



# LAUNCH THE STRUGGLE TURN THE TIDE

The predictable collapse of the TUC-Government talks leaves the official trade union leadership without any policy for the conduct of the fight against Phase 3 and the Tory Government.

The only concrete result of the TUC's manoeuvring has been to reveal that the trade union 'lefts'—in particular Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones—are no more prepared to lead a fight against the Tories than is the right-wing.

While the TUC bureaucrats begin their march into hibernation, hoping to sleep off what promises to be a long, Tory winter, the Government is openly discussing new attacks on working class living standards. Spurred on by the massive trade deficit, both Walker, Minister of Industry, and Barber, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, have suggested that Phase 3 is 'too soft' and must be followed by something even tougher.

Despite the treachery of the trade union bureaucrats, the working class movement has not yet been defeated in this round of struggle. Millions of workers are still prepared to take on the Tories, if they can see a clear way forward.

This way forward could be opened up by any group of workers who launched a decisive struggle against Phase 3. Whether miners, engineers, or railmen, they would meet with massive working class support and widespread solidarity action could be readily organised. Such a movement would rapidly grow to the point where it could turn the tide against the Tories on all fronts and threaten the very existence of the Government.

The same sort of chain reaction could be set off by a determined struggle around the jailing of the three Shrewsbury defendants, an issue which highlights the brutal nature of the Tory Government and the grave threat they represent for the trade union movement.

The central task for militants in the weeks ahead will be to use all these opportunities to launch the struggle against the Tory Government, and turn the tide in favour of the working class.

In the miners, raildrivers, and engineering unions the key question is a national strike against Phase 3. Towards this end the national meeting of engineering convenors which took place in Manchester last month must be recalled to work out plans for coordinated, all-out strike action to

win the full engineering claim.

With the decision of the NUM negotiating committee to recommend a strike ballot, there is now considerable likelihood of a national miners strike. NUM militants must campaign to make sure that a national all-out strike is launched. If the executive proposes anything less they should organise massive unofficial action to carry the struggle all the way.

Other workers can contribute towards the campaign for a national miners strike and a miners victory, by passing resolutions pledging full support for the miners demands and full solidarity with a national strike, and by entering into discussions with miners representatives at all levels about organising solidarity and joint action. Such a fighting alliance should be worked out between the miners, engineers and raildrivers, in particular.

Militants must strive to coordinate all local struggles and unify the fight against the Tories. Wherever possible, Councils of Action representative of the whole local labour movement should be established to carry out these tasks. Where this is not possible action committees of local militants can play a valuable role and could be a practical first step in the direction of a genuinely representative Council of Action.

Every effort must be made to stop further back-stabbing by the trade union bureaucrats. The entire rank-and-file must be mobilised to stop further TUC-Government talks, and the demand must be raised for a recall of the TUC to launch a united counter-offensive against the Tories. We do not expect the TUC to launch such a struggle, but organised mass support for the steps necessary to carry the struggle forward could be rapidly turned into mass independent action when the bureaucrats fail to move, if the campaign for official action goes hand-in-hand with seizing every opportunity to launch independent unofficial initiatives.



TUC General Secretary Len Murray speaks to the press after the breakdown of talks with the Government last Monday: nowhere to go, no one left to talk to. The TUC's manoeuvres have left the working class high-and-dry in the face of new Tory attacks. But the prospect of a national miners' strike could change all this by giving a concrete focus for the struggle of every group of workers against the Tory Government.

## SHREWSBURY MOBILISE FOR LIVERPOOL CONFERENCE

The capitalist legal machine, having ground out its ruthless 'justice' for six building workers in the Shrewsbury case, has now started on its second batch of victims.

Meanwhile the three building workers sentenced to jail terms in the first trial have been granted leave to appeal, but are being kept inside while the courts argue the toss about whether or not to give them bail.

The building of a mass movement to free the three, reverse the verdicts and stop the trials is now one of the most crucial tasks facing the workers' movement. A victory in this fight can do more than simply defend the long-established right of trade unionists in this country. It can provide a rallying point around which the trade union rank-and-file can begin to unite its forces and link up its struggles, with the possibility of forcing a full-scale counter-offensive against the Tory Government.

This makes the upcoming conference on Shrewsbury called by the Liverpool Trades Council of double importance. It must receive massive support from all trade union militants, with as many trades councils, union branches, shop stewards committees, and Shrewsbury Defence Committees as possible being represented.

But the convening of an impressive conference will not force the Tories to retreat. The Conference must initiate decisive action to back the Shrewsbury militants.

Over the past few weeks Communist Party trade union militants contented themselves with vague 'calls' to the official leadership. If these policies win out at Liverpool it will be a disaster. The Liverpool Conference must give a decisive lead. To ensure this a campaign must be launched to send delegates to the Liverpool Conference pledged to support a resolution along the following lines:

1. This Conference calls for industrial action by all workers, during the appeals, to free the Shrewsbury 3, reverse the convictions, and stop the trials.
2. It supports all moves towards indefinite national strike action in the building trade.
3. In the event of an indefinite national building strike the conference calls for indefinite solidarity strikes by all other sections of the trade union movement.

Only on the basis of such a policy can the Shrewsbury struggle go forward. The campaign around this resolution should go beyond union militants, stewards and branch activists. Mass leafletting should be organised, and mass site, plant and factory gate meetings held in every area to discuss the case, the way forward, and the election of delegates.

The Editorial Board of *Building Workers' Charter* will be meeting to discuss the Shrewsbury case in Manchester this Saturday. This body has the power to set the scene for the Liverpool Conference by backing the lead already given by Birmingham UCATT shop stewards with their call for an indefinite strike in the building trade. If *Charter* took up this call it would be guaranteed a national impact. But the previous behaviour of CP militants does not encourage optimism: in any event the decisions made by *Charter* will be a clear test of how committed the CP is to a serious fight in defence of the Shrewsbury workers.

The Shrewsbury Conference is being held on Saturday, 2 February in St. George's Hall, Liverpool. Credentials and further information can be obtained from: Simon Fraser, LTC Secretary, 33 Hatton Gardens, Liverpool 3 (Tel: 051-236-1778).

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# Liaison Committee meeting votes for right-wing, do-nothing line

On every single issue facing the working class today the Liaison Committee for the Defence of the Trade Unions meeting in Birmingham last Saturday, (19 January), came out with a right-wing, do-nothing line.

- \*They refused to publicly condemn the TUC-Government talks.
- \*They endorsed Scanlon's postponement of the Engineering pay claim until after the settlement of the miners struggle.
- \*They ignored the call of the Birmingham UCATT Joint Shop Stewards Committee for an all-out strike to free the Shrewsbury 3.
- \*They staked everything on keeping the ear of the left trade union bureaucrats.

The Liaison Committee, which is the main mouthpiece of the Communist Party in the trade unions, was meeting in the midst of the most serious class confrontations since the war. The TUC is busy throwing the movement into utter confusion. The LCDTU should have come up with a clear and decisive plan of action, but on all the major issues of the day it only added to that confusion.

The meeting refused to condemn the TUC-Government talks, despite the campaign of opposition to the talks in the *Morning Star*. They merely demanded that the TUC should stop participating in any talks which result in acceptance of Phase 3.

## BASEST OPPORTUNISM

One delegate called for the rejection of talks with the Government unless it is willing to scrap Phase 3 and release the Shrewsbury 3. Jim Hiles replied by saying: 'We do not want to antagonise those in leadership who have fraternal relations with the LCDTU'. He went on to say that it had been a 'long hard struggle' to reach a position where 'we have the ear' of some of the leaders.

So out of the basest opportunism towards the 'left' bureaucrats, the LCDTU is not going to lead a fight to put an end to the talks and block the TUC's outright treachery. In addition, they refused to condemn the TUC for failing to

provide a lead over Shrewsbury, Phase 3 etc.

The meeting also rejected an attack made by one delegate on the AUEW decision to go for an overtime ban rather than a national strike, and went on to endorse Scanlon's decision to postpone the AUEW struggle until after the 'crisis'.

by DAVE BAILEY

was over, even though this means shifting the whole weight of the struggle against Phase 3 and the Tory Government onto the miners' shoulders. The AUEW's decision to abandon the struggle for their pay claim in favour of a struggle solely around 5 days work or 5 days pay, was held to be justified because the '3-day week put the shop floor onto the defensive'.

"We don't want to antagonise those in leadership who have fraternal relations with the LCDTU"

Of course! 'Putting the shop floor onto the defensive' was one of the things which the Government intended to do with its 3-day week. That is why the AUEW should have taken the offensive. The 3-day week was not an act of God. It was an act of the Tory Government designed to divide the workers' movement. The AUEW decision has left the miners struggle isolated and the engineers' fight seriously weakened.

## LIVERPOOL CONFERENCE

This refusal to fight against the line of the bureaucracy was also seen in the discussion on the forthcoming Liverpool Trades Council conference on Shrewsbury. A delegate from the building industry in Birmingham, where UCATT shop stewards recently passed a resolution calling for indefinite strike action in the building trade, proposed that the LCDTU call for the Liverpool conference to initiate industrial action in support of such a strike and undertake to spread such action to other industries.

But the Birmingham resolution was ignored by the LCDTU, as it has been by the *Morning Star*. Instead they want the Liverpool Conference to 'campaign' to get the 1875 Act repealed, to get pledges of support, and to demand the release of the 3. Any real action must, it seems, depend on the TUC and Parliament. The Conference must simply try to commit the Labour Party to the repeal of the Act, and the TUC should be recalled in order that (unspecified) industrial action should be called.

The CP refuses to fight for the policies which are necessary to defeat the Tories. They should have campaigned for a national strike in the AUEW and the NUM, and fought for an alliance between the AUEW, the NUM and ASLEF against Phase 3. The failure of the CP to do so is directly responsible for the present situation in which the TUC are able to get away with barefaced treachery in the struggle against

the Government. It is this same policy of alliance with the bureaucracy which now leads the CP to run for cover in the midst of the crisis. The one struggle, with the exception of the miners' pay claim, which could break the deadlock is the Shrewsbury campaign, which has been going on in the building industry for nearly a year. Yet up and down the country the CP (with the exception of some CP shop stewards in Birmingham), has opposed calls for strike action in the building trade, and instead proposes only one-day protests until the TUC can be badgered into action.

## ELECTORALISM

The CP justifies its opportunism by appeals to electoralism and to the alleged backwardness of the working class. Crowning the general policy of the LCDTU (recall of the TUC; 5 days work or 5 days pay; 'full support' for miners, ASLEF and other sections in struggle) is the call for a general election with the return of Labour pledged to end the 1875 Act, the Incomes Policy, and the Industrial Relations Act. The CP sees this as an alternative to stepping up the industrial struggle. It is not the mobilisation of the working class and its organisations against the capitalist state which is their objective, but the return of a 'progressive Labour Government', opening the way to an electoral alliance with the Communist Party.

Coupled with this is the cry repeated at Birmingham that the working class is 'not ready' for action. Instead what is required is further campaigns of education and propaganda.

The CP do not distinguish between the present consciousness of the working class about the need to struggle against the Tory Government and its understanding of the practical steps necessary to get that struggle under way. It is true that there is some confusion about the latter, produced in no small measure by the CP itself, but the workers movement remains undefeated. What is needed is for some section of the class to give a lead by taking up a determined struggle.

The Birmingham LCDTU meeting offered nothing to the working class, and was solely a means for the CP to cover its tracks, and to prepare to lay the blame for inaction on the rank-and-file.

# The rank-and-file and the leadership

## SHEFFIELD WORKERS DISCUSS THE WAY FORWARD

The TUC must give meaningful support to the miners, to smash Phase 3, to bring down the Government, and elect a Labour Government pledged to socialist policies. These were the words with which Dick Caborn, convenor of Firth Brown, ended the opening speech at a meeting in Sheffield on 15 January, called by three of the most important shop stewards committees in the area. The meeting had been designed to give a platform to the miners and to support all workers fighting Phase 3.

Two days earlier another unofficial meeting had taken place. Without backing from important shop stewards committees, this meeting had been called at the initiative of the Sheffield IMG, in an attempt to organise support for the Shrewsbury building workers. A handful of convenors from the local building and engineering industries, a dozen or so shop stewards, together with some 50 to 60 engineers, teachers and students—they did not 'officially' represent a great deal.

## DEFINITE PURPOSE

But they came together with a definite purpose—to unite as many forces as possible in the locality in defence of the Shrewsbury workers. As a result, the discussion at the meeting was absolutely practical: how to establish a new Shrewsbury Defence Committee and mobilise local support. Many participants stressed that it was necessary to create an organisation that would bring together local militants and provide them with an instrument which could unite the various separate struggles and build support for them in the area. Only in this way would it be possible to defeat the Tories' attempt to split up the working class and throw it on the defensive, and launch a working class counter-offensive.

A number of participants referred to the importance of the meeting two days away. Amongst these was Tony Hope, convenor at BSC River Don and one of the organisers of the Tuesday meeting. He stressed the lessons of the struggle to free the five dockers in 1972 and pointed out that it was only after the massive response of the rank-and-file (River Don had themselves struck) that the TUC called their one-day national strike.

Tony later explained to *Red Weekly*: 'I share with you your views of the official leadership, having been through several episodes. I remember the Industrial Relations Bill: there was a massive demonstration in London; no organisation could have got a greater response, but then the TUC saw that as a peak of activity and from then on allowed the thing to

slip until the Bill became an Act. And we had precisely the same thing with the May Day strike against the Tories.'

## OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL

But the Tuesday meeting did not live up to its potential. Only 80 people attended—barely 10 more than had been gathered on Sunday by the tiny forces of the IMG. An array of four celebrity speakers talked for so long that it was not possible to have speakers from the floor, let alone use the meeting to map out definite actions which militants in the area could undertake.

The cause of this failure is to be sought in the incorrect ideas of the organisers about the relationship between the official and unofficial movements. All three convenors see the need for unofficial action, but they conceive of the unofficial movement as merely a pressure group on the official movement.

As Dick Caborn told us: 'I'm one who supports the unofficial movement never losing sight of the fact that if you're going to get the change that you're advocating, then you're not going to do it with the unofficial movement, but must strive to change the official leadership into the type of leadership that we would want to see it have. The power lies inside that official labour movement, whether we like it or not, and we've got to get hold of it.'

Indeed, it is important to force the trade union bureaucrats into taking action, and of course militants must launch a determined struggle to capture the leadership of the official movement. The question is *how*? Certainly not by 'pressure politics'. The experience of the Pentonville 5 shows that the most effective 'pressure' that can be put on the bureaucrats is to take the control of the situation out of their hands by organising mass action independent of their misleadership. Let them run if they want to 'lead'!

Moreover, the creation of a mass movement among the rank-and-file is the only way that militants can hope to establish their leadership within the official movement. Such a movement will not be forged by the cautious application of 'pressure' and bureaucratic manoeuvring. It can only come about by allowing the mass of working people to feel in practice the power in their hands, and proving to them that only a revolutionary leadership can develop and correctly apply that power. We will never be able to do these things unless we exert all our energy to carry every struggle forward as far as possible—even though it means relying on the 'unofficial' movement to lead such struggles.



On the platform at the Sheffield meeting on 15 January: (l to r) Percy Riley, NUM; Tony Hope, Convenor BSC River Don; Jimmy Miller, branch secretary Kellingley NUM.

This was the fault with the Communist Party-led Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions. It called and organised, independently from the trade union leadership, the most effective actions against the Industrial Relations Bill. But it was afraid to remain in the leadership of the movement it had created. As soon as the AUEW executive showed signs of stirring, under 'pressure', it turned everything over to them and heat a hasty retreat into the sidelines. As a result the Bill became an Act with only token protest, the AUEW leadership has allowed the most scurrilous application of the Act without a serious fight, and the LCDTU has become a mere shadow of what it might have been.

In Sheffield this conception holds similar dangers. It prevented the organisers of Tuesday's meeting going out and seriously campaigning for backing from other shop stewards and for mass attendance from the shop floor. At the meeting it prevented them cam-

aigning for the establishment of a local rank-and-file action committee that could offer some serious leadership in local struggles.

They see that as the affair of the Trades and Labour Council, and place themselves in the wings pressuring the Trades Council into action. Our attitude is different. We want to establish an effective rank-and-file body now, and then launch a campaign to get support and representation from the Trades Council for this body. This should be the approach of militants throughout the country: fight for action from the official leadership, but develop your own organisation so that your struggle is not dependent on the bureaucrats. Only in this way can the official leadership be put to the test, and a real struggle for the leadership of the official movement be launched.

JIM WILSON



# Expropriate Centre Point!

## Occupation wins mass support but loses its way

Few acts of 'illegality' have won as much popular sympathy in recent times as the well-planned storming of Centre Point last weekend. Passing motorists responded to the sign which asked them to 'blow your horn if you're with us', creating a cacophony of honks around St Giles Circus throughout the 45-hour occupation. Hundreds of messages of support were delivered to the occupiers, including one from the Kent miners which was read out to enormous cheers from the 2,500-strong rally which gathered on Sunday afternoon when the occupation ended.

Even sections of the bourgeois press felt obliged to respond. The *Guardian* headlined its story 'Centre Point taken at last', the *Mirror's* leader came out with a line close to solidarity, and the *Sun* devoted a large part of its centre-spread to the violence of the police who physically jumped on an architect who sounded his car horn.

### 'HOMES NOT HYAMS'

The reason for this broadly-based sympathy is evident. Centre Point was constructed at a cost of £5 million. Now, 10 years later, it is still an empty concrete shell and is valued at around £50 million. Property speculation has become the focus of the 'unpleasant face' of capitalism in almost every corner of the political arena, and few would openly contradict the placard which read 'Homes not Hyams'. Harry Hyams has almost been elevated to the status of Rachman.

But the success of the occupation exposed its serious weakness: having succeeded in focusing the attention of the nation on this concrete pinnacle 'as a symbol of everything that is rotten in our unequal society', the organisers seemed to have little idea of where to go from there, and were unable to differentiate themselves from the horde of bourgeois politicians prepared to jump on the bandwagon of demagogic 'speculator bashing'.

This failure was not an oversight or miscalculation. The organisers of the occupation, who had spent eight months laying their plans, which included infiltrating the security firm engaged to protect the building, declared that it was primarily a stunt to win publicity, very much in the style of protest politics. And the organisers' obsession with both respectability and legality reached ludicrous proportions.

Their press statements stressed that the occupiers were drawn from a variety of professions, and they insisted on putting

Hyams to as little trouble and expense as possible, even paying for phone calls they made and clearing up litter. This, of course, played straight into the hands of the bourgeois politicians, so that the Liberal Party, for example, had no compunction about sending along a posse of local council candidates to have their picture taken.

There was, however, a broad spectrum of political opinion among the squatters themselves, and a vote taken on whether to continue the occupation was only narrowly defeated. The main slogan taken up by those assembled outside Centre Point was 'Stay in', and this undoubtedly had repercussions among those inside.

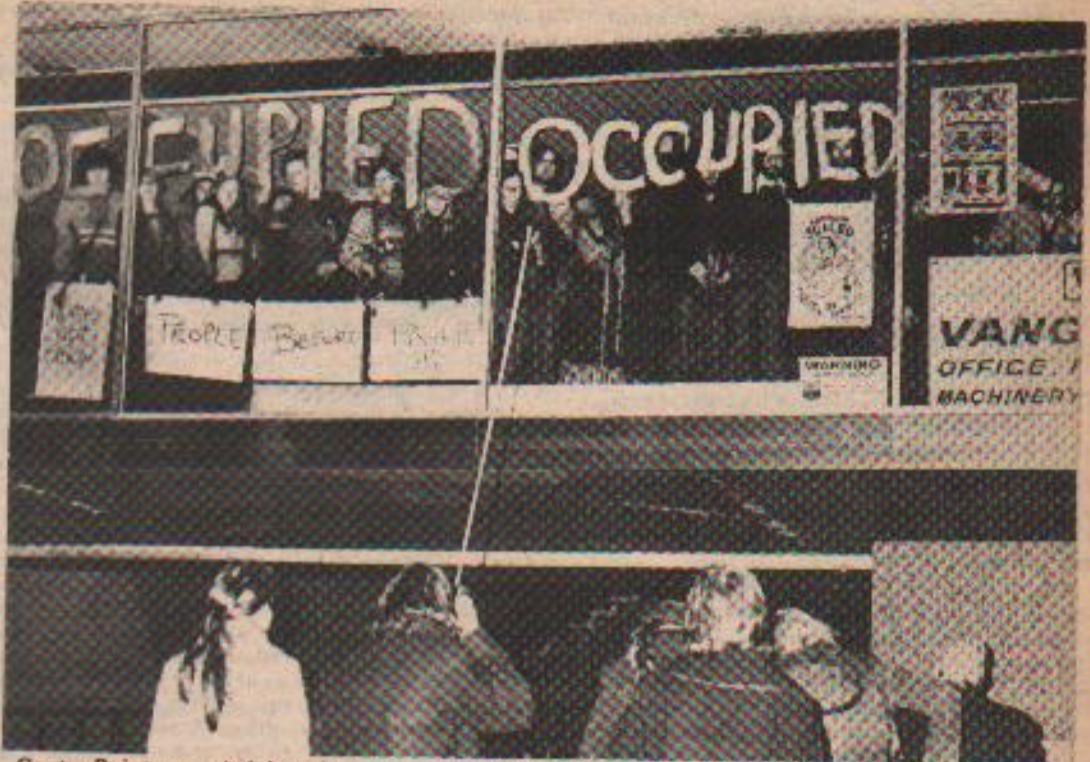
### EXPROPRIATION

The occupation was timed to coincide with a meeting of Camden Council to consider the compulsory purchase of the 36 flats contained in the 32-storey building. Since these flats are located on ground level, it would have been quite feasible to squat these for an indefinite period, thus keeping public attention centred on the issue and providing a valuable focus for organising mass support around the demand for the expropriation of Centre Point. Any action taken by Hyams or the police for the 'legal' or physical removal of the squatters could have been prevented by mass pickets.

As it was trade unions and other organisations had little time to react to the situation, and while a dozen banners from Labour Party constituency organisations were in evidence on Sunday's rally, there was no pressure on Labour Party members to raise their sights beyond the purchase of a slice of the building at market price.

Maida Hill Squatters and Tenants Association distributed a special issue of their newsheet which correctly called for the immediate take-over of the 36 flats for homeless people as the next practical step and for trade unions and tenants to show their support. They also proposed that the occupation should be used to propagandise on present housing struggles, such as the defence of the 26 squatters who are on charges arising from the occupation of the London Electricity Board showrooms in West London, and support for squatters who have broken 'official agreements' with councils to evict themselves at the council's request.

Housing struggles all over the country—Bristol, Oxford, and London especially—have during the past six months, made advances in both the level of organisation and militancy. These struggles, increasingly around houses



Centre Point occupied, but the action failed to expose the bourgeois speculator-bashers

owned by the property companies rather than those awaiting demolition, have inevitably led to an increasing isolation of the reformist 'old guard' among housing activists, who rely on various State bodies to solve the housing crisis rather than mass struggle. The task for militants is to determine how to take these struggles forward, whether initiated by reformists or others, and how to organise support for all struggles for decent housing.

### URBAN CRISIS

In London the urban crisis of capitalism is seen at its sharpest—acres of multi-occupied slums, rampant speculation, cuts in council house development, and now attempts by the GLC to make houses available for transport workers who, like other essential service workers, are being forced out of the city centre. These factors express themselves in soaring rents, 100,000 properties lying empty, and rapid growth of squatting. In London there are now over 10,000 squatters, drawn more and more from the ranks of the industrial working class. Increasingly these squatters are under attack through 'legal' intervention.

Important developments in the organisation of housing struggles have included the formation of the All London Squatters Federation; 'official' squatting groups in a number of boroughs

actively breaking agreements with councils about vacating premises; militant squatting against speculators, by placing homeless families in empty luxury flats; and re-squatting in contempt of eviction orders.

It is this context which gives the Centre Point action such tremendous potential, and it is still possible to draw on this potential to carry all of these struggles forward.

The central task must be to build a unified campaign, centring on the demand for the outright expropriation of Centre Point but taking up the whole question of property speculation and housing under capitalism, that can bring together London squatters, tenants and trade unionists, Local Labour Councils, Trades Councils, trade union branches and shop stewards committees should be canvassed for support. The opportunity should be seized to launch a massive wave of propaganda—leafletting, street theatre, rallies and public meetings. Finally, a series of mass actions—demonstrations, occupations, etc—must be planned to back up the demand for expropriation. In this way the present struggles can be advanced and a movement capable of creating a *working class solution* to the housing crisis of capitalism can come into being.

PIERS CORBYN and RICHARD BRINSLEY

# Police launch new campaign against squatters

As part of the present toughening up of the police a new campaign against squatters has been launched by police and landlords.

Two recent developments show this. The first was at the Electricity Showroom in Notting Hill Gate, where police attacked squatters who were peacefully demonstrating against the Electricity Board's new policy of cutting off power to squatters.

The two-hour occupation was organised by the All London Squatters Federation, and carried out by 80 squatters and tenants, 26 of whom were arrested in a large police swoop backed up by the Special Patrol Group.

The second development comes in the Borough of Haringey. The local newspaper, *The Weekly Herald*, has started a campaign of hysteria designed to whip up attacks on squatters. It is also giving this campaign a racist slant by blowing up a supposed case of immigrants squatting in a 'white' woman's house last year. The general hysterical nature of this campaign, and its openly anti-working class character, is summed up in an article which appeared in the 11 January issue.

The international powers have given way to blackmail by the Arab guerrillas; the national Government has been subject to blackmail and worse from the IRA and to actions leading to national damage by some trade unions. Haringey must not give way. Haringey must show that law defiers ... cannot be allowed to win.

As to how to deal with the situation, the *Herald* is in no doubt:

'Our soft and sloppy attitude towards disrupters and common takers of other people's property has gone far enough. The majority of the people live quiet, orderly, disciplined lives, and have respect for their fellow-citizens. Our attitude towards those who put themselves outside such codes of conduct should become harsh and unforgiving. Out with them.'

At the same time the *Herald* is not quite able to conceal the real facts on Haringey Council and housing. It turns out that Haringey Council takes over 500 houses a year, but many of them stand empty and unused for up to two years. The *Herald* argues for all information about these houses to be kept secret.

These new tactics in the fight against squatters emphasise the need for concerted action by the working class movement. Much more information about which houses are unused must be made available. This information passes through the hands of members of local government trade unions every day. It should be every union's policy to make public all information on unused housing.

New links must be forged between squatters and trade unions in the 'public services,' such as gas and electricity. If power is cut off it has to be done by trade unionists. As a measure of workers' control, the trade unions in these industries should refuse to cut off squatters and should have a policy of switching on



Police muscling two of the 26 arrested for occupying LEB showrooms

supplies. Squatters should campaign for this by leafletting and contacting public sector workers explaining the true facts of the housing situation.

Self-defence of squats, and agreements for self-defence, are crucial. There is a real history in this country of working class action against eviction, in which barricades have been erected and open fighting with the police has occurred. The lessons of these experiences must be drawn on in the current struggles. Support must be sought from workers' organisations for defence against evictions.

Defend squatters arrested during occupation of London Electricity Board

Public Meeting: Friday—1 Feb—7.30 pm  
CONWAY HALL

enquiries: LEB 26 Defence Ctee., 207 Railton Road, SE24; tel. 01-733 8663



# BRITAIN'S SECRET WAR

Everyone knows about the war in Ireland, but very few know much about Britain's long-standing military presence in Oman, and her leading role in the struggle against the guerrillas of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLOAG). The present oil crisis obviously gives this British foothold in the area an added importance. Below, in an article condensed from the January issue of the 'Gulf Bulletin', we take a closer look at what the army is up to.

In the last few years, Oman has been the only place in the world outside the State borders of the UK (ie Northern Ireland) in which the army of the British State has been involved in live fighting. It is the only other colonial war in which the British have been directly involved since the defeat of British intervention in South Yemen ('South Arabia' and 'Aden' as they called it) in 1967.

In the arrogant jargon of British officers, Oman is the 'only place where a young officer can put into practice the training he has received at Sandhurst and Mons'. In terms of the global strategy of imperialism, it is the only place outside Ireland where the young repressive cadre of the British State can implement and perfect their techniques.

The British military presence in Oman began during the Napoleonic Wars and was given permanent form in the 1870s. British intervention was based on the strategic need to defend the client Sultans of Muscat on the Omani coast—both against rebel tribes in the interior and against rival imperialist powers—as a means of defending British interests in India, and predominantly Indian troops were used.

However a serious uprising in the Omani interior during World War I forced the British to dig in around Muscat. In 1920 the British-officered Muscat Levy Corps was set up, based on the local Arab tribes and recruits from impoverished areas of Baluchistan (now part of Pakistan) across the sea.

## OIL COMPANIES

During World War II military intervention went a stage further: the British fear that Rommel would conquer Egypt led them to build a string of bases through Central Africa, and the link with In 'is went through Oman, where four airfields were built—at Salala, Masirah Island, Azalbah, and Muscat. Though hardly used at the time, they later proved very useful when the invasion of inner Oman by the oil companies led to a full-scale uprising which lasted from 1955 to 1959. Several hundred British troops were sent in, and the Sultan's army was expanded.

The British, realising that previous arrangements were inadequate, then signed a new agreement with the Sultan: under an 'Exchange of Letters' in July 1958, the British agreed 'to extend assistance towards

the strengthening of Your Highness's Army. Her Majesty's Government will also, at Your Highness's request, make available regular officers on secondment from the British Army, who will, while serving in the Sultanate, form an integral part of Your Highness's Armed Forces'. The British also agreed to provide training facilities and to help the Sultan build an air force.

## MYTH OF 'SECONDMENT'

Today the Omani army is based on this structure. All top posts in the army are held by British officers seconded from the British army: the Defence Minister, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Head of Intelligence, Commander of the Air Force and so on are all officials of the British State. According to official British figures, about 200 seconded officers were serving in the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) and Sultan of Oman's Air Force (SOAF) in 1973. But this figure understates the real situation, just as the myths of 'secondment' try to obscure the fact that the Omani 'army' and the government of the Sultanate are in reality little more than extensions of the British State.

The real figures are made up of the 'seconded' officers plus several other categories. First, there are the 'contract' (ie mercenary) officers, former members of the British armed forces working for the Sultan and formally not part of the British State apparatus, although they are about as independent of it as the US army's 'civilian advisers' in Indochina. Secondly, there are British forces not officially 'seconded' but only 'training'. A 100-man British Army Training Team made up of members of the SAS counter-insurgency regiment was claimed to be not on active service but only training; however, the British said that 'if fired upon they would defend themselves', and 'they were seeking realistic training situations'. In fact they were an offensive military unit.

Thirdly, there are British personnel allegedly not in action but only 'defending the Salala' base: members of the special defensive unit, the RAF Regiment, they are again formally excluded but in reality included in the military apparatus of the British State in Oman. Finally (and most numerous) there are the British military personnel not directly deployed in the combat area of southern Oman, Dhofar. Such are the RAF personnel on the island base of Masirah—since SAF and SOAF make unimpeded use of these facilities, the distinction has no practical significance.

This partially concealed British military presence is the core of the Omani army, which since the early 1960s has grown from 3,000 to about 10,000 in total strength. But for domestic and international reasons the British are reluctant to commit more than a certain number of troops to Oman. Moreover, after overthrowing Sultan Said and installing his son Qabus in his place in 1970, they decided that the best way to legitimise the new ruler was to involve other Arab states.

This led to the arrival shortly afterwards of several Jordanian intelligence officers, specialising in torture and in appeals to the 'Islamic' sentiments of the population against the 'infidels' of the Popular Front. Saudi money was also funnelled in, and some Saudi officers paid at least temporary visits to the combat zone. Pakistan, which provides most of the pilots for the Saudi, Kuwaiti and Abu Dhabi air forces, also started to provide military personnel to officer the SAF. India, meanwhile, began to train the new Omani navy. Finally Iran, the new guardian of capitalism in the Gulf, sent hundreds of counter-insurgency helicopter personnel into Dhofar to back up the Shah's boast that Iran will not tolerate 'subversion' on the Arab side of the Gulf.

This use of different kinds of local support can be seen in two ways: as a continuation of the old 19th century use of 'native' troops to make up for the lack of British troops; and as a version of the imperialist strategy exemplified in 'Vietnamisation', where the direct use of imperialist troops is avoided because of the possible political consequences, both in the country under attack and in the imperialist country itself. This latter aspect of the problem also has the advantage that some of the other states in the region are implicated in the specific repression: the use of Korean, Australian and New Zealand personnel in Vietnam followed a similar pattern.

## COUNTER-INSURGENCY

Overall British strategy in Dhofar can also be seen as a mixture of old and new style counter-insurgency. The central tactic used is that of trying to smash the liberated areas by: (a) cutting their supply lines; (b) destroying their food sources—cattle, wheat, etc; (c) killing or terrorising members of the civilian population until they are prepared to be 'resettled'; is driven into concentration camps under government control. In contemporary jargon, this involves 'splitting the people from the hard core', the 'core' being assumed to be 'communists' somehow separate from the native population.

This policy has, however, another side: under the pretence of splitting the people and putting pressure on the 'core', a policy of annihilation is being carried out. Villages have been burnt down, wells blown up, animals killed, crops burnt from the ground and from the air; while long-range artillery bombardment of 'suspected rebel areas' fulfils a similar function.

The use of air power formed the basis of British colonial control in Iraq, South Yemen, and Somalia; and its importance in the armoury of imperialist tactics has most dramatically been shown by the Americans in Vietnam. In Dhofar, air power is used for reconnaissance, flying supplies to outposts, bombing guerrilla areas, and tactical support to SAF positions under fire. The basis of the force are 15 or so Strike-master BAC-167 fighter jets, backed by transport planes (Skyvan, Caribou, Viscount) and helicopters. These are flown by RAF personnel plus some mercenaries, and are serviced by Airwork Ltd.

Because of the intensity of guerrilla fire they have, however, had to limit their activities: helicopters now fly at around 9,000 feet—5,000 feet above the mountains—and the short-range Skyvan transport planes are only able to land for very brief periods at the desert airstrips. Throughout the rainy season—June



to September—reconnaissance is impossible because of the thick cloud that overhangs the Dhofar mountains. But it is not inconceivable, though never admitted, that in other periods US spy satellites have been used to photograph the area for additional reconnaissance material.

Another key aspect of British counter-insurgency is 'psychological warfare'. Salala radio and leaflets dropped over guerrilla areas appeal to the population to surrender, tell them of people who are alleged to have done so, threaten them with death with pictures of graves marked 'This One is For You', and so on. A constant stream of propaganda tells of the wondrous doings of the new Sultan.

For those who are captured, a different kind of psychological war lies in store: modern interrogation methods, including the use of disorientation techniques, sleep deprivation, and mental torture. This set of intelligence techniques was developed by the British in the string of colonial wars after 1945, and has now been well documented in Ireland.

The ideology of the British personnel in Oman summarises the nature of the war there: since a majority of the personnel are officers, or in the special elite regiments like the SAS, there is none of that proletarian cynicism which has marked the presence of the British army in other colonial areas. Here the dominant world-view is Sandhurst anti-communism, itself a medley of dreams of Empire and modern counter-insurgency. 'Helping the Sultan to fight Communist aggression', 'they started it, we didn't' are common justifications.

There is also a personal aspect, derived from the contemporary contraction of the British army: Dhofar offers a kind of experience for the belligerent young imperialists that cannot be found elsewhere. 'Running your own show', 'the job is the perk', and 'the only place in the world where an Englishman is still called  *sahib* ', have been quoted as subjective aspects of the motivations of British officers.

Fundamental to the continued presence in Oman of the British army is the indifference of the British working class movement to this war. The passive complicity of the British population, a product of centuries of imperialist wars, forms the necessary ideological backdrop to the Omani intervention. But things are beginning to change now with the impact of the war in Ireland, the Heathrow manoeuvres, the threatened use of troops as strikebreakers, and so on. Exposing the activities of the British army in Oman will be an essential part in deepening this process of understanding of the relationship between the State and its armed bodies of men.

The Gulf Bulletin is available, price 10 p, from: The Gulf Committee, c/o ICDP, 6 Endleigh Street, London WC1.

## Save the life of Salvador Puig

Three years after the Burgos trials, comrade Salvador Puig Antich has been sentenced to death by the courts of the Franco regime.

Salvador Puig, a militant anarchist belonging to the MIL (Movimiento Iberico de Liberacion—Spanish Liberation Movement), was accused of killing a policeman of the special brigade who was about to arrest him. Puig had already been wounded by a bullet in the jaw when he shot the policeman. The military doctor who examined him upon his arrest maintained that Puig was not in his normal state of mind after receiving this wound.

The death sentence on Salvador Puig is the most serious development so far in a whole series of repressive actions carried out by the regime in the last few months. Others include the savage jail sentences of 12-20 years imposed on the Carabanchel 10 for their trade union activity; the imprisonment of 16 comrades of the LCR (Liga Comunista Revolucionaria—Revolutionary Communist League), supporters of the Fourth International; and the arrest of 100 members of the Catalan Assembly.

This is the only policy the regime has to counter the escalating struggles in Spain. The boycott of the elections to the State-run trade unions was followed by the strike at SEAT (the largest car factory in Spain) in Barcelona, the general strike in Vigo and El Ferrol in Galicia; the tremendous upsurge at San Adrian del Besos in Barcelona after the murder of a building worker by police; and finally the general strike last June in Pamplona.

The response of the regime has simply been to step up the repression. In June came the appointment of Carrero Blanco as prime minister; in September the dismissal of a majority of the 'liberal' Opus Dei members of the Cabinet; and now the choice of Arias Navarro to replace Carrero Blanco. Arias has inherited the nickname 'Butcher of Malaga' from the time of the Civil War, and is also a former chief of police. His appointment in-



icates that Franco is relying increasingly heavily on his one solid asset—the police and the army—to block the escalation of the mass struggle.

The fuse of international solidarity with Salvador Puig and the Carabanchel 10 has already been lit in violent confrontations between 2,000 demonstrators and police protecting the Spanish consulate in Toulouse; in the occupation of the Spanish consulate in Brussels; and in other confrontations between the families of Basque refugees and the police in Bayonne. The coming weeks must see its world-wide extension in the fight to free the Carabanchel 10 and have the death sentence on Puig commuted.

The address of the Spanish Embassy, to which all letters, resolutions of protest, etc should be sent, is: 24 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8QA.



Guerrillas of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf—they are steadily gaining ground despite all the techniques of counter-insurgency employed by the British army.



# Israeli elections show growth of anti-Zionism



For the voters in the Israeli elections (centre), the choice between Golda Meir (left) and Menachem Begin of the Likud opposition (right) involved no basic questions

The large number of parties and blocs contesting the Israeli parliamentary elections together with the intensity of the campaign rhetoric tended to give the impression that basic questions of policy were at stake, and that the election's outcome would have a big effect on the Geneva negotiations.

But in fact, the plethora of parties results from a peculiarity of the Zionist movement rather than from a vast number of counterposed political ideas. Nearly all the parties are Zionist, that is, committed to preserving the Israeli State as the 'ingatherer' of a mythical 'world Jewish nation.' None of the major parties favours restoration of the national rights of the Arabs of Palestine; none favours returning the territories conquered in 1967 to the Arabs; none favours breaking with US imperialism.

The results of the election were not surprising. The current ruling bloc, which won 46.2% of the vote in the 1969 elections, dropped to 39.9%. The major right-wing opposition bloc increased its share of the vote from 25.98% to 27.4%. The ruling Labour-Mapam coalition suffered a loss of five seats, while the Likud opposition picked up eight.

Golda Meir's Labour Party, which presently controls the cabinet in a bloc with the National Religious Party and the Independent Liberal Party, will retain its control, although the two minor coalition parties are expected to press for a few more ministerial posts in the new cabinet. So the right wing's push to oust the Labour Party regime failed.

But there were also non-Zionist parties running in the elections. And the increased vote for the largest of these, Rakah, is far more significant than the shifts within the Zionist camp. This becomes clear with a cursory look at the real divisions among the Zionist parties and blocs.

## THE ZIONIST CONTENDERS

All Zionist parties in Israel are members of the Jewish Agency, the organisational backbone of the Zionist movement. The money raised each year by this outfit (it exceeds \$100 million) is used to finance all Zionist activities, including the activities of the Zionist parties in Israel. The distribution of funds allows parties that would otherwise fall apart for lack of support and membership to go on functioning, running candidates, blocking with other parties, and in general maintaining a constant struggle for increasing their shares of the handouts. The ease with which parties can attain funding also partly explains the strong tendency of Israeli parties to split over seemingly trifling issues.

The elections to the 120-seat parliament, the Knesset, are normally held every four years. The vote is by national lists, and seats are apportioned among the lists on the basis of proportional representation on a countrywide scale. Lists receiving less than 1% of the vote are eliminated from the Knesset.

The 1973 Knesset elections, which were held on 31 December, were contested by twenty-three lists. Some lists were presented by single parties, others by blocs. Of the Zionist lists, the most important were these:

1. The Maarakh (Workers Front) bloc. Maarakh, which actually means 'alignment', is itself the workers front because it is composed of parties claiming to be socialist. It has two main components, the Labour Party (the party of Golda Meir & Co) and Mapam.

The Labour Party is itself a product of a 1969 fusion of three components: Mapai, Achdut Haavodah, and Rafi. Mapai is historically the main party of the Zionist colonisation of Palestine. Founded by David Ben Gurion, it has always controlled the Jewish Agency and the Histadrut trade union federation, the two most powerful agencies of Zionism. It has consequently always been the dominant force in the Government.

Mapam, formed in the 1940s, is the left wing of the Zionist left and the second-largest party in Israel. It supported both the 1956 invasion of Egypt and the June 1967 aggression. It joined the 1967 'national unity' government, and its members have been ins-

trumental in settling the territories occupied since then. Its main role in Israeli politics is to drum up international leftist support for Israel.

2. The Likud bloc. Likud was constituted shortly before the October War under the leadership of General Ariel Sharon, who during the October War commanded the Israeli troops that broke through to the west bank of the Suez Canal. Like Maarakh, it represents a bloc of blocs.

The Gahal bloc is the dominant component. Gahal is an alliance of the Herut Party, which was formed in 1948 as the legal cover of the gangsters of the Irgun (organisers of the Deir Yassin massacre), and the Liberal Party, a 1961 creation formed of a union of right-wing Zionists. The other members of the Likud are the Free Centre Party, founded in 1967 by a faction that opposed Herut from the right, and the

'There were also non-Zionist parties running in the elections. And the increased vote for the largest of these, Rakah, is far more significant than the shifts within the Zionist camp... The big Rakah vote and the huge abstention rate in Arab Jerusalem reflect a rise in the anti-Zionist confidence of the Arabs, brought on by the October War.'

National List, which is composed of those members of Rafi who refused to participate in the reunification with Mapai.

## SECONDARY ISSUES

Despite the fact that the election campaign was very bitterly fought between Maarakh and Likud, the differences between them are of secondary importance. Likud's main slogan was 'not one inch', meaning that the Israeli state should return none of the conquered territories to the Arab countries, not even in exchange for a 'peace' agreement. The Likud parties belong to the 'territorialist' wing of the Zionist movement: the section of Zionism that favours grabbing as much land as possible, regardless of the number of Arabs consequently added to the population of the Israeli state.

Maarakh, on the other hand, has declared its willingness to make modest territorial concessions to the Arab states in exchange for a settlement. It insists, however, on maintaining control of the Golan Heights, Arab Jerusalem, most of the West Bank, and parts of Sinai.

In addition to Maarakh and Likud, there were several other Zionist parties and blocs presenting lists in the elections. Among these were Maarakh's coalition partners—the National Religious Party and the Independent Liberal Party.

The fundamental division in Israeli politics is not between 'left' and 'right' Zionists but between Zionists and anti-Zionists. More important than the fluctuations in the relative strength of the 'doves' and 'hawks' in the Knesset is the fact that the October War has generated an unprecedented process of political questioning within the Israeli population. While popular disgust with the Meir-Dayan regime may temporarily bolster the bargaining power of the right, the more deep-going effects of the October War will create new opportunities for the growth of a revolutionary anti-Zionist movement.

The problem facing the Israeli revolutionists in

the Knesset election was how to utilise the election to capitalise on those opportunities. The members of the Israeli Socialist Organisation (Matzpen-Marxist), Israeli supporters of the Fourth International, decided to do this by giving critical support to the candidates of the Rakah Communist Party.

Rakah is the product of a 1965 split in the Israeli Communist Party. In that year one faction of the CP, which retained the party's official name, Maki, finally resolved to jettison its anti-Zionism in a bid for respectability. Maki objects to identifying Israel as an ally of imperialism, and considers any critique of Zionism irrelevant. It describes the 1967 war as a fight for Israeli survival. The membership of Maki is nearly all Jewish, and it has virtually disappeared as a political force in Israel.

Rakah grew out of the CP faction that refused to

follow Maki into the camp of Zionism. Its membership is almost totally Arab. In fact, it is the only political party in Israel with a mass base among the Arabs. It was the only party with Knesset representation that opposed the 1967 war.

Rakah was and remains a Stalinist party. It aims not at the overthrow of the Zionist State but at the formation of a 'progressive' bloc that can limit the more brutal aspects of the Israeli ruling class's policies. But the combination of Rakah's ties to the Soviet bureaucracy and its mass base among the Arab population of Israel forces the regime to try to isolate it, restrict its right to function, and arrest its members. Rakah is thus continuously pressed into opposition to the ruling class. At the same time, in order to maintain its Arab base, Rakah is compelled to defend the Arabs against victimisation by the State.

Rakah is not a revolutionary party. But neither is it a Zionist party. That is what separates it from all the other large Israeli political formations.

## TROTSKYIST ATTITUDE

While Rakah continues to command the allegiance of masses of 'Israeli' Arabs, discontent with the reformist policy of the Rakah leadership has created an opposition within the party. In the past several years that opposition has broadened. In an article published in the August 1973 issue of *Matzpen-Marxist*, A. Said explained the attitude of the Israeli Trotskyists towards Rakah members as it relates to Matzpen-Marxist's election policy:

'The treachery that has been manifested in Moscow's policies in recent years and Rakah's drifting along after the Kremlin, along with the appearance of a revolutionary nucleus putting forward a Leninist political programme and line, have intensified the process of alerting and awakening that is going on among Rakah's members and supporters. An indication of this is Rakah's attacks on Trotskyism and on what the leadership calls 'ultraleftism', and the disciplinary measures (such as expulsion from the party) taken against critical elements.

'But in spite of this, one cannot abstain in the elections. Abstention would strengthen the ruling parties and the bourgeoisie. It is necessary to make use of the elections precisely to express opposition to Zionist ideology and policy.

'Only one party is not tied to the ruling class and its agents of the right and the left, and should be supported. That is the new Communist list: Rakah... We, the Trotskyists, have deep disagreements with Rakah... For example, Rakah supports without any reservations the Soviet Union's policy of peaceful co-existence. We are violently opposed to this policy because it is counter-revolutionary. It is a policy which sacrifices the class struggle and the revolutionary war of the oppressed peoples on the 'altar of detente' between the Soviet bureaucracy and American imperialism...'

'Rakah has a reformist programme, a conception of the revolution by stages, a policy of alliances between the classes, and the illusion that socialism can be achieved peacefully, step by step.

'We condemn this political approach, and say that

'But we must not deceive ourselves. There is still a long way to go before it will be possible for a revolutionary organisation to offer these groups a realistic alternative by gaining the confidence of considerable sections of the working class and the intelligentsia.

'In our opinion, participation in the elections through an independent slate in the current elections does not serve this task. If we go ahead with such a step, we will gain the support only of a tiny, limited group, while to the great majority of groups and individuals who are critical of Rakah's reformism—and the revolutionary organisation must recruit them to its ranks—such a step would be considered 'anti-communist' and 'adventurist'. These elements would then be driven back into the arms of Stalinism...'

'It is evident from these considerations that the position of Matzpen-Marxist is the call to support Rakah critically in the eighth Knesset elections, a support accompanied by exhaustive political criticism and refusal to tone down our critique of Stalinism and its reformist practices, coupled with a campaign against parliamentary and reformist illusions in general.'

## INCREASED VOTE

The election results fully confirmed the Matzpen-Marxist estimate of Rakah's continued strength among the Arab population. 'Arab lists affiliated to the Labour Party lost votes (Arab Labour deputies dropped from four seats to three) while the pro-Soviet Communist Party, Rakah, the majority of whose members are Arab, increased its vote by 38%', reported the 8 January *Le Monde*. Rakah's advances were especially marked in Nazareth, the largest Arab city in Israel, where Rakah got 59% of the vote, as compared to 47% in 1969. In the municipal elections, which were held along with the Knesset elections, Rakah won the mayoralty of Nazareth.

Opposition to the Zionist state was also manifested in Arab Jerusalem. The leaders of the Palestinian resistance movement urged the people to boycott the election in protest against Israel's annexation of Arab Jerusalem. The abstention rate was 88%, with less than half as many Arabs voting as in 1969.

After the elections, the leaders of Rakah took pains to insist that their party in no way intended to challenge the existence of the Zionist State, and denied that the large Rakah vote represented anti-Zionist sentiment on the part of the 'Israeli' Arabs. Notwithstanding the Stalinist leaders' claims, however, the big CP vote and the huge abstention rate in Arab Jerusalem reflect nothing else but a rise in the anti-Zionist confidence of the Arabs, brought on by the October War.

This strengthening of anti-Zionism among the Arabs in Israel, along with the mood of rampant insecurity and political questioning developing among Israeli-Jewish youth, is far more important for the future of the Arab East than the shifting parliamentary balance of forces between Zionist 'hawks' and 'doves' [ICP]

JON ROTHSCHILD

# Trotskyist campaign finds good response

The comrades of Matzpen-Marxist, Israeli supporters of the Fourth International, distributed 15,000 leaflets during the election period. These explained the group's reasons for giving critical support to the Rakah

CP list and met with a very favourable response, particularly from rank-and-file CP members. Among the points the leaflet made were:

'For the working class, the basic questions will not be decided by the Knesset—but in the streets, in the factories, and on the estates. They will be decided by the struggle for a real class-struggle trade union, and by the construction of a workers' revolutionary party.

'The only solution to the problems of the working class is the joint struggle of Jewish and Arab workers... for the direct power of the working masses and the organised peasants in councils (soviets), the most consistent and radical form of democracy: workers' democracy.

'The problems of all the working masses of the region will find no solution except through the revolutionary struggle against imperialism and its agents—Zionism and the Arab ruling classes—for the socialist revolution throughout the region, which will put an end once and for all to national oppression and social exploitation; a revolution which will give birth to the United Socialist States of the Arab East...'

the bourgeoisie will not hand over power voluntarily, and will not surrender its class privileges following a democratic change in parliament; but that socialism will only be achieved through a revolution which abolishes the apparatus of the bourgeois State.

'Rakah says that it is possible to obtain peace and decide the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 242. We say that this is an illusion, and a dangerous mistake. There can be no peace on the basis of an agreement between the big powers, an agreement which recognises the existence of the State of Israel and the bourgeois Arab regimes; an agreement made on the backs of the Palestinian Arabs...'

'However, it is not these questions which are at stake in these elections. The problem is to know how to express, through the elections, the greatest possible opposition to Zionist policy.

'We say there is only one way: to vote for Rakah, a party which is neither Zionist nor bourgeois.'

MATZPEN - MARXIST



**T**HE vicious sentences meted out to the building workers on trial in Shrewsbury and the joint police-army operations at Heathrow are two recent events that offer a graphic warning of the preparations being made by the ruling class to meet any challenge to their power.

The reformist view of capitalist society sees it moving steadily towards greater and greater 'democracy', eventually to culminate in a gradual transition to socialism. In fact, as Marxists point out, capitalist society is headed in the opposite direction: not towards the extension of bourgeois democracy, but its continual erosion.

#### MONOPOLY CAPITALISM

Consider just one example—the case of political refugees. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries the British ruling class allowed such far from harmless men as Marx and Lenin to live here without disturbance. Today they will not even let Bertrand Russell's secretary Ralph Schoeneman, or a German student with part of his brain shot away, Rudi Dutschke, remain in the country. On a more serious level, barbaric developments like fascism and the war in Vietnam are all products of modern capitalism.

Those forces within our society that work to undermine bourgeois democracy are not just secondary features nor are they exclusively the offspring of old fashioned and outmoded sectors of the ruling class. On the contrary, the decline of bourgeois democracy and the emergence of the 'strong state' (a state which, without totally abandoning the trappings of bourgeois democracy—election, Parliament, etc—resorts more and more to repressive measures and relies on the administrative machine to carry them out) is a product of the central features of present day capitalism. This can be seen in the fact that although practically no major European country faced a serious revolutionary threat in the 20 years between 1948 and 1968, this whole period saw an at first slow, and then more rapid, undermining of bourgeois democracy.

The reason for this is simple. In the nineteenth century capitalism could function without the continual and direct intervention of the state in the economy. Today this is impossible. Only the state possesses the colossal economic resources necessary to guarantee the profits, bring about the mergers, and finance the



Above: Special Constables being issued with batons in 1926 — now once again a mass recruiting drive for Specials has been launched.

Left: Police chief Robert Mark



As the crisis of capitalism steadily worsens, **ROGER SMITH** explains how the repressive apparatus of the State is forced to intervene more and more directly in all aspects of the class struggle

*The Times* in its 18 January issue carries some very interesting facts about the activities of United States special services in Britain. It reveals that between 30 to 40 extra CIA men have been drafted into Britain. Apparently,

'many of them are experts skilled in the use of advanced surveillance techniques'.

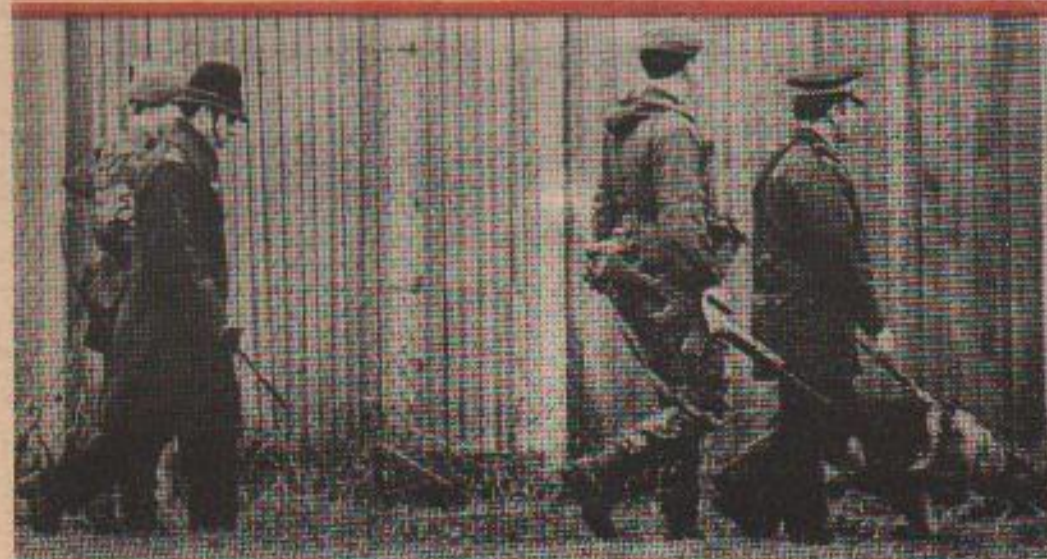
The aim of their being sent is

'to gather information on so-called "subversive elements" operating within the trade union movement'.

Seemingly this is not a new development. Miles Copeland, former senior CIA agent and 'expert' in intelligence matters is quoted as saying:

'There is no doubt at all that it (the CIA) has agents operating inside the British labour unions, but it is unlikely they would ever be found out. They would be British nationals recruited by CIA case officers.'

Most of the information they gain is apparently handed back through 'normal channels' to British intelligence.



Police and troops in combined exercise at Heathrow — a deliberate show of strength, says Lord Arran

research of the huge capitalist monopolies. Similarly, because of the growing struggle of the working class, the state, the representative of the capitalist class as a whole, is forced more and more to intervene directly to support individual capitalists against their workers. The Industrial Relations Act, the incomes policies and so on are all part of this trend. The functioning of the capitalist class in the economic field and the actions of the state thus draw ever closer. It is out of this process that the trend to the strong state emerges.

#### EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENTS

Although the tendency to a strong state has existed for several decades, it is quite clear that the economic crisis and the rise of working class struggles since 1968 have enormously speeded up this development. We can see this most clearly on the following fronts.

1. The use of special 'political' laws with an openly repressive character. A typical example of this is the 'Loi anti-casseur' passed in April 1970 in France. This makes leaders of a political organisation responsible for any act committed by their members regardless of whether the leaders were involved in it or not. It was for example the law used to arrest and hold Trotskyist leader Alain Krivine. It carries a five year prison sentence. In Italy last summer the centre-right coalition of Andreotti passed a law permitting the arrest of 'any person who, by his comportment, may be assumed to be engaged in illegal activities'. In other words the police can arrest anyone they like. The next catch in this law, a very neat one, is that anyone so arrested may be held without charge or trial for four days. In Italy you are automatically sacked if you are absent from work for three days without being sick, so the law gives the police complete power to get any militant victimised. In Switzerland, you may be fined, as was the Trotskyist paper *La Breche*, for saying that the bourgeoisie exploits the working class.

In Britain of course the classic examples of this developments have been the Industrial Relations Act, the various Immigration Acts (including the notorious Pakistan Act which deprives Pakistanis of voting and trade union rights) and the use of the conspiracy laws. These latter have been used against Irish militants, political groups, black militants and trade unionists in the Shrewsbury case. They can be used to give unlimited sentences for even the smallest crimes and are now the chief legal instrument of repression. All this is in addition to existing repressive legislation such as the Emergency Powers Act (1920) and the Incitement to Disaffection Act (1934).

2. The banning of left wing organisations and the harassment of their members. This has already been seen in Germany with the banning of the Maoist KPD and in France with the banning of the Trotskyist Ligue Communiste. In Britain we have seen raids on various revolutionary organisations and the recent call of a Tory MP for the proscribing of the Communist Party.

#### EMPLOYERS' FORCES

3. The dramatic strengthening of private employers' police forces. In Belgium a Bill which will allow employers to use armed guards is being proposed. In France such a private police force shot dead a worker, Pierre Overney, for distributing leaflets at the Renault factory. In Britain the alarming growth of organisations

# THE COMING OF THE STRONG STATE

such as Securitor shows a similar trend.

4. There is a growing collaboration between the forces of the state, the forces of individual employers and organisations of the right. In France, during a strike at a Peugeot factory in April last year, two commando squads of the far right Committee for the Defence of the Republic attacked workers with iron bars, bicycle chains and axe handles. The police stood by and watched. Similarly at the Citroen factories the police have allowed the thugs of the fascist 'union' the CFT to attack workers delegates with gas pistols. Even more menacingly in Italy, apart from the daily police cover ups of fascist shootings and bombings and fascist penetration of the army, it has been revealed that in Pisa, a military centre, the fascists were receiving training from the army. In Britain things have not yet reached the French, let alone the Italian, scale but the trend is quite clear. The use by Chrysler and the *Sheffield Morning Telegraph* of thugs to attack picket lines and the collusion of the police in the fascist attack on the Mansfield hosiery mills picket line, show the shape

Semi-fascist Lord Arran, writing in the *Evening News* as regards the purpose of the Heathrow army-police

'I do not, incidentally, for one moment think that the operation was local only. Nor do I know any person I have met who would deliberately and detestably strengthen the Arab excuse.

'Is it likely that the use of cars, machine guns and hundreds of troops are justified to deal with a few girls and some dangerous seeking Arabs? I must think so.

'The fact that the use of force has to be extended to the whole of the country is revealing of a well planned exercise





The uniformed thugs of the French CRS riot police, quite capable of killing in the course of their 'duties'. In Britain the embryos of such an organisation are to be found in the Special Patrol Groups.

of things to come.

**RACISM**

5. The close collaboration between the state and the extreme right on the issue of racism. In practically every country, the alliance of state, fascists and employers is most closely fused around this axis. In France, the fascist *Ordre Nouveau* is openly supported by the local governments of Nice and Marseilles, and the police have made no attempts whatever to stop the wave of killings of immigrant workers in southern France. In Britain the House of Lords decision on illegal immigration has given every fascist the right to hound and harry blacks with the support of the police.

6. The strengthening of the repressive apparatus of the police. This is seen clearly in the infamous CRS riot police in France. These uniformed thugs, all trained in riot control and the use of arms, are quite capable of killing in the course of their 'duties'. It was the violence of their repression which led to the formation of barricades and street fighting and touched

off the revolutionary movement in May 1968 in France. No other West European 'democracy' yet has such a perfected weapon, but they are all working hard at it. In Germany the so-called 'anti-terrorist' police, trained by the army, are the nucleus of such a force. In Britain the embryos of a CRS type organisation are to be found in the Special Patrol Groups, who shot dead two Pakistanis in London last year, and in the army trained anti-picket squads are now being formed in many areas. These heavy squads, who have already been in action against Hull dockers and workers at the Footprint factory in Sheffield, are a key element of ruling class strategy. It is no accident that the first measure announced by the Government after the declaration of a State of Emergency in the present crisis was the formation of a national police co-ordinating centre for anti-picket action.

**THE ARMY**

The core of the power of the ruling class is the army. This is not only the best trained and best equipped of any ruling class force, but also the one which is most carefully screened ideologically and politically. Jack Woddis, in the Communist Party pamphlet *Time to Change Course*, gives a perfect description of the army (although he totally fails to draw the correct conclusions from it):

'The upholders of the establishment are given all the facilities they require to mould the minds of the armymen, to foster anti-democratic conceptions and influence them to regard civilian activities for the redress of grievances or for changing our society as dangerous heresies that must be repressed by force. At the same time, the members of the armed forces are denied democratic freedoms, and are banned from participating in normal activities or belonging to trade unions and political parties. The politics of preserving the status quo are drilled into the troops every day; but the politics of working for progressive change are disallowed.'

This situation of the army makes it the final instrument, one the ruling class increasingly looks to, for backing up the police and other civil instruments of repression. Conservative MP Peter Iy, writing in the *Guardian* on 17 November, rather let the cat out of the bag when talking of pickets. He wrote: 'Can the police and the civil forces alone cope? Might there not be the need for enlisting the aid of the armed forces as an adjunct to the civil power? ... There is reason to believe that this problem has exercised the minds of many politicians.'

Even more revealing are the views of Brigadier Frank Kitson - the man appointed by the Heath Government to the key post of head of infantry training. He is on record as holding that the Government must at once prepare army forces for strike breaking by setting up 'specialist individuals and units within the army to enable essential civil services to be maintained in the event of civilians being unable or unwilling to maintain them.'

Even more ominously he thinks that 'If a potent and serious grievance arose such as might result from a significant drop in the standard of living, all those who now dissipate their protest over a wide variety of causes might concentrate their efforts and produce a situation beyond the power of the police to handle.

Should this happen, the army would be required to restore the position rapidly.'

**A PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

All the facts which have been outlined so far make it absolutely imperative that the socialist and working class movement takes up as one of its central tasks the struggle against the strong state. Among the main struggles and demands which must be launched at present are:

- \*For the complete abolition of the Industrial Relations Act, the Immigration Act, the Pakistan Act, the Aliens Act, the Emergency Power Laws,

It is necessary to deprive the ruling class of its claim to a monopoly of violence.

\*For the organisation of self-defence by the black community and for the boycott of the machinery of the Race Relations Act. For black self-organisation in the trade union and labour movement.

\*For a united front of socialist and working class organisations to deprive fascists of the right to organise and spread their message. Follow the example of the Edinburgh and Liverpool workers and students and prevent the fascists from meeting.

\*For the dissolution of the Special Patrol Groups and anti-strike squads of the police and disarming of

In case anyone should feel that the armed forces might not be adequate in capitalism's hour of need, Lord Arran recently assured *Evening News* readers as follows:

'For your comfort and information we have roughly some 170,000 troops in Britain and overseas, half of which are in this country: we have 15,500 troops in Northern Ireland and 55,000 in Germany. Quite a good total. Moreover, all are volunteers and professionals.

'Add to this in England and Wales some 95,000 policemen on active duty, most of whom have had weapon training and can be armed in a matter of hours. We may need every one of them.'

the Incitement to Disaffection Act, together with all similar laws. Defence of all those accused under them and release of all convicted under them.

\*For the abolition of the Conspiracy Laws, the defence and release of all militants threatened or convicted on them, or on other political charges. In particular, the release of the Stoke Newington 5, Irish political prisoners such as the Price sisters, and for the release and dropping of all charges against the Shrewsbury 24.

\*For the dissolution of all private employers' police forces and organisations such as Securicor. Such dissolution to be policed and enforced by the trade unions.

\*For the abolition of all laws limiting picketing. \*For the organisation of self-defence of pickets.

all sections of the police. This to be supervised and controlled by the organisations of the working class.

\*For the banning by Labour councils of the use of Special Patrol Groups and anti-picket squads in their areas.

\*Full right of trade union and political organisation in the police, including the right to strike.

\*No use of the army in industrial disputes. End of all joint army-police exercises and no army training of the police. End of all army exercises in civilian areas.

\*For a united front of all working class and socialist organisations for the defence of all organisations of the working class movement.

\*For joint agreement by the organisations of the revolutionary left for the defence of their own organisations.

on 9 January, rather gave the game away  
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# Reviews HEROES AND VILLAINS

**HIDDEN FROM HISTORY**—Sheila Rowbotham (Pluto Press, £1.50 p paperback)

Sheila Rowbotham's work is certainly the most sustained attempt so far published to place the struggle of women in the context of the struggle of the British working-class. The book covers the experience of the entry of women into large-scale production, from the early 19th century to the 1930's, and the effects this had on the trade-unions and political organisations of the period.

She traces the breakdown of the initial division of organised labour along sexual lines, the emergence of discussions connecting female emancipation with socialism (and their weaknesses), the increasing intervention of the bourgeois state to encourage the use of women as an industrial reserve army (a role they still play to this day) and the suffragette movement.

Her discussion of the suffragettes is important, in that it puts paid to the widely-held view that this was a typical bourgeois reformist movement. She shows conclusively that it provided an opportunity for the left wing of the suffragettes to put forward and organise around a whole series of issues related to women's oppression under capitalism. The mass involvement of women in production in the First World War and the example of the Russian Revolution are also shown to have contributed to the upsurge of women's confidence at this time.

The weakness of the book is Rowbotham's lack of an adequate theoretical foundation, so that history appears as a collage of events. Secondly she tends to ignore crucial differences between workers' political organisations. Lastly, although her research is invaluable for an understanding of the oppression of women under capitalism, it falls short of concretising the steps necessary to realise the potential behind this oppression, with the aim of bringing down the present bourgeois patriarchal order.

MICHELE LEE

## THE LEFT AGAINST EUROPE?

Tom Nairn (Penguin 40 p)

The issue of Britain's entry into the Common Market was an issue which for long was largely ignored by the left as being irrelevant. When a heated debate did break out in the Labour movement around the question, there was a belated rush to take a position with all the accompanying failings which lack of discussion and blatant opportunism tend to produce. Tom Nairn in this book, originally published as a whole issue of *New Left Review* No. 75, has traced and analysed this whole unfortunate process from its beginnings.

Nairn covers the ground comprehensively, starting with the situation of British capitalism which created the necessity to enter Europe in the first place, the debates within the ruling-class on this question, and then Heath's re-orientation of British capitalism in the early 70's.

The core of the book is his analysis of the attitude of the Labour Party and the trade unions. He examines in detail the total confusion and contradictions caused by the curious traditions of British labourism, fed on narrow chauvinism as a result of Britain's imperialist past. He tears viciously and wittily into the outdated nationalism of British social democracy and Wilson's twists and turns.

In the latter sections he deals, in equally devastating fashion, with the positions of the Communist Party and the organisations to the left of the CP, pointing out their inconsistencies and inadequacies.

His unorthodox conclusion that 'support for entry can only increase the tempo of revolutionary politics and further diminish the role of social democracy' is debatable (and has been hotly debated) but the book is a sustained polemic which should be read (or re-read) especially in the light of the 'one-year itch' and the resurrection of anti-Market hysteria.

CARL GARDNER

## How the press makes its mark in the class struggle

One of the well-known tricks of the bourgeois press is to give massive coverage and praise to the actions of any member of the working class movement who will come out against a strike while presenting as ogres all those who support struggle.

For example, during the 1971 post office strike, which was almost 100 per cent solid, the *Daily Mirror* continually carried headlines, in one case eight inches high, such as 'REVOLT! BY THE HELLO GIRLS'. The *Daily Express* carried a picture covering 50 square inches of a

single individual going into work. The fact that the entire postal service came to a standstill merited only half an inch in the London *Evening Standard*.

We have seen the same ritual in the present crisis. Anyone calling for stronger action is portrayed as a raving madman, while figures such as Tinsley of ASLEF, who claims to have organised the calling off of non-cooperation, are given endless column inches and banner headlines like 'Ted, the man who talked them back'.

The two men who have undoubtedly emerged as the newspapers' greatest 'villain' and greatest 'hero' in the present crisis are Tony Benn and Frank Smith. As a model of how the press operates, it is instructive to examine the coverage afforded to these two protagonists.

Tony Benn has taken a completely ambiguous position on all the crucial questions of the day. In particular, he has refused to come out for industrial action to smash Phase Three. However, he has not capitulated openly like Wilson, and there is no doubt that his moves in exposing the facts on the coal stocks did considerably embarrass the Government. It therefore became an important political objective for the ruling class to discredit Benn, and in order to take on this task the press has dutifully come up with two themes.

### BENN THE 'HERETIC'

The first is to suggest that Benn is completely irrational or even insane. The second is to attempt to drag up any sort of dirt on his motives. Classic cases of the first tactic are continual references such as 'Harold Wilson and his wild man Benn' (London *Evening News*, 4 January), and 'Mr Benn... delivered a fiery speech which was clever but at times demented' (*Daily Mail*, 11 January).

A typical example of the second line of attack was the publicity given to Dick Taverne's outburst. The *Evening News* on 5 January ran a big headline, 'Benn's blamey! He's gambling for power says Taverne'. Prominent quotes from Taverne then appeared, such as remarks on the 'opportunism and careerism of Benn' and: 'His (Benn's) problem is that he wants to be leader of the Labour Party so bad that truth is no obstacle... He exploits the Government's feeble inability to put over a truthful case (sic) by every kind of tendacious huckstering blamey that he can muster. He is a political gambler'.

ideas and the admission that Smith had never called a strike, were endorsed by the reporter in such glowing terms as 'Like a voice of sanity in a country hell-beat on self-destruction, Frank, I suggest is the voice of our silent majority' and 'We can all learn from Frank Smith today'.

Even more blatant was the handling of the whole episode by the *Daily Express* on 7 January. After Smith's anti-communist tirade, the *Express* came forth with the headline 'Cheers for Frank. Support pours in to miners' leader who says: End the Ban.' To judge from the *Express*, you would have thought Smith was

about the most popular man in the world with total support from every worker in the country.

The *Express* declared: 'Moderate miners' leader Frank Smith was yesterday counting a wave of support for his outspoken plea, made at the weekend, to end the crippling overtime ban. He spent all day taking calls from fellow miners, industrialists, and ordinary men and women congratulating him on his stand over the dispute... Said his wife Gladys last night, "I am proud of Frank for having the guts to say this". Frank's first visitor yesterday was his next door neighbour, 53-year-old engineering worker Jack Haywood. Said Jack: "When I read what Frank had been saying, I just had to shake him by the hand." This eulogy of Smith's support became

rather exposed when the Leicester miners came out on strike against him. The press tune was therefore changed to that of the 'red plot'. The *Evening Standard* on 8 January declared 'At his Coalville office today, Mr Smith accused Left-wing extremists of plotting', it went on to say: 'Hinting that Communists were behind the walkout over his remarks, Mr Smith said: "I still find it incomprehensible that there was such a swift reaction to the comments I made at the weekend. I spoke out for the first time only on Saturday night, and by Monday morning the men were walking out. You can't help wondering if it was all planned in advance."'

### REMARKABLE PLOT

A truly remarkable plot this. Apparently not only is the 'red menace' capable of organising whole groups of men to go out on strike against their will, but it is even capable of reading people's thoughts so that it knows in advance they are going to make certain statements! The small consideration that even Smith had to admit he had not received any message of support from a single Leicester miner was of course as nothing beside the creeping menace.

The media campaign on Benn, Smith and all the other trade union and Labour Party leaders during the present crisis shows absolutely the need for both an independent proletarian press and for workers in the media to act as the safeguards of the working class. Trades councils should follow the example of Newcastle by establishing their own press, and, when three South Wales newspapers feel able to refuse to publish a paid advertisement from the NUM on the miners' case, as they did this month, it is essential that journalists and print workers exercise their own form of censorship, as the Fleet Street electricians have threatened to do.

### CENTRAL LONDON A.I.L.

Forum with Bob Purdie and Gery Lawless on the current situation in Ireland. General Picton pub, Caledonian Road (5 mins Kings Cross tube), 8.00 p.m. Friday 25 January.

## Russians backed miners with cash

By Terry Pattinson

**RUSSIAN** workers have given generous cash gifts to British strikers - including the miners.

This was confirmed last night by a union leader who has recently visited Moscow.

Mr. Les Dixon of the plant engineers' union said donations had also gone to the Clydebank U.C.M. ship workers.

### Example

He said it was an example of how trade unions were supporting internationalism. The 31-year-old member of the A.C.E.W. executive council spent the day in Moscow at

### UNION LEADER TELLS HOW THE SUPPORT FLOWS IN

an international member of metal workers' trade union. While he was there, he praised the Russians in a B.C. radio interview for backing their message of solidarity and support with financial aid.

He said the "substantial contribution" by the Russian miners to the miners' dispute had during the 1971 strike was a "good example of solidarity".

Mr. Dixon went on: "We have messages of solidarity and support from the Soviet engineering workers and in the past have had financial aid."

It is also correct to say that in a recent dispute in which our mine workers' industry was involved, the Soviet trade union made a

### Control

Mr. Dixon, the only anti-communist Communist on the A.C.E.W. executive, told the Russian workers that British workers were having difficulty with the Government.

It was "introducing legislation to attempt to control and weaken the powers of the trade union."

He said it was very im-

portant to separate the between the workers class movement in Britain and the Soviet Union.

Our organisation is firm in its policy of having relations and contacts with our workers," he added.

"Our contacts with our counterparts here in Russia, over the last two years has been very, very good."

"We feel that even these American and European of course such good will come."

Mr. Dixon said the conference discussed the serious problems of workers such as safety, health, new technology, between and lack of job satisfaction.

He was extremely impressed with the Russian unions and their organisations for improving the conditions of workers.

Mr. Dixon, who was elected to the executive committee in 1970, was re-elected for another four years last year.

He was also elected for 11 years in 1969 against the Staffordshire and joined the Communist Party in 1944.

The *Daily Express* was only one of several papers which used this version of the 'red scare' tactic to try to get at the miners last week. Strange to say, there was scarcely a mention of the donation from the United Mine Workers of America which came through at the same time.

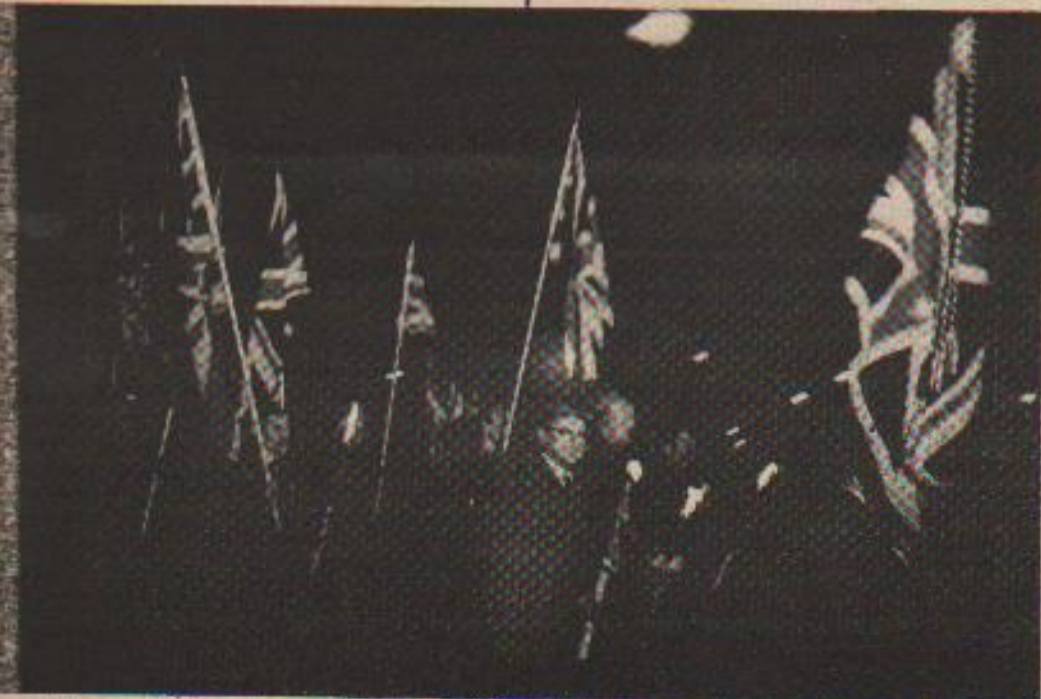
Of course, there is some element of truth in this. Benn is undoubtedly acting out of the motive of becoming next leader of the Labour Party. But it is only in the case of Benn that these types of motive are given prominence. Anyone who is prepared to openly oppose working class action, as we shall see in the case of Frank Smith, is always presumed to have motives as white as snow. As for Taverne himself, in order to preserve for him some shred of credibility, his view that Phase Three is too generous and that the miners shouldn't have been offered so much is kept quiet.

Even clearer than the attitude of the ruling class press to the Labour leadership is its treatment of the trade union bureaucracy. Continual attacks are made on any trade unionist leading a struggle, while those in favour of calling one off are praised to the skies. A typical example was the *Daily Mail* editorial of 11 January which, after an attack on Scanlon for something he had unfortunately not said, went on to stress 'there are union leaders like Tom Jackson, of the Post Office workers, and Mr Frank Chapple, the electricians' leader, who genuinely look forward to a time when a just incomes policy can be achieved'.

### SMITH THE 'SAVIOUR'

But the man whom the press has latched on to as the bosses' trade unionist of the moment is Frank Smith of the NUM. This red-baiting follower of Moral Re-Armament has been given endless miles of press coverage with such views as 'Who is Britain's hero in this ugly sordid industrial business. Who other than Frank Smith... Stick it Smith. All honest British folk except the fascist Marxists are behind you' (*Evening News*, 9 January). The following day the *Evening News* waxed positively lyrical. Under a banner headline, 'The man who spoke out for the Silent Majority', it talked of 'Frank Smith, the reluctant hero of the nation's darkest hours'. This 'reluctant hero'—so reluctant he carefully sent a letter to the *Times* in the middle of the overtime ban—was zealously allowed to spell out his semi-fascist theories of some sort of Corporate State:

'Cyril Smith, the heavyweight Liberal, he had the right ideas for our industrial problems—a commission, confederation, call it what you will of industry, Government and the Trades Union Congress to decide what is right'. These



Anti-Common Market demonstration in London last Saturday included a large National Front contingent... Tom Nairn's book *The Left Against Europe?* brilliantly exposes how much of the left's anti-Market rhetoric played right into the hands of organisations like the NF.



# The Labour Party and the 'rule of law'

A central element in the ruling class political offensive over the past few months has been an intense propaganda campaign about 'Parliamentary sovereignty' and the 'rule of law'. Such arguments have thrown the reformist leaders of the working class movement into complete confusion, since they too are ardent supporters of the 'rule of law'.

In fact, 'the law' is a deadly enemy of the working class. All the great struggles of the workers' movement—from the Tolpuddle Martyrs to the freeing of the five—have been won against the law. No law which purports to represent the interests of the working class has ever been passed and enforced unless the workers' movement already had the strength to defend its interests without the aid of such a law.

The development of a statutory incomes policy—with Phase 3 as its latest stage—now brings the law in as a continual regulator of the economic struggle. This has touched off a big debate inside the workers' movement on the 'rule of law' and the working class attitude towards it.

For revolutionaries the 'rule of law' is only a veiled form of the rule of the capitalist class. We urge the working class to break whatever laws stand in the way of the pursuit of their class interests, just as we know that the ruling class will overturn any law which comes into conflict with its fundamental interests. But the views of other political currents are not so consistent.

## LABOUR RIGHT

One of the most important examples of the thinking of the Labour left has come in the recent dispute inside the Labour Party over Clay Cross. The heroic councillors of this town have by their actions exposed all the nonsense about Labour being unable to oppose in practice the decisions of the Tory government. For this reason they have come under a storm of attack. The way the left of the Labour party has dealt with the question reveals all the inadequacies of left Labourism.

The present row over Clay Cross came to a head with a letter, leaked to the press, to Harold Wilson from Sir Reg Goodwin, GLC leader of the Labour party, and 23 other local government

leaders and prospective Labour candidates. This letter bitterly attacked the Labour leadership which it claimed had 'publicly ignored, condoned or even supported the undermining of our democratic parliamentary system of law. In this connection we are particularly concerned about the resolution carried at the last party conference on the recommendation of Mr Edward Short, PC, for the NEC, that "upon the election of a Labour government all penalties, financial or otherwise, shall be removed retrospectively from councillors who have courageously refused to implement the Housing Finance Act". We wish to ask you whether you and the shadow cabinet will make it clear, at the earliest opportunity, that a future Labour government will not carry out this pledge.'

Coming at a time when Wilson was already under attack from the Tories for encouraging 'law breaking' against Phase 3, this letter greatly embarrassed the Labour leadership's attempt to appear more respectable than the Tories. Wilson felt it necessary to stress in an interview he gave to the *Sun* on 28 November that 'I do not support and will not support any action against the law'.

Having by now got the bit between their teeth, the extreme right of the Labour party advanced to the attack. Stephen Haseler wrote a hard-hitting right-wing attack on the Labour lefts in the 14 December *Tribune*. The main points of this article were as follows:

'If it is right (as the left wing argues) that Parliament should be defended from attacks upon it from within our own shores, Aneurin Bevan put it rather well when he said... "The House of Commons must assert its supremacy and not allow itself to be dictated to by anybody, no matter how powerful and strong he may be" ... does he [Michael Foot] believe that Nye Bevan was right when he said "If there is one thing we must assert it is the sovereignty of Parliament over any section of the community" ...

'In previous days Labour leaders had bitter arguments over all sorts of issues. They took, and still take, differing views on nationalisation, pacifism, defence, foreign policy, and so on. They have been united though on the cardinal principle that Labour should achieve its aims through the ballot box. This principle united Clement Attlee and Aneurin Bevan, Hugh Gaitskell and Anthony Greenwood, and today, hopefully, still unites Anthony Crosland, Reg Prentice, Judith Hart, and Michael Foot. It unites them for no small reason. They know that if the ballot-box goes, then only naked power takes its place.'

## LABOUR LEFT

In essence what Haseler does is to echo a

point already made in the Goodwin letter: 'How can an alternative government encourage law breaking when in opposition and expect to enforce its own laws when it becomes the government?' Apart from the fact that the Labour leadership hasn't been encouraging any law breaking, this is a rather telling question for Social Democracy.

Michael Foot, replying in the 28 December issue of *Tribune*, is completely unable to answer Haseler. All he can say is that 'Occasions do arise when bad laws must be resisted by means which democrats would normally condemn. The rights of conscience are not entirely subdued by the existence of universal suffrage'.

This gets us nowhere. What about the 'rights of conscience of the capitalist? Did not the generals in Chile exercise their 'rights of conscience'? On Foot's basis the capitalists shouldn't be expected to obey laws passed by a reforming or socialist government—as they didn't in Chile and wouldn't in Britain. But Foot gives no guide as to what is to be done to protect the working class when the capitalist owners and the capitalist army begin to exercise their 'rights of conscience'.

Equally useless on this question were the views expressed by Tony Benn on a slightly different issue a few months earlier. According to him the key thing is persuasion:

'It isn't the Parliamentary tradition but the concept of persuasion that really differentiates us from societies that, due to their quite different circumstances, believe that it's got to be done by military uprising or revolution.'

Quite what protection the 'concept of persuasion' will give us against material force is left unanswered.

## REAL LAWS AND TORY LAWS

If the arguments of Foot and Benn fail completely, there is another approach which is now becoming favoured on the Labour left. This is a supposed distinction, as Eric Heffer puts it, between 'ordinary laws' or real laws, and 'class laws'. Quite what the basis of this distinction is no one can explain as all statute laws are passed through Parliament in exactly the same way, whether they be the Industrial Relations Act or laws on dog licences. However this argument also appears greatly to appeal to the Communist Party. Bert Ramelson in his

pamphlet 'Heath's War on your Wage Packet' attempts to give this some basis as follows:

'They [the Labour leaders] are playing the Tory game by failing to distinguish between law which is based on genuine consensus and is aimed to guarantee the rights of the overwhelming majority to the orderly [sic] and peaceful pursuit of their way of life, and vicious class law.'

This statement, coupled with some really odd remarks about 'natural justice' which Ramelson also makes, is an example of complete confusion. Does Ramelson believe we should obey law based on 'genuine consensus'? If so, every minority movement would have to start off by obeying the law.

An example which even the CP would have to accept shows this is rubbish. In the First World War those who opposed the war and carried out propaganda against it went completely against laws which, at that time, expressed the 'general consensus'. What conclusion should have been drawn from this? To act legally? On the contrary. Precisely as Lenin proposed, it was absolutely imperative to start *illegal* activity.

What is more, this supposed distinction between 'real laws' and 'class laws' leads in practice to the complete disarming of the working class. For example, for months the TUC and the CP went around declaring that the Industrial Relations Act was not a real law but a 'Tory law' which it was permissible to violate. Of course 'ordinary' laws had to be obeyed. As a result the movement was completely disarmed when the Tories, seizing on this inconsistency, use an absolutely 'genuine' law, that of Conspiracy, against the Shrewsbury defendants.

In the working class movement at present there are two lines of divide. The first line is between those who are prepared to struggle against Phase 3 and those who are not. Unity must be sought between all those forces prepared to support all the struggles against acceptance of incomes policy, but at the same time a continual struggle must be kept up within that united action along the second line of divide—between those who accept the 'rule of law' and 'Parliamentary sovereignty' and those who do not. Only in this way can the working class be fully armed against the ruling class attacks—both those we now face and those to come.

John Marshall



## Not by politics alone

Dear comrade editor,

*Red Weekly* No 33 (4 January 74) carries a review of the book 'Not by Politics Alone: The Other Lenin'.

One should always assume that a reviewer has actually read what he criticises. However in this particular case one hopes he did not; or else one should conclude that there is deliberate distortion or narrow mindedness on his part.

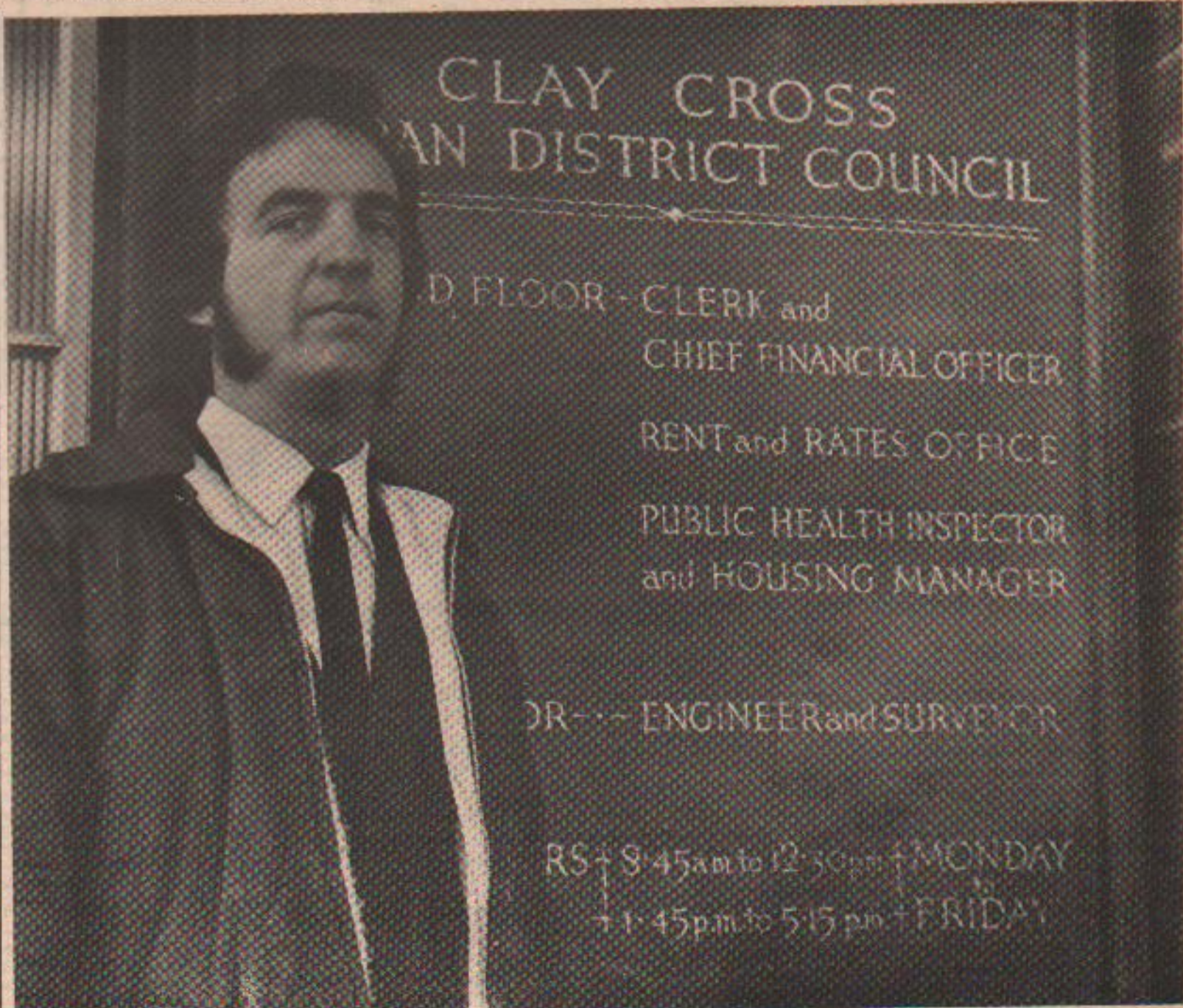
The introduction to the book states very clearly: 'It is not the aim of this volume to introduce the reader to the essentials of Leninism... The other Lenin will emerge... neither the humourless monolithic cult-hero of the official mythology nor the humourless bogey man of official anti-communism.' This is the purpose of the book and therefore any criticism of it should be made within this frame of reference. Instead, from the outset, the reviewer classifies it in the category of those 'dozens of books now pouring from the bourgeois publishing houses in an attempt to "explain" Leninism'. This is his basic mistake, or... is it intellectual dishonesty?

If it is neither, it is even more serious. Indeed, it would mean that the very criteria according to which the book should be judged are regarded as trite or irrelevant. If the reviewer thought that, he should have substantiated it.

We, on the contrary, think that there is everything to learn from Lenin's remarks on literature, art, women's rights and the bureaucracy which constitute the *bulk* of the book. If only this lesson: we learn that, yes, even the Bolshevik leader was a bit of a philistine when it came to questions of literature or art; but at least he was aware that this was a *shortcoming* and understood that other Bolsheviks should devote time to these questions.

We advise all those eager to fight bourgeois culture to read 'Not by Politics Alone: The Other Lenin'. (Most books being expensive, use libraries.)

Juliet Wynter and other comrades from London IMG.



Clay Cross councillor David Skinner — 'the heroic councillors of this town have by their actions exposed all the nonsense about Labour being unable to oppose in practice the decisions of the Tory government.'



# SUNNINGDALE Faulkner muddies the water

Brian Faulkner's dash to Dublin last week did nothing to settle the muddied waters in the Sunningdale pond.

A few days earlier he had carelessly tossed in a half-brick by demanding a clarification of the Southern coalition Government's view of the status of the North. The resulting ripples caused a rush to the telephones in Dublin and London, with a breakdown of the Sunningdale agreement looming large.

Faulkner's talks with Liam Cosgrave did not ease matters. He had unequivocally demanded that the Free State recognise the status of the North as being part of the United Kingdom, but returned to Belfast 'satisfied' by assurances which did no more than re-state the position put by the Dublin Government at Sunningdale.

Although what seemed to be a crisis had fizzled out, the issues raised are of prime importance, and show up the cracks which are already appearing in Britain's new deal. It is worth looking a bit more closely at the background to this significant non-event.

## UNIONISM

When Faulkner unveils his new party the word is that it will be called the 'Northern Ireland Unionist Party', as distinct from the

'official' Ulster Unionist Party. Despite his old pals routine with the SDLP, Faulkner is a Unionist. He has insisted that the only way to guarantee the Union is to accept Sunningdale, and this will form the central plank of his new party.

The tardiness of the Tories in deciding to split the Unionist Party has resulted in a steady trickle of 'liberal' Unionist politicians out of the Party, some into the Alliance Party, others into independent Unionist politics. The solid core of the Faulknerite Assembly grouping is composed of place-seekers and opportunists, able to work with Faulkner only so long as he has jobs to distribute. As soon as the Executive begins to tremble they will seek another perch.

The one political question on which Faulkner can hope to win over support from the 'liberal' camp, and prevent the 'officials' from carving up his grouping, is the Union with Britain. That is why he had to respond sharply to any suggestion that the Southern Government still stood by the Free State Constitution, which asserts the territory of Ireland to include the Six Counties.

## CONSTITUTIONAL INDIGESTION

But the Cosgrave Government faces even more intractable problems. Although he would

quite gladly junk the North for good, Cosgrave cannot desert this constitutional stand. Fianna Fail, the largest party in the Dail, which swallowed Sunningdale with great difficulty, has been hiccupping loudly. Any shift by Cosgrave towards an abandonment of the constitutional position would force them to retch the whole lot up again.

The difficulty lies not so much in the current political interests of Fianna Fail (although these are served best by this bout of indigestion), as in the political history of the state. Politics in the 26 Counties have never emerged from the long shadow of Eamonn de Valera. With supreme Bonapartist skill he was able to channel anti-British sentiment into his 'economic war', and by raising tariff barriers against British imports effect deep changes in the structure of industry and society in the South.

## CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Nevertheless his attempt fell short of creating an independent economy, and he has bequeathed to his heirs intractable problems. They have accepted the need to re-integrate their interests with those of British capitalism, but have not yet tackled the political and ideological consequences.

De Valeraism had two ideological pillars—

the Catholic Church and nationalism. Today, while the conservative influence of the Church has waned, nationalism has become an incipient threat. At best, from the point of view of the bourgeoisie, it obstructs the necessary political re-adjustments to British interests, at worst it blazes out in Republican militancy. The South requires a cultural revolution which will break up nationalist sentiment, and clear the way for a federal relationship with Britain. However the immediate interests of British policy in the North, which require an explicit revision of the constitutional claim to the North, is too sharp a change for any government in Dublin.

## WEAK POINTS

That is why neither Faulkner nor Cosgrave can speak with one voice. They can only assure their supporters that the other one does not really mean what he is saying.

These superstructural difficulties will not of themselves bring down the Sunningdale agreement. Only mass resistance can do that. But the boiling up of new struggles will break through at these weak points. The inability of British imperialism to eradicate these contradictions indicates the depth of the crisis which still grips Ireland.

BOB PURDIE



## Why we stopped supporting 'Militant'

Dear Comrades,

For several years the class struggle in Britain has centred on the attempts by the bourgeoisie to break the combativity of the trade unions. It is this basic fact from which revolutionaries must begin. We have to indicate a series of practical measures through which this offensive can be turned back and a road to workers' power opened up.

The 'Militant' is attempting to build a revolutionary current in isolation from this central problem facing the working class. For 'Militant', revolutionary activity, yesterday, today and tomorrow, consists overwhelmingly in a struggle around the programme of a future Labour Government, a contest with the Labour bureaucrats taking place inside the Labour Party itself.

'Militant' is right to hold that the greatest barrier to the working class movement lies in the influence of the social-democratic leaders. However, this influence is based on social-democratic ideology. The struggle to destroy the influence of the Labour Party leaders is a struggle to break up and destroy this ideology. And this ideology pervades all the struggles of the working class, whether they take place in the trade unions or in the Labour Party.

'Militant' falls victim to one aspect of this ideology straight away when it looks upon the struggle of the trade unions as merely an adjunct to what it calls the 'political' struggle, that is in the Labour Party and the struggle around elections and government. Hence, for example, its demand in the present crisis is for a one-day general strike to force a general election. Yet an

election is the slogan now being raised by sections of the bourgeoisie and the labour bureaucracy. Why? Because knowing the social-democratic ideology of the working class movement they hope an election will extinguish the industrial struggle.

'Militant' falls straight into this trap. Of course, we are not opposed to an election. But we must point out the need to deepen the industrial struggle in the face of an election. The future of the industrial struggle is after all the main issue being fought over in any election at the present time! And we must also point out the need for a general strike to change the overall relation of class forces decisively in favour of the working class, thereby incidentally creating the best conditions for defeating the Tories at the polls. 'Militant' has done none of this.

'Militant' is unable to combat social-democratic ideology even on its own chosen ground—the internal Labour Party struggle. To give an example. When Labour discusses nationalising 25 companies, 'Militant' demands that the figure should be 350. It is of course necessary to do this. But the question on which Benn and the others are wrong is how to nationalise even 25 companies which the bourgeoisie wishes to retain. The bourgeoisie will resist by sabotaging its own constitution from the very first day. The workers must therefore create new organisations able to smash this resistance, organs which themselves refuse to be hampered by the constitution. These bodies could develop into organs of workers' power able to destroy the bourgeois Parliament and constitution.

'Militant's' approach is to ignore these central problems concerning the bourgeois state, and simply to amplify the existing proposals of the Labour leadership. When the leaders then fail to be bold and consistent with their own politics, they will be 'exposed'. But this 'exposure' is nothing more than the exposure of a gulf between the words and deeds of the Labour bureaucracy, never the exposure of the political line of social-democracy in the light of revolutionary alternatives.

It is not a false belief in the sincerity of Harold Wilson or Tony Benn which holds back the working class. It is the belief held by many workers that the capitalist state is an adequate instrument for breaking the power of the capitalists which holds them back. Once again, 'Militant' capitulates to social-democratic ideology and disarms the workers' movement.

It is of course on this very question of the state that the central weakness of social-democratic ideology is to be found. 'Militant' does not see that the historic struggle now being fought out between the unions and

the Tories offers an enormous opportunity for revolutionaries to take up this question in a practical manner. In fact, it is our prime responsibility, for weakness on the question of the state stands in the way of a successful reply to the capitalist offensive.

A general strike involves a struggle against the centralised power of the state. Revolutionaries must fight for new forms of organisation and of struggle adequate to this task—Councils of Action, committees for organising production, workers' self-defence, and so on. To the extent that these steps are taken, a policy of reliance by the working-class on the bourgeois state in the manner of social-democracy will be weakened, and organs objectively capable of carrying through the transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat created.

'Militant' has considered none of this because it does not start out from elaborating a programme of

practical measures which begins with the objective tasks facing the movement in the struggles today. Only in this process can a revolutionary party be built. For the above reasons, the comrades signing this letter have renounced their support for 'Militant'.

Joanna Arkwright (Leicester); Judith Arkwright (Notts); Greg Benton (Leeds); John Brown (Sec. Battersea LPYS); Derek Brough (Sec. Hampstead LPYS/UCATT Convener); Sheila Coxhead (N. Islington Labour Party); Ted Coxhead (NUT, ex 'Militant' Editorial Board); Wendy Forrester (LSE); Drew Forsythe (UCATT); Gillian Frost; Islay Fullerton (LPYS London Regional Committee); Sue Jennings (NUT); Jim Kemp (T&GWL Convener); Dave Packer (TASS); Hugh Richards; Derek Rodrigues (TASS); Sheila Rodrigues (NUT); and an Iranian comrade.

## WHAT'S ON?

**SOCIALIST WOMAN DISCO:** Friday 25 January, Sol's Arms pub, Hampstead Road, NW1 (Warner Street tube). Starts 8 pm with bar extension to midnight.

**PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS and the crisis:** public meeting with speakers from NUT, NALGO and NUPE, 7.30 pm on Monday 28 January, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Organised by IMG.

**BLOODY SUNDAY COMMEMORATION:** Sinn Féin demonstration, Sunday 27 January, 2.30 pm at Speakers Corner (Marble Arch tube). Main speaker: Sean Caughey (editor of Republican News).  
**IRISH POLITICAL HOSTAGES Campaign—**programme of action: Saturday 2 February—motorcade (details later); Sunday 3 February—picket on Wormwood Scrubs, assemble White City underground station, 3 pm; Thursday 7 February—public meeting, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (Holborn) at 7.30 pm. Prominent Irish speakers; Sunday 10 February—march to Brixton Prison, assemble Clapham Common 2.30 pm. For further information phone Bob Purdie, 837 6954.

**DEFEND SHREWSBURY WORKERS:** Demonstration in Canterbury, Saturday 26 January, assemble 10.30 am Dane John Gardens (next to bus station). Sponsored by local trade unionists and students.

**LONDON RED FORUM:** The Labour Party and Social Democracy, Tuesday 29 January at 8 pm in the General Picton pub, Caledonian Road (5 mins walk Kings Cross tube).

**SOLIDARITY WITH MINERS and Railwaymen:** Haringey Trades Council public meeting, Thursday 31 January, 7.45 pm at Tottenham Trades Hall, 7 Bruce Grove, N17 (nearest tube Seven Sisters). Speakers: Joe Burk, president Kent Area and secretary Betteshanger pit branch NUM; George Seville, executive member ASLEF; and speaker from UCATT.

**ANGOLA:** Big Business v. The People, Public meeting Monday 4 February, 7.30 pm in Unity House (NUR), Euston Road, NW1. Speakers: Basil Davidson, Lionel Cliffe, and others. Sponsored by Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea. Information: 734 9541.

**'THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM'** Seminar organised by the Indian Workers Association and LSE Indian Society at which Le Chan from the DRVN Embassy will speak. Monday 28 January at 7 pm in Room S175 at London School of Economics. All welcome.

**TRADE UNIONISTS AGAINST PHASE 3:** public meeting organised by Battersea LPYS. Speakers: Ernie Roberts (Asst Gen Sec, AUEW), Jack Collins (Kent area member, NUM executive), Paul Smith (Industrial Editor, Red Weekly). Friday 25 January, 7.30 pm in 'Cornet of Horse', Lavender Gardens, SW11.





Photo: Chris Davies (Report)

## Action to free Chilean revolutionary

Supporters of the Chile Solidarity Campaign took part in a picket of the Chilean Embassy last Friday calling for the release of Bautista Von Schouwen and all political prisoners. Von Schouwen, a leading figure in the MIR, was arrested on 14 December and has since been tortured. But the junta still refuses to admit even that he is being held. Friday's picket was part of an international campaign which

has been launched to save his life. Meanwhile, action against British Government collaboration with the junta received a further boost last week when dockyard workers in Portsmouth voted to black a Chilean warship which had arrived for minor repairs. The AUEW district committee took the initiative in this, and it was then taken up by the dockyard Whitley Committee. The workers' action was

backed up by a demonstration of Portsmouth Polytechnic students to the dockyard on Monday. A large number of factories in the Portsmouth area are involved in work for the navy, and moves are now being made to continue the campaign by setting up a Chile Solidarity Committee in the town.

### Trowbridge conference discusses crisis

Eighty trade unionists attended a conference on the present crisis called by Trowbridge Trades Council, near Bristol. Two speakers from the South Wales executive of the NUM hit out at the TUC's attempts to get a settlement to the miners' struggle at the expense of other sections of the working class, and Paul Davidson of Birmingham UCATT Joint Shop Stewards Committee explained the initiative of his committee in calling for an indefinite strike in the building industry to obtain the release of the Shrewsbury Three.

A resolution from the trades council was passed calling for full support for those fighting the three-day week and Phase 3, and for the release of the Shrewsbury 3. An addendum, moved by IMG and supported by IS, called for the setting up of an action committee to organise such support. This was passed, but referred back to the trades council on the casting vote of the chairman, a CP member, preventing any decision on concrete action from being taken.

### Newport workers vote support for miners

At a meeting of Newport Trades Council last Friday two face workers from Pontypridd NUM spoke on the miners' pay claim. Rafiq Assam from the T&GWU in the local Crompton Parkinson factory moved a resolution which was passed unanimously, pledging support for the fight of the miners, and committing the trades council to organising a public meeting in Newport, to publicise the miners' case. The Pontypridd miners promised to supply a speaker.

A member of the Society of Civil Servants moved the vote of thanks, and after the meeting members of the society, and of the Civil and Professional Servants' Association, undertook to distribute several hundred leaflets, explaining the miners' struggle, to workers in the huge Business Statistics Office in Newport.

### Prison picket for one of Shrewsbury Three

An 80-strong picket outside Nottingham prison last Saturday demanded the release of John Jones, one of the three jailed building workers who is held there. Future action on this issue in the area will include a conference in early February to discuss industrial action to free the Shrewsbury 3.

The picket followed a demonstration organised by Nottingham and District Trades Council, which was called on the basis of the slogans: 'Free the Shrewsbury 3', 'Support the miners and all workers in struggle against Phase 3', 'Sack the Tories not the workers'.

### Haringey Trades Council calls racism conference

Haringey Trades Council is to hold a delegate conference on racism on 3 February. There has been serious concern in the local labour movement at the influence of racist organisations in this area, which has a large black population. During last year's local elections the National Independence Party registered a very high poll, in once case being only narrowly defeated by the Labour Party.

### Rhetoric dominates Manchester conference

The Chairman of the General Council of UCATT, Bert Smith, chaired a delegate conference in Manchester last weekend, organised by the Manchester Co-ordinating Committee of Trade Unionists. The conference called for support for the Shrewsbury defendants, and for the release of the 3 jailed building workers.

The Co-ordinating Committee, in which the CP has the leading influence, presented a lengthy resolution to the conference which talked in vague terms about 'industrial action'.

An amendment moved by an IMG member called on the conference to demand that the Executive Committee of UCATT and the T&GWU launch a national building strike, to send a message of support to the Birmingham building workers who had called for a national strike, and to pledge extended strike action in the Manchester area. But when the guest speaker at the conference, Pete Carter, a leader of the Birmingham building workers and a member of the CP, failed to speak in favour of the Birmingham resolution the amendment was voted down.

## Combine committee can help Maclarens

The strike committee at Maclarens Controls is to meet shop stewards from other companies in the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation group this Saturday to discuss the setting up of a combine committee. The meeting is to be held in Manchester.

Meanwhile the management has been holding talks with a special negotiating team from the Scottish TUC, in an attempt to come up with a settlement which will end the five-week occupation of the Maclarens factory in Glasgow.

The dispute began 11 weeks ago with a strike over a wage demand. The factory was occupied when the management began to move plant and materials to Germany in an attempt to re-start production.

ITT wants to bring the struggle to a rapid conclusion. It failed to drive the workers out over the New Year holiday period, and it will undoubtedly resort to new tactics, but its basic aim remains the same—the crippling of trade union organisation in the factory.

The key to victory for the workers is effective blacking action, combined with solidarity from local trade unionists. It is possible for ITT to conceal the transport and handling of black goods but an effective combine committee, the involvement of other unions, and the systematic collection of information about the Maclarens contracts can defeat attempts at concealment.

The occupation of the factory provides a base for such work, since the files are in the hands of the occupiers, and there are workers available to do the job.

The STUC may be able to wring some concessions out of ITT, but so far the management has refused to listen to the workers themselves. Bigger and better negotiations on the union side will not be able to divert ITT from its main aim of hamstringing militancy on the shopfloor, especially when the negotiations are carried on behind locked doors.

The way forward for the Maclarens workers is through mass solidarity action by the local trade union movement, mass support for the blacking of the transport, assembly and machining of components produced under the Maclarens contract, and the carrying on of any negotiations under the control of the Maclarens workers.

## Asian workers' picket defies police harassment

Lorries were turned back by a mass picket at the gates of A L Dunn (Nuneaton) Ltd, an engineering plant in Coventry, on Saturday, despite a police decree that only four pickets would be allowed at each gate, and the arrest of several pickets.

The strike and subsequent lock-out of 83 Asian foundry workers at Dunn began six weeks ago, when the management sacked a shop steward because of an overtime ban in pursuit of a wage claim. The firm has a six-year history of hostility to trade union organisation, and with half of the labour force composed of Indians and Pakistanis, they have, on many occasions, used racism to divide the workers. The management is presently running the Foundry with scab labour, and other sections of the factory are continuing to work.

The strikers have been subjected to intense intimidation. They are being refused social security benefit, and the police have threatened to arrest pickets on suspicion of being illegal immigrants. Pickets have been prevented from

speaking to lorry drivers, and the police have told drivers to go in to the factory, and that the strike is unofficial. Two leading members of the strike committee have been arrested and charged with assault, both several days after the alleged incident.

The strikers have received support from the District Committee of the Transport and General Workers' Union, who will probably declare the strike official, and the Indian Workers' Association has also given assistance. The mass picket last Saturday came after a circular from the strike committee to local shop stewards.

The strike committee has issued a leaflet appealing for components produced by scab labour to be blacked. Dunn, which also trades under the names 'Coventry Apex Engineering', 'Burbages Engineering', and 'Coventry Art Castings', supplies aluminium components to a number of well-known vehicle manufacturers.

The address of the Strike Action Committee is c/o 154 Churchill Avenue, Coventry.

## Oxford call for factory occupations

A resolution calling for the occupation of plants threatened with redundancy or closure was carried at a conference on the current crisis organised by Oxford Trades Council last Monday. It was moved by the S/55 branch of the T&GWU, which represents workers in the British Leyland assembly plant at Cowley.

Throughout the capitalist world, car workers are being put on short time or face redundancy, and speakers on the resolution stressed that the British car industry would be severely hit by last month's deflationary budget, especially the hire purchase restrictions, and the rise in petrol prices. The policy of plant occupations was agreed by a recent meeting of the British Leyland shop stewards combine committee.

The other main resolution discussed at the conference, which was attended by a hundred trade unionists from a variety of work places in the area, called for the recall of the TUC solidarity action with the miners and others fighting Phase 3, and immediate industrial action to pursue the engineers' pay claim. But this resolution, which was moved by the Cowley 203 AUEW branch, did not specify the kind of industrial action necessary, and failed to propose any concrete steps to achieve these objectives.

The most positive response of the conference was to Dave Jackson of the Shrewsbury Defence

Committee, who moved a resolution calling for district-wide industrial action to free the three jailed building workers, pledged support for any national initiative along these lines, and also called for the immediate organisation of a district-wide campaign of leafleting and collections. This was passed unanimously.

Jackson answered those who say that the Shrewsbury issue is a diversion from the central struggle against the Tories, and those who treat it as an isolated issue, when he stressed that if the workers' movement allows this fight to be lost, it will be a setback for all the coming struggles against Tory Government attacks.

### Trade Unions Against Racism plan February conference in Nottingham

The East Midlands is to be the focus for the first conference organised by the National Committee for Trade Unions Against Racism, formed last June at the initiative of the Mansfield Hosiery strike committee. Loughborough, Leicester, Nottingham, and Mansfield have recently seen bitter struggles by Asian workers against poverty wages, 84-hour weeks, and the racism of managements, unions, and white workers.

Speakers at the conference, to be held in Nottingham on 23 February, include Alan Sapper (ACTT) and Mike Cooley (TASS). Delegates are invited from union branches and other labour movement bodies together with observers. Details from NCTUAR, 8:11 Victoria Centre, Nottingham.

## 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 .....



# MINERS:

# Red Weekly

## All Out Against the Tories

## ESSEX STUDENTS BACK ON THE OFFENSIVE

Caught between the pincers of the TUC's refusal to lead a fight against the Tories and the Government's new-found store of energy stocks, miners across the country are becoming aware that they must unleash their full strength against the Tory Government and Phase 3.

Over the past few weeks there has been a rapid rise in local, militant struggles with the Coal Board arising out of the enforcement of the overtime ban. Moves by the traditionally 'moderate' area of Leicestershire to put a stop to the public scabbing operation of local bureaucrat Frank Smith, are now being matched in another 'moderate' area—Staffordshire—who have a similar rotten apple in their barrel.

There is growing pressure from all the more militant areas within the NUM—Yorkshire, South Wales, Scotland and Kent—for a major stepping up of industrial action. Miners in several pits in Scotland have passed resolutions and sent telegrams to the executive along these lines, and South Wales miners have organised a lobby of the executive to back up their call.

A major breakthrough is the decision of the Yorkshire area to call for an immediate strike ballot and a stepping up of the overtime ban while it is being conducted. Emyln Williams,

President of the South Wales miners, has been quoted as saying, 'If the National Executive recommends a ballot on the strike, the South Wales executive will support them.'

This is clearly the only way forward. The Government now feels confident that it can weather the overtime ban without drastic cut-backs in power. More importantly, the TUC's inglorious retreat from the fight against Phase 3, has left millions of workers—victims of Tory Government policy—high and dry. Only decisive action like an all-out national miners' strike can break the present deadlock and set the workers' movement on the road to victory. There can be no doubt that a miners' strike, accompanied as in 1972 with a wave of flying picket squads, would meet with tremendous support from other workers. Despite all their preparations, the Tory Government would be brought to its knees in very short shift.

At the time of writing it is not clear whether Thursday's executive meeting will call for a strike ballot or not. In any event, time has now become very precious. If there is not some sign of a serious struggle being launched against the Tories in the very near future demoralisation will begin to spread throughout the working class, and the Government get its victory on a platter.



Photo: Chris Davies (Report)

Mass rally in solidarity with the miners during the 1972 strike. Such solidarity action could be guaranteed from the very first day of a strike called at the present. This, coupled with an alliance of the miners and other sections of the labour movement in struggle against Phase 3, could ensure a decisive victory for the whole working-class.

## Hunger strikers ~ SDLP blocks return to Ireland

Gerry Fitt and the SDLP are a major obstacle to the campaign to get the Irish political prisoners on hunger strike repatriated to the North of Ireland. Supporters of the Irish Political Hostages Campaign and the Connolly Association were told this when they lobbied MPs at the House of Commons last Tuesday (22 January).

The lobby was organised by the Connolly Association and supported by the IPHC. It took up the question of the continuation of internment, and the recent British Army raid on the offices of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, as well as the case of the hunger strikers.

Several Labour MPs, including Jock Stallard and Norman Atkinson, told lobbyists that they supported the return of the prisoners, as did Lords Longford and Castlereagh, but in taking up the question with the Home Office they faced the problem that the Irish group in the House, which is convened by Gerry Fitt,

had not acted on the question. Although they promised to take it up again, the position of the SDLP is a major stumbling block.

### CHANGE OF LINE

Last Sunday, Gerry Fitt made a statement about the Price sisters on Southern Irish radio. He said that, 'the terrible plight of these young girls could be brought to an end if the IRA stopped its campaign of violence.' This is a clear shift in the SDLP's position since the setting up of the Executive, and was elaborated by Paddy Duffy on Saturday when he said that there could no longer be any political content in violence since the Sunningdale agreement, and consequently those now convicted of violence could not expect inclusion in any amnesty.

The SDLP took up the case of Michael Farrell and Tony Canavan last summer, and have usually tried to grab the glory for any successes in struggles over political prisoners. But since taking their well-paid offices their line has changed—could it be

that this was a condition laid down by Faulkner for the operation of power-sharing?

Claire Price visited her sisters Dolours and Marion last Saturday. She told the *Irish Times* that Dolours 'seemed to be dragging her feet...and like Marion her skin was like wax. The girls' eyes were black looking and there were sores around their mouths because of the force-feeding.' They are still suffering severe chest and stomach pains.

The struggle to end the torture of

## to Ireland

kers Corner were Dr. Dominic Costa, who described the terrible effects of sustained force-feeding, and Siobhan McKenna, the well-known Irish actress.

### BROAD SUPPORT IN IRELAND

The day before, the IPHC had staged a dramatic demonstration outside Wormwood Scrubs, challenging the Governor to show his faith in Home Office pronouncements about the beneficial effects of force-feeding by submitting to it himself.

Naturally there was no response, so three volunteers were force-fed under medical supervision. All three vomited before the force-feeding tube had even got to the back of their throats, and one of them, an elderly man, had to be taken to hospital where he was kept overnight suffering from shock.

In Ireland there have been demonstrations in Dublin and Belfast—the march in Belfast ended with the stoning of British troops. Rarely has support for any issue been broader: trade unionists, the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Gaelic League, and even the Dublin City Council have called for repatriation. The Bloody Sunday commemoration demonstrations this weekend will give a further boost to the campaign.

Bob Purdie



Photo: Miffie Newton (Red Weekly)

Demonstration of the brutality of force-feeding outside Wormwood Scrubs.

force-feeding, and get the prisoners returned to the North of Ireland, is gaining momentum. Last Sunday (20 January) the IPHC called a demonstration in which 400 took part. It marched from Speakers Corner to Kilburn Square, where Liam Kelly, the father of Gerald Kelly, and Claire Price thanked the demonstrators. Amongst the speakers at Spea-

Essex University students, whose occupation of university administration buildings last term was an important factor in the resurgence of student struggles against the Tory Government, have once again gone on the offensive.

This time they have adopted the tactic of a rent strike, and over 150 students have already pledged their support for this action. Support is growing daily and plans are currently being made for a stepping up of their campaign, which will include further occupations, boycott of the university catering facilities, and mass obstruction of senate meetings.

The students have reaffirmed last term's demands of a 15% reduction in university catering prices with no staff redundancies, a guarantee of expanded catering and accommodation facilities to meet the increase in student numbers, and a 55% reduction in the rents in certain university-owned accommodation.

To these they have added further demands which include a ceiling on all university rents (to be fixed at the level of £250 less the cost of 3 meals a day at university prices for the academic year), the appointment of a full-time Housing Officer to assist students in private accommodation, to fight claims through the rent tribunals, and university subsidisation of private accommodation so that it is kept below the level of the ceiling on university rents.

Meanwhile, 28 students and staff are being summoned before the university's disciplinary committee at the end of January on charges arising out of last term's occupation. The current campaign is making the demand for no victimisation of staff and students a central one, and already over 100 students have signed a statement affirming their collective responsibility for last term's action.

The importance of the Essex actions are that they combine a struggle over key local issues with action on the demands of the national NUS grants campaign. Essex students are asking for solidarity actions and messages of support from student and trade union bodies across the country. At the same time they recognise that their victory depends upon other colleges taking up the fight along similar lines. Accordingly, they hope that the entire student movement will begin to discuss the lessons of Essex, and expect to produce material to stimulate such discussions in the near future.

Ray Alexander

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As the Tory Government has piled on the pressure, the trade union bureaucrats, left and right, have cut and run. The miners and the Shrewsbury defendants are left to face the capitalist onslaught alone.

The need for a revolutionary paper was never greater. There is a serious job to be done not only in getting revolutionary ideas across, but also to blaze out the message that the workers can win, if they push past their 'leaders'.

That was why we launched our £2,000 Crisis Fund Drive last December, we need the money to make *Red Weekly* a paper which gets close to doing the job. But despite a good start, donations tailed off after the middle of the month, and we have to report, in our last issue for January, that we have only got £1,110.20. We need the money, our readers need the paper, the class struggle needs a better paper. We are extending the appeal for two weeks — don't let us down, send a donation NOW to: Red Weekly, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1.