imperialist-minded, chauvinistic, British loyalists. The skilled trades at Harland & Wolffs are 100% unionised, and 100% Protestant. Why? Because northern Ireland is part of the British imperialist economy, ship-building is one of the most craft-intensive industries in the British economy, and craft unions are organisations of the labour aristocracy who defend their position by keeping other workers out.

In the six counties, where the whole economy practically revolves around Harland & Wolffs, the craft prejudices of the Protestant skilled worker in one of the 'black trades' like boiler-making are inseparably mixed up with his national hatred for the Irish labourer. Pure trade unionism is fully compatible with imperialist, even fascist politics in Harland & Wolffs.

Lenin explained long ago how 'the culture of the advanced countries has been, and still is, the result of their being able to live at the expense of a thousand million oppressed people... The whole thing boils down to nothing but bribery... It is these thousands of millions in superprofits that form the economic basis of opportunism in the working-class movement.' (Speech at the Second Congress of the Comintern, 1920).

Orange bigotry among the Protestant trade unionists is only the most disgusting example of how the British capitalists have been able to corrupt large numbers of their 'own' workers with sops from imperialism.

How can the *Militant* pretend they don't know that Irish workers are forced to emigrate from the six counties by the tens of thousands, tens of thousands are unemployed, and the rest are mainly employed in menial, casual labouring jobs — jobs that can hardly ever be unionised in a stable way. What does a 'trade union-organised peace-keeping force' mean to these Irish workers? LAW, Vanguard, Orangeism and Protestant supremacy!

Even Paddy Devlin MP who doesn't claim to be a Marxist is more honest and more of a help than *Militant*. When they were passing resolutions at

apology for imperialist Protestant workers in its support of partition.

For the *Militant* the national struggle in Ireland is irrelevant, a diversion from the 'real' struggle of the working class. Concretely, this can be seen by their views on the Civil Rights Movement and Partition. According to *Militant* the civil rights campaign disrupted an alleged movement in the Sixties among Protestant and Catholic workers towards class unity. Thus they contradict the theory of permanent revolution by holding that a struggle over democratic demands has a diversionary role. Similarly, like the ICO, they regard the opposition of Protestant workers to the ending of partition as correct and progressive. This fails to come to grips with the real problem: the lack of consciousness on the part of Orange unionist workers that British imperialism oppresses the whole of Ireland; both the Catholic and Protestant working class.

This is precisely the type of view assigned to Trotsky by Stalinism: the idea that the bourgeois democratic

Skegness he kicked up a row because Protestant workers in Harland & Wolffs were shooting homemade mortar bombs from the shipyards into the homes of Irish workers in the Short Strand enclave.

He attacked Andrew Barr, a CP reactionary who is chairman of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions. Barr had the gall to deny there had been mortar-bomb attacks from the yard!

Devlin told him: 'I view your organisation's activities in recent years and its anti-Catholic tendencies with deep distrust.... There is not one single incident recorded throughout the last three years of the Confederation or a member trade union acting against the bigots involved in the expulsion of Catholic workers from their jobs.' (Irish Press, 26 April).



Paddy Devlin of the SDLP.

revolution could be 'skipped over', and its problems forgotten about. But what did Trotsky actually say? He argued that the problems and tasks of the national and democratic revolution remained 'burning questions of the day', but that the capitalist class was unable to carry out a serious struggle for their solution, and therefore the working class must take up and lead the struggle to resolve these problems.

Thus, in the light of the theory of permanent revolution, the national question and national struggle in Ireland remain absolutely decisive questions for the Irish working class: precisely because it is only this class which is capable of carrying on an uncompromising struggle against imperialism and for the solution of the national question.

The *Militant* condemns those who pursue the national struggle as avoiding the 'social issues' and 'splitting the working class'. But in the framework of permanent revolution how should the question of uniting the two sections of the class be resolved? The *Militant* see the struggle over economic and social issues as

What have the *Militant* done to fight fascist politics among these Protestant trade unionists? They say these chauvinists should become a 'peace-keeping force.' What is there to choose between Andrew Barr and the *Militant*? The *Militant* have more in common with Barr and Vic Feather than with Lenin; they provide a 'left' cover for imperialism.

Lenin was attacking the *Militants* of his day when he said, 'the Jingoist and chauvinist-minded labour aristocrats of Britain and America present a very great danger to socialism.... The parties of the Second International have pledged themselves to revolutionary action, but they have given no sign of genuine revolutionary work or of assistance to the exploited and dependent nations in their revolt against the oppressor nations.' (Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Question, 26 July 1920).

We say to the *Militant*, what have you done concretely to assist the Irish struggle over the past couple of years? There's an old Belfast working class saying: 'Talk's cheap, but it takes money to buy drink.' You've not supported Irish demonstrations, you've not attended benefit nights for dependants. All you do is attack the Provisional IRA. It's all very well boasting about collecting £70 for Mexican political prisoners. But what have you ever done for Irish political prisoners, the prisoners of your own capitalists? Another Belfast working class saying — 'Put up or shut up!'

Lenin knew these *Militant* heroes inside out. 'The Russian Social-Democrat who "recognises" the self-determination of nations more or less... without bothering to fight for the freedom of secession of nations oppressed by tsarism, is in fact an imperialist and a lackey of tsarism.' (The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up, July 1916).

Well, Messrs. Taaffe, Hadden, Grant and Co. — that's you, imperialists and lackeys of Unionism! We hope the coming AIL conference on the British labour movement and the British army in Ireland will spend a lot of time discussing the relation between British imperialism, the labour aristocracy, and this sort of opportunism.

R. Ascal, T. Haig.

having an independent dynamic from that of the national struggle. Through struggle on these issues, the two sections of the working class can be united.

But this forgets that these issues in the six-county situation are mediated through the national question. The present struggle of the Catholics, by changing the balance of forces between the oppressed minority, British imperialism and the Protestant working class, creates a situation whereby the protestant working class can no longer be distracted from their economic and social problems in the traditional manner i.e. by oppressing the Catholics. Thus an historical choice now faces the Protestant working class: either to engage in a suicidal UDI initiated Civil War or to realise that their interests lie in joining with the Catholics in their struggle against the British imperialism.

This is the true content of the theory of permanent revolution as applied to Ireland. It is also the position which has been consistently put forward, applied and developed by the International Marxist Group with regard to the Irish national struggle.



'Left Turn' by Bandaranaike Regime?

The ban on demonstrations and public meetings in Ceylon was temporarily lifted on May Day this year (though re-imposed on 2 May) so that the coalition parties could hold a public rally. The aim of this rally was to boost the sagging morale of the government's supporters and prevent the disintegration of the popular front led by Madame Bandaranaike.

In face of their unpopularity the coalition leaders have resorted to the 'Nasserite' tactic of a partial mobilisation of a section (generally the more backward layers) of the masses. Government spokesman at the May Day rally made new 'promises' to implement socialist policies. The Prime Minister, however, despite all her demagogic rhetoric, called on the masses to work hard to make the country prosperous. She announced that next year the government will stop importing rice (at present 50% of the food requirement imported) and the people would have to eat yams.

While the government's hollow promises cannot stop the rot, even such partial mobilisations may be turned against them. On May Day the LSSP(R), Ceylon section of the Fourth International, took advantage of the temporary relaxation of emergency regulations to call a demonstration and meeting through the Ceylon Mercantile Union at which a resolution was adopted calling on the government to stop imports of arms, not rice, to restore all democratic rights including the right to strike, and to release all political prisoners. The meeting also decided to form mass committees to campaign for these demands.

The Ceylon Solidarity Campaign has launched a signature campaign in solidarity with these demands, which have now been endorsed by six mass organisations in Ceylon with a total membership of more than a million. More details from Ceylon Solidarity Campaign, 9 Dennington Park Mansions, London, N.W.6.

ANGLO-PORTUGUESE ALLIANCE: PARTNERS IN CRIME

This summer will see 'celebrations' of the 600th anniversary of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance. In organising them the two governments aim to bolster up and give a 'popular' gloss to their collaboration in the regression of the liberation struggles, which pose an increasingly successful threat not only to Portuguese colonialism but to the interests of Western imperialism. As two of the oldest colonising powers in Europe, they have between them a vast experience of ruthless repression and counter-revolution against colonial wars in the imperialist epoch, which is brought to bear today in the Arab Gulf, in Ireland and in Southern Africa.

Anglo-Portuguese collaboration in Africa is, not

surprisingly, based on mutual self-interest. Portugal plays for Britain the useful role of policing a large proportion of its vast economic interests in Southern Africa. Among the British firms exploiting the people of Mozambique and Angola are such familiar names as British Oxygen, ICI, Tate and Lyle, Metal Box and Rio Tinto Zinc. In return Britain, along with West Germany, France and the U.S., provides Portugal, especially through NATO, with a major part of its rapidly growing defence needs. Britain also safeguards Portugal on the diplomatic front: a significant part of Britain's EEC negotiations involved ensuring that Portugal's economic interests would be satisfied.



A campaign to end Britain's collaboration with Portugal's colonial wars and in solidarity with the liberation movements is being organised by the Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea, with the support of an increasing number of

organisations. The first stage of the campaign is to organise pickets against the Duke of Edinburgh, whose visit to Portugal next month is intended as a major diplomatic and political boost to the regime. This will be followed by the organisation of pickets at all 21 Portuguese consulates in Britain on 18 June, the actual date of the anniversary. On 20 June there will be a mass rally in Central Hall, Westminster, on 'Southern Africa in Struggle.' One of the speakers will be Marcelino dos Santos, vice president of FRELIMO. There will be a similar rally in Manchester on 22 June.

The End the Alliance Campaign is not intended as a once and for all initiative, but is planned in the

context of the need to build a mass movement against British collaboration and in support of the liberation struggle. The political education of activists in this movement is one of the purposes of the conference on 'Revolution Against Portuguese Colonialism' to be held in Manchester on 23-24 June. Speakers include dos Santos, Basil Davidson, Bob Sutcliffe, John Saul, Fred Halliday and Joe Slovo.

The climax of the political mobilisation of this campaign will be a demonstration against Premier Caetano when he comes to Britain on 15 July to clinch the 'goodwill' that both imperialist powers hope to engender by the celebrations. The first visit by a Portuguese Prime Minister in 50 years, it indicates the growing concern of imperialism with the wars in Africa. An effective demonstration on 15 July will be a blow against Portuguese colonialism even on what it expects to be the safe ground of the metropolis of its 'oldest ally.'

The Chickens Come Home to Roost

After years of loyal campaigning, freedom is at hand for Soviet Jews, or so we are told. The visa tax on Jews who want to emigrate from the Soviet Union to Israel has been shelved after American pressure. After all, nothing can be allowed to stand in the way of 'peaceful co-existence between different social systems.'

The ban on emigration has been lifted by the Soviet bureaucracy in order to curry favour with the US. Now all decent people will be satisfied — especially the Zionist regime, which regards this Soviet Jewish immigration as a heaven-sent influx largely of skilled manpower. 'Here are some real Jews at last,' remarked Golda Meir, in reference to the fact that these Russian Jews, unlike the Oriental Jewish immigrants, speak Yiddish! The new arrivals will be able, if they so desire, to settle in the occupied territories of the West Bank — after all how better to get to know your new neighbours than by taking over their lands? The Palestinians on the other hand, who don't have such a subtle comprehension of the dialectic as Messrs. Brezhnev and Kosygin, might find it difficult to understand why in 1972 alone a total of 30,000 Soviet Jews emigrated to Israel.

What then of the Jews who wish to remain in the Soviet Union? They will of course continue to suffer from the ill-concealed anti-Semitism of the ruling bureaucracy. But you can be sure that they won't attract much attention from the Zionist movement, which insists that the only road to redemption from the curses of dispersion is repatriation to Israel (did someone say something about Enoch Powell?). Where, we might ask, have all the demonstrators gone?

Anti-Internment League Conference THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT AND THE BRITISH ARMY IN IRELAND

- Sessions on: 1. The Politics of Repression. 2. The Theory and Practice of Repression. 3. The Technology of Repression. 4. The Irish Struggle and the British Labour Movement.

Film show and performance by Combine Theatre Group Saturday, 19 May, 10.00 a.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (Holborn tube).

ENQUIRIES: Maureen Maguire, 88 Roslyn Rd., London N.15 (800-9392)

LEBANON: WHICH WAY FOR ARAB REVOLUTION?

A series of bloody clashes between the Lebanese Army and the Palestinian commandos have once again brought the simmering cauldron of Middle East politics into the Western headlines.

The latest outbreaks of fighting were triggered off by the Israeli terrorist raids on 10 April, in which three leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organisation were murdered and the offices of the left-wing Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine blown up. This operation was part and parcel of a systematic Israeli strategy, whose aims are to liquidate all elements of the Palestinian resistance, whatever their programme, tactics and numerical strength, and to bully the Arab regimes into accepting 'peace' on Israel's terms.

By BOB SLANSKY

The Zionist regime, which has deservedly achieved a reputation for ruthless and cynical counter-revolutionary violence second to none, is intent on pushing those Arab states which have not already got rid of the guerrillas into a choice between clamping down on the Palestinian movement or suffering episodic Israeli terror expeditions (no longer even dressed up as 'reprisals'). The repeated bombing raids against Lebanon and Syria show that this is no idle threat. Each successful military exploit serves only to whet the Zionist leaders' appetite for further demonstrations of their absolute military hegemony in the area.

Indeed, Israel is now more self-confident than ever in its role as the policeman of the Arab East. Dayan boasts openly that it will intervene wherever 'stability' is threatened. Gone is the 'left' phraseology of yesteryear; in its place is the naked reality of imperialism's watchdog in the Arab world. As the Israeli Ambassador wrote in the *Spectator* on 16 February: 'If Israel wasn't there I think the British and Western powers would find that their interests and positions in the Middle East would have long been swept away by Arab radicalism and Soviet imperialism. The regimes

in Amman and Beirut would also quickly disappear.'

The Lebanese regime has responded to Israel's proddings in predictable fashion, by launching an all-out offensive against the Palestinian commando organisations and their bases in the refugee camps. The Lebanese President, Suleiman Franjeh, has made it clear that he is determined, at the very least, to bring the Palestinian movement under still tighter control than before. His no-nonsense attitude is evident from his widely-quoted remarks to Mahmoud Riad, the secretary-general of the Arab League: 'When I took office I swore to preserve the sovereignty of this country, and I intend to do so. I will not allow the rise of a state within a state.' Armed by Britain, France and the U.S., as well as Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, Lebanese reaction is bent on muzzling and paralysing the fedayin, if not destroying them altogether.

The Israeli one-eyed bandit, Dayan, is full of praise for this prompt action. Suddenly, a month after ordering an armed operation in the Lebanese capital, he has become the most enthusiastic advocate of Lebanon's 'national sovereignty'. Such hypocrisy is matched only by the venal cowardice of the Lebanese regime itself, which having stood by as the Israelis shot up Beirut then turned its riot police on student demonstrators the next day, and now turns its army on the Palestinians. Such, despite the patriotic rhetoric, is the sordid reality of passive complicity/direct collaboration with Zionism.

'PROGRESSIVE'

The so-called 'progressive' Arab regimes are no better. Anwar Al-Sadat, the Egyptian president, did take time off from torturing dissidents to send a personal envoy to try to bring about a ceasefire, but his essential interest is in reaching a compromise deal with the Israelis, which will enable him to salvage some prestige at home and shore up his hold over Egyptian society. The 'total confrontation' with Israel, promised so often that it has become a national joke, is in practice only an excuse for further domestic repression.



Fatah leader Yasser Arafat—offers no way forward.

The Syrian government, on the other hand, has given some support to the beleaguered guerrillas, partly for internal reasons and partly because the Ba'athist regime knows full well that Israel will not return the Golan Heights under any circumstances. But the Syrian regime has refused to commit its regular army although the present truce is fundamentally shaky and renewed fighting in the relative short term is almost certain.

The determination of the rank-and-file of the Palestinian movement to retain their hard-won positions should not be under-estimated. As long as the root causes of the Palestinian problem — the existence of an exclusive racist, pro-imperialist power structure built on the oppression of another people — are not attacked, resistance in one form or another will continue. The recent resurgence of guerrilla activity inside the occupied territories, and the even more significant discovery of spy rings or resistance cells among Arabs living in the pre-1967 borders, as well as among the Druze population, involving for the first time young Israeli Jews, testifies to this fact.

This explains the tenacity and desperate heroism with which the guerrillas have held out against the most recent offensive. Their leaders, however, have demonstrated yet again their unwillingness to link the national struggle against Zionism with a policy of independent class struggle of the workers and peasants against the existing Arab status quo. Financially dependent on the Arab ruling class, they have consistently clung to the bankrupt formulas of 'unity against the common enemy' and 'non-interference in internal Arab affairs'. This has led them to make one retreat after another, preparing the way for the latest Lebanese offensive.

The Arab revolution, which sustained a number of heavy blows in 1970-72, is now experiencing the beginnings of a new and hopeful upturn. The student revolt in Egypt and the struggles of Lebanese workers and youth in the last period are only the first signs of this recovery. But the struggle against imperialism and against Zionism will only be successful if the crippling ideology of 'Arab brotherhood' is cast aside and revolutionary socialist politics developed. Never has this been more clearly shown than in the events of the past few weeks.

International Marxist Group

(British Section of the Fourth International)
182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.
I would like more information about the IMG and its activities.

NAME

ADDRESS

WATERGATE: A NEW SILENCE

It seems now that Nixon will 'ride the storm' despite his sensational exposure in the Watergate Affair and other crooked deals - one of his aides negotiated a \$400,000 contribution to Republican Funds in return for dropping an anti-trust suit against International Telephone and Telegraph. Those sections of the American ruling class who saw Watergate as an excellent chance to force Nixon to drop his special aides and adopt more 'realistic' policies are now getting scared that the disclosures might discredit the whole capitalist system.

As one scandal follows another, the disillusionment of the American population swells to frightening proportions. The latest Gallup Poll shows that over 50 per cent of the American people believe Nixon participated in a cover-up of Watergate.

Eysenck Attack

Following the attack by members of the Maoist Communist Party of England (M-L) on racist quack professor Eysenck at the London School of Economics last week, the students union has voted to apologise to him but also to defend his 'assailants' against any victimisation.

The attack itself was undoubtedly a factual mistake. There is nothing wrong with preventing right wing ideologues from having a platform, but such actions have to be politically prepared beforehand so that their motivation is understood. However, once the deed was done it was essential to defend the Maoists against victimisation at a time when the ruling class is stepping up its offensive against students.

This was not understood, though, by all the left. The Communist Party, in particular, essentially put forward a line of 'all respectable students unite to combat thuggery'. In effect they supported the witch-hunt launched by the right wing, and although an IMG motion calling for defence of the Maoists was narrowly passed by the union meeting its substance was largely amended out of existence with CP help.

Ultra-leftism can be a danger to the student and labour movements. But the responsibility for such actions must lie with the failure of the 'leaders' to offer any alternative way forward. The sort of opportunism which the CP indulged in at the LSE last week can only open students up to further attacks and thus increase the likelihood of more individual acts of 'adventurism'.

One group of Republican senators became so desperate at this lack of public support that they threatened

By Jeff King

a revolt against Nixon. A Nixon aide then informed them of the possible imminence of 'another Dien Bien Phu in Indochina'. He explained: 'The President may soon have to decide whether to bomb North Vietnam or the Communist missile bases in the South. How can he take such a step if his support in Congress is collapsing?' The revolt fizzled out. Faced with the choice of defending Nixon's crooked regime or jeopardising the interests of American imperialism, the senators decided to put their mouth where their money lies.

Even the press which has fed so greedily on the White House scandals has begun to develop a certain coyness. Many American papers boycotted the report that former presidential counsellor John Dean is now ready to implicate Nixon. The day this story broke, NCB news blandly reported: 'There were no new developments in the Watergate case today.'

The media is always a reliable ally for American 'democracy'. When

Bobby Baker, Lyndon Johnson's aide was prosecuted for bribe-taking Johnson arranged a million dollar pay-off to keep Baker quiet. A book written by a Washington lobbyist documents how Johnson 'wept hysterically' and screamed 'If that bastard talks I am going to land in jail. Tell him I will give him a million dollars to take the rap. I've got to be kept out of this.' Despite its tremendous news value this disclosure remained unreported.

Support for Nixon is not restricted to the press and the Republicans. Teddy Kennedy has publicly expressed his support and hopes that the case will not damage the Presidency. George McGovern his opponent in last year's elections has sung his psalms of praise to Nixon and suggested that he ought to 'admit a mistake as it is essential to the nation'.

Nixon will also be cheered by the attitude of Peking and Moscow, who have remained silent on the case. Hedrik Smith, *New York Times* correspondent, writes: 'This is the one big world capital where a Nixon Administration official can escape the Watergate nightmare.' Despite the fact that US bombing in Indochina now totals 150,000 tons since the cease fire of 27 January, the Peking and Moscow bureaucracies prefer not to discredit their deal with Nixon in



the eyes of the Russian and Chinese people.

In Britain, too, there has been a certain reluctance to comment. The Loftho affair, quickly following on the heels of Poulson, shows that tax-fiddles and the involvement of Government personnel are not a peculiar American disease.

The case has however reached such alarming proportions that sacrificial offerings will have to be made of those least able to implicate others. The ruling class will withdraw protection from those who have no bargaining power and rely on those whose loyalty is sufficiently strong and purchasable to serve their sentences with tight lips, with a suitable pay off when released. There is too much at stake for the American ruling class to admit that the capitalist system breeds such corruption and is run by third-rate shysters like Nixon.

Bason's Strikers Evicted

From BOB BEST

In the new round of Manchester engineering disputes the giant Gardner's works in Eccles remains solid in its eighth week of strike and sit-in. But at Bason's in Stockport the occupying workers were evicted early last Friday morning by a large force of police and so-called 'bailiffs'. Picketing there continues, however, despite constant police intimidation, and the 'owners' have so far felt unable to repossess the factory.

The dispute at Gardner's is centred around the Manchester Piecework Agreement (MPWA). It was under the terms of this agreement that the Gardner's workers decided at the beginning of this year to protest against low piecework earnings by going on to the basic day rate, banning all piecework until new piecework rates were agreed upon. After nine weeks of this management threatened to lay off the men unless they agreed to lift the ban, thereby breaking the MPWA. An official strike and the sit-in followed almost immediately.

The MPWA has been a very strong weapon in the hands of Manchester engineering workers, and the attack on it is one prong of a new attack on shop floor organisation in the area



One of the asbestos panels broken when police and 'bailiffs' stormed Bason's last Friday.

by the local Engineering Employers Federation, whose president is the managing director of Gardner's. The other prong is the attempt to isolate and intimidate militants through victimisations and sackings. The recent sacking of IS shop steward John Deason at the Newton le Willows works of Ruston Paxman (GEC) after an unsuccessful strike of seven weeks for his reinstatement is one example of this; the so-called 'redundancies' declared at Bason's are another.

Every step in this new employers' offensive directly affects the fight-

ing ability of all engineering workers, particularly with the possibility of new struggles around the AUEW claim in the autumn. If the MPWA is smashed at Gardner's then it will encourage employer after employer to try their luck at the same game. Solidarity action now by other engineering workers in the area is of the utmost importance; particularly effective could be a more general banning of piecework and a reversion to the basic day rate as at Gardner's. This would clearly remove the initiative from the employers and place it firmly in the hands of the workers.

Red Notes

The Coventry 8, arrested after the police raids in April, came up for their fifth remand last Monday: as usual bail was opposed because enquiries were proceeding in Lancashire (last week it was Yorkshire). No date has been fixed for the trial, because the police are short of evidence and they know it.

A large and militant crowd greeted the prisoners as they were hustled into the vans. On Saturday the Defence Committee held a meeting in the main shopping area of Coventry to publicise the political nature of the trial. When the trial date is fixed they will be calling for a massive demonstration outside the court on the opening day.

Further details, speakers, collection sheets, etc. contact the Prisoners Defence Committee, c/o 27 Pages Lane, Hillfields, Coventry (0203-58991).

One of the most emphatic indications of support for this Saturday's Anti-Internment League conference has come from South Shields Trades Council. At their meeting earlier this week they passed a motion sending their 'fraternal greetings and support to the Anti-Internment League conference on the British Labour Movement and the British Army. We welcome your initiatives on this issue and intend to mount a campaign against recruitment to all the armed forces in the South Shields area. We look forward to closer co-operation with you in this campaign and wish every success to your conference.'

The five Birmingham building workers who occupied the SOS labour agency last February, along with three members of an ATV film crew who filmed them, will not now appear in court until 11 or 12 June. They are up on charges of conspiracy to trespass and endangering the public peace. The trial may well involve new legal precedents which can be used against workers in struggle; the *Birmingham Evening Mail* reports that 'the police are regarding the summons as a test case.'

The NUS is threatening to withdraw its backing from the National Union of School Students which it helped to found not so long ago. Although the membership of the NUS is now nearly 10,000 the number of activists is steadily declining and recruitment is coming mainly from middle class school students in grammar schools and the higher streams of comprehensives. This is not surprising given the political basis on which the NUS was founded (by the NUS) which rejects militant struggle in favour of a respectable image aimed at winning participation in the running of schools under capitalism. Signs of change are apparent, though, with a large minority of votes at the recent NUS conference going to a revolutionary platform put forward by South London school students.

The Third Conference of Radical Scholars of Soviet and East European Studies took place in Birmingham last weekend, with an attendance of some 70 people. Various papers coming under the general title of 'The Dictatorship of the Proletariat' were discussed and it was widely felt that the conference had provided a valuable opportunity for fruitful discussion between Marxists of aspects of Soviet studies in relation to socialist theory. The Conference was also marked by the appearance of the first issue of a new journal of Soviet studies and socialist theory, *Critique*, closely connected with the Conference.

SUBSCRIBE!

RATES: £4 per year, £2 for six months

FOREIGN: £6 per year, £9 airmail

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER!

12 issues for 50p.

I enclose P.O./Cheque (made out to 'Red Weekly')

182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

OCCUPATION:

What's On ?

REQUIRED URGENTLY: Fast, accurate typist 35 hour week. Flexible hours, wages negotiable. Write to Carl at F.L. Litho, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1. or phone 01 837 9987.

COMING SOON: An important film on the struggle in Ireland, produced by Lotta Continua and People's Democracy, to be shown in London from 29 May to 9 June. Shot behind Republican lines with the co-operation and participation of the people of the No-Go areas of Belfast and Derry. Information on this film may be obtained by contacting P. Doherty, 34 Dalston Lane, London E.8.

BELFAST TEN DEFENCE COMMITTEE: Rally 7.00 p.m. Sunday, 20 May, at Clapham Common followed by march to Brixton prison. Plus folk concert 8.00 p.m. same day at 'The Swan' opposite Stockwell tube station.

THE GREEN REVOLUTION in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Talk by Alec Gordon, 23 May, 6pm in the Senior Refectory, School of Oriental and African Studies, Malet St., W.C.I. Organised by the Association for Radical East Asian Studies.

TEACHERS, EDUCATION AND CAPITALISM: Hull Red Circle on Thursday, 31 May at 8.00 p.m. in 'The Rose', Beverley Road.

ALMOST FREE THEATRE: From Tuesday, C.P. Taylor's political satire on political satire - THE GRAND ADULTERY CONVENTION. Nightly at 8.15 p.m., 9 Rupert St., W.1. 485 6224 (marab).

DINNER AND SOCIAL: In aid of the Communist League of Australia - 7.00 p.m. on Friday, 1 June, at the Blythe Hall, Blythe Road, London W.4. Tickets 60p from K. Hardy, 26 Ceell Road, London N.W.10 or from Red Weekly.

CENTRAL LONDON A.I.L.: Social on Saturday, 19 May after A.I.L. Conference. At Sol's Arms, Hamstead Road, N.W.1. (Warren Street, Euston Square tubes) 8.30 to 12 midnight. Bar, musicians.

LSE LATIN AMERICAN SOCIETY together with the Latin American Front Organisation are holding a series of weekly talks on Mondays at 7.00 p.m. in Room 509, Main Building, LSE. This Monday, 21st Argentina - Peronism. General discussion will follow. All welcome.

SOUTHERN AFRICA CONFERENCE: University of Kent, Canterbury (Rutherford College) on 19 May, 10.30 a.m. to 6.30p.m. Speakers from ZANU (Rhodesia), PAC (South Africa), SWAPO (Namibia), UNITA (Angola) etc. plus films.

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

