

RED WEEKLY

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ON TO FINAL VICTORY!

IMG PUBLIC MEETING

SPEAKERS:
PIERRE ROUSSET
ROBIN BLACKBURN

CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQ.,
(Holborn tube) 7.00pm THURS.
17 APRIL



RECOGNISE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT!



THE WAR IN VIETNAM is nearing a climax. The puppet regime of Thieu is disintegrating. His armies are in disarray. Their morale has broken. Their will to fight is disappearing. In Saigon, it is only the rich, the exploiters and the corrupt hangers-on who want to carry on the war.

But the American imperialists will not let go. Even at this late hour they are trying to find a way out of the situation. In an exercise of breath-taking cynicism they have cruelly batted on to the issue of the refugees.

The Vietnamese orphans have become valuable pawns in the propaganda war against the liberation forces. For years, these children—victims of the American war machine—were stuck in overcrowded orphanages, ignored and unwanted by a succession of American administrations. Washington allocated less than one half of one per cent of its 'reconstruction' of Vietnam budget for the care of orphans and the maimed. That was the previous extent of its concern and worry over these children.

Now the US has to paint a picture of people fleeing the 'red hordes'. As John Pilger pointed out in Saturday's *Daily Mirror*: 'The majority of the refugees are soldiers and their families, and officials and civil servants answerable to the Saigon regime, and the rest are people confused and in panic and doing what they have been conditioned and forced to do for years.'

by
Bob Pennington

Many refugees have been driven onto the roads by the retreating South Vietnamese Army. Refugees at Yung Tau told the Reuter correspondent: 'They were as bewildered about why they had to quit their homes as about where they would be going next'.

These people were used as human shields to cover the retreat of the Thieu armies so that the liberation forces could not shell and bomb the soldiers. Often after they had served their purpose, they were robbed, raped and sometimes shot.

The 'mercy' airlift was simply a cover to transport arms to Saigon. The 200 children who died on the C-5A Galaxy freighter plane were murdered in the interests of a sick publicity stunt. The plane carried no

safety belts or any other elementary precautions for passengers. The children were simply herded like cattle into the hold of the plane.

These Galaxy planes on their journey to Saigon have been packed with military hardware for the South Vietnamese to prolong the war and create thousands more orphans.

The Labour Ministers try to cover up their own shameful record on Vietnam by appearing in the role of 'humanitarians'. Mr Ennals, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, met the *Daily Mail* air-lift at Heathrow to play the role of nursemaid.

But if Mr Ennals and his colleagues are so concerned about the children of Vietnam, then they should be demanding that the Americans stop supplying arms to Thieu, and that Labour recognise the Provisional Revolutionary Government and send financial aid to help it rebuild its devastated country.

As long as the Thieu Government is propped up by the financial and military aid of the imperialists, then the people of Vietnam will continue to suffer and die. The complete victory of the national liberation forces is the only way to peace in Vietnam. The task of the international working class movement is to do everything in its power to hasten that day.

INSIDE: 4-page dossier on Indo-china — Pages 5-8.

Sliding scale of prices!

When we increased the *Red Weekly* from eight to 12 pages we explained that it was the first step towards a 16-page paper. We did not only promise better coverage, but we also assured our readers that we were going to improve the design, lay-out and technical appearance of the paper. We have kept that promise and we intend to improve on it.

But such an improvement is not possible without boosting our finances. In the last few months costs have rocketed and prices will rise even faster in the next months. This is beginning to bite deeply into the finances of the paper.

This means that the price of the paper has to go up to 10p from next week. We make no apology for that. We know that you our readers recognise not only the role that *Red Weekly* plays now but understand that it will have to play a bigger role in the future and will therefore back the paper to the hilt.

On the Fighting Fund front we had some good news last week. An East London teacher donated us £100 and the *Red Weekly* social netted £77. That made sure that we just scraped home. Now it's forward this month to a record Fund Drive. Rush all donations to: 182 Pentonville Road, London, N.1.

PRENTICE RAVES ON

This year's NUT Conference got off to a really sour note when Reg Prentice took advantage of the platform in order to step up still further his attacks on the workers' movement. He appealed directly to teachers to take up the cudgels on behalf of the social contract inside the TUC.

Given the present crisis, 'the only answer', he said, 'is a permanent social contract, a long-term voluntary incomes policy in which the whole community exercises restraint...The more that is taken out of the national product for personal incomes, the less

is available for schools and hospitals.'

The Union Executive clearly seemed to accept this garbage from the man who, far from building more schools and improving the education system, has been implementing the Tory education cuts and a few more of his own.

The response of the Communist Party members — whose different sections can't seem to agree whether or not they support a social contract — was to claim that more hospitals and schools is what the contract is all about. All they could come up with was empty rhetoric calling on

the Labour and Communist Party dominated Executive 'to issue a firm declaration to resist any further cuts in teacher training and the supply of teachers...'

It was CP member Max Morris who also led the attack against an amendment from Sheffield NUT which spelled out a basis for tackling the cuts. The amendment called on 'local associations to initiate a campaign amongst teachers, parents and trade unionists against all cut-backs in the education service'.

Continued on back page



THE FIGHT TO GET THE TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND GOES ON. Part of the 1500-strong TOM demonstration in London last Sunday. The next step is the Trade Union conference on Ireland which will take place on the 24th of May.

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

THE FIGHT AGAINST

Jack Jones against the dockers

By his successful efforts to smash the London containerisation redundancy strike, Jack Jones has taken another step towards putting thousands of dockers in the dole queue.

Jack Jones has known for years the scale of the attack being mounted by the employers in the docks. In 1967 the McKinsey survey estimated that with new technology the work force in the docks should be reduced by 90 per cent in 10 years.

That was probably an exaggeration, but the actual operations were no less hair-raising. It was calculated that the entire UK to Australia container trade, eventually amounting to 2,000,000 tons a year could be handled by one berth at Tilbury employing only 15 men. By 1969 number 43 berth at Tilbury was turning around 14 ships in a week with only 26 dockers—each docker doing the work previously done by 100!

Faced with this massive technological development, the TGWU leadership should have embarked on a campaign to win massive benefits for dock workers. If a half or quarter of the men could do all the previous work, then the whole dock force could have been employed working only a half or a quarter of the previous work week.

CO-OPERATED

Instead, at every stage, Jones has fully co-operated with the employers in cutting the labour force. He has gone to extreme lengths to break dockers' resistance to sackings.



Jones' scabbing has its effect: dockers' mass meeting is not convinced by Billy Powell (speaking) and witch-hunted T&G Executive member Brian Nicholson (behind him)

During the 1967 strike against the Devlin proposals, he went to Liverpool at the personal behest of Wilson to try to get the dockers back to work. Although he lost the vote then, nearly getting thrown in the Mersey for his pains, he had started the process of undermining the strike leaders. The Government was then able to step in, isolate London and Liverpool, and slam through the Devlin proposals.

It is true that the Communist Party-led Port Liaison Committee failed to fight the Government in the most effective way—for example it completely failed to work out demands such as work-sharing with no loss of pay that could unify all dockers. Nevertheless, it was clearly Jones who bore the main responsibility for this defeat.

Even worse were Jones' activities in the 1972 strike. If ever there was

a strike that could have been easily won it was this one. Right at the beginning of the struggle the threat of a general strike had forced the release of the five imprisoned dockers from Pentonville jail. The Government and the employers were on their knees. The door hardly had to be kicked in—it could have been blown over.

Instead, by backstage manoeuvring Jones managed to get the dockers defeated. He gained a promise of a mere 200 jobs when it was already known that the National Ports Council report forecast 11,000 dock redundancies.

But 1972 also showed how Jones' policies of refusing to fight inevitably led to his betrayal of 'shop floor democracy' on which he based his rise to power in the TGWU. When he announced the 'vote' for the return to work in 1972 Jones made much

of the fact that it had been passed by the dockers' delegates. But what he didn't say was that the delegates who had voted against a return to work represented 30,000 while those who were for it represented only 15,000.

Equally significant is the fact that in his attacks on the dockers Jones continually finds himself lined up, either by choice or by the inevitable logic of his actions, with the most extreme reactionary forces. In 1967 he took no action when employers for a whole period diverted work from the militant ports so as to demoralise the dockers and undermine their leaders. In 1972 he produced the Jones-Aldington report with an ex-deputy chairman of the Tory Party—the man who, as vice-chairman of GEC, had presided over the sacking of 50,000 workers. Within a year of that particular report 9,000 dockers jobs had gone.

GONE FURTHER

But in this strike Jones has gone far further. The strike was completely solid. Every dock and every wharf in London was out. But Jones waded in. In the middle of a press witch hunt he leaked stories about his meeting in Poplar being invaded by a 'gangster element' when all the workers at the meeting, checked by union card, were clearly dockers.

He stayed silent when the employers paid lorry drivers to attend the

dockers' meetings to vote for a return to work, or when supervisors and foremen—not even on strike—turned up to vote against the docks leaders. He didn't raise one peep of objection when it became public knowledge that the Special Branch had formed a 'Docks Squad' to intervene in the dispute. Finally he got his way and the strike was broken.

The benefits the employers hope to get out of this defeat are high. Already 35,000 docks jobs have been lost in seven years. The biggest single port employer, Scrutton's-Maltby, is going into liquidation which threatens 2,000 more jobs.

Meanwhile all Jones can talk about is some vague future legislation—which won't be introduced until next year at the earliest. It's going to be a hard continuing fight against redundancy in the docks—a fight made ten times more difficult by the policies of the TGWU bureaucracy. But the lessons of Jones role are not confined to the docks. The Communist Party and others still believe that the 'lefts' can be relied on in the struggle to protect jobs. In the car industry and elsewhere they substitute pressure on the 'lefts' for independent working class organisation and class wide demands. Those 35,000 jobs in the docks should be a terrible reminder for anyone who wants to tread the path of relying on the Joneses of this world.

CROSFIELD'S STRUGGLES ON

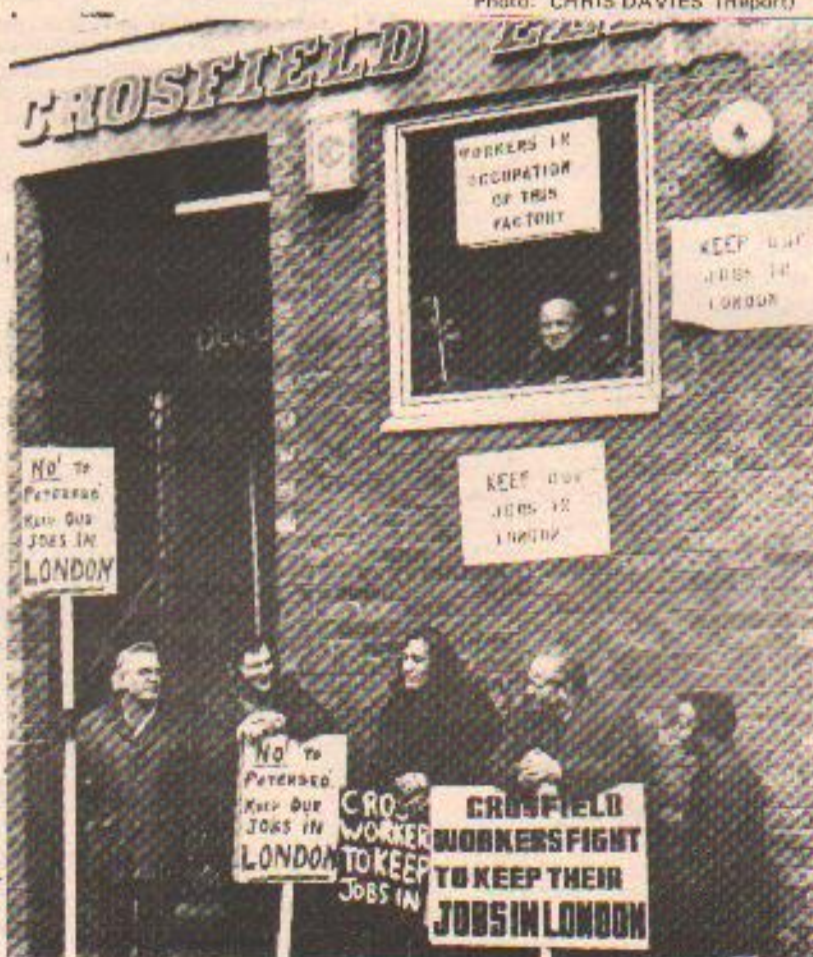
Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

AS THE OCCUPATION at Crosfield Electronics in North London enters its third week, the workforce are digging in for a long, hard struggle. Information received from the Department of Industry makes it clear that it is not just 350 jobs which are at stake but 800 to 900, as De La Rue, the owners since August 1974, intend to transfer all production to Westwood Instruments, Peterborough.

With unemployment steadily rising the struggle at Crosfields could become a test case for the unions involved. Already the AUEW has circulated all its branches in the UK and all convenors in the London area, and the National Union of Sheet Metal Workers and the Electrical Trades Union have promised to do the same.

But the workers have also suffered two setbacks. The first was the decision by the majority of women sacked to accept redundancy pay—a lump sum paid across the board with a 50 per cent bonus. This carries serious warnings for future struggles.

Many of the women accepted the money because of family commitments. Unless the unions begin now to campaign for the provision of state-financed, community-controlled nursery facilities and other ways of dealing with the domestic jobs usually defined as 'women's work' (cooking, washing, etc), then the struggle of the whole working class—women and men—against redundancies will be seriously weakened. The present situation at Crosfield's—where the women who have not accepted redundancy pay simply come in on a daytime basis to cook for the men—will only reproduce these problems inside the factory instead of overcoming them.



Of equal concern is the decision of the office staff, organised in TASS, to break the picket line from Monday 7 April. Although it is hoped that TASS officials may persuade them to change their minds, their condemnation of all the actions taken by the AUEW so far is a blow—particularly as TASS is the white collar section of the AUEW. Militants in TASS should make it a priority to get through motions condemning this decision and

giving full support to the occupation.

But the occupying workers, together with those still employed by the company, are determined to make a fight of it.

Late last week *Red Weekly* interviewed Bill Hayward, Press Officer to the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, who indicated that they might have been willing to accept voluntary redundancies and short time working.

Interview with Bill Hayward Press Officer to the Joint Shop Stewards Committee

How many workers are taking part in the occupation?

There are 30 full-time in the fitting shop, which has been closed, and this number is increased at night by volunteer forces from other shops. We have an official picket covering the occupied buildings on a 24-hour basis.

Some shops are still in production—are you withholding goods from the management?

There is one machine that they want to get to an exhibition either in Europe or the UK. It's a new machine and we're obviously holding onto the parts as a bargaining tool to demand the re-instatement of the people left who are still under notice. We have seen the company's order books and know that they have orders for another 40 machines of the old type—that is equivalent to a year's work.

We are demanding that this work goes to the 30 men sitting in in the fitting area. What was behind the De La Rue takeover of Crosfields?

In August of last year Crosfield himself sold out lock, stock and barrel for £6.1 million. He gave written assurances to all workers that this would be a safeguard for jobs as a bigger company would provide greater stability. But within eight months they have closed down one section completely and made 350 people redundant. The Junior Minister at the

Department of Industry told us that it was the company's intention to shift all production to Peterborough—where they have offered us precisely ten jobs!

Members of TASS are now threatening to cross your picket lines. What will you do about this?

We think this is a disaster for the members and organisation of TASS. As from Monday 7 April, we will not be forcibly stopping them going into the building, but we will collect their names and they will be formally branched at their union meetings. The outcome of that is obvious—they broke a picket line and they are out.

How do you see your struggle developing?

We see our situation as part of the process of the de-industrialisation of London as a whole. We are among the first to put up a fight against this and occupy a factory to demand the right to work. The de-industrialisation of London is proceeding very rapidly, so if you are made redundant there is no chance of hopping across the road to get a job paying the same sort of money.

We know it's going to be a long and hard struggle. We have circulated many trade unionists and we hope that they will give us every support because this fight is in their interests as well.

But it is only on the basis of rejecting the right of the bosses to sack

anyone and putting the whole cost of the economic crisis on the backs of the capitalist class that jobs can be defended.

Rather than accept sackings and short-time, we should be demanding a shorter working week for all workers and lower retirement ages with no loss of pay. Broad support could be won for these class-wide demands.

'AFFECTS ALL WORKERS'

The Crosfield Joint Shop Stewards Committee has issued an appeal

which should win the support of every worker.

'The picket outside our building will continue in support of those inside; we ask all to come and join the picket line. This important fight, which affects all workers, needs the fullest financial support from all our fellow workers. With the wholehearted involvement of our class, we can and will win this fight.'

Donations and resolutions of support should be sent to Crosfield Joint Shop Stewards Fund, c/o Bill Hayward, 34 Dresden Road, London N.19 3BD.

REDUNDANCIES

CAR WORKERS FACE BIG CHOICE

THE RYDER REPORT is lying on the ministerial desks. Now the car workers are facing further attacks on their livelihood by the Government and the employers.

Although the trade union officials co-operated in its preparation, the Report's findings are secret, and only an 'edited' version will be seen by the workers whose jobs are in danger.

There is much speculation about Ryder's findings. But the grim facts speak for themselves. In British Leyland's Midland factories alone, 25,000 workers are on short-time. At the BLMC Longbridge plant the management are demanding 3,000 redundancies.

IN STORE

The BLMC stewards know what the bosses have in store for them. Derek Robinson, convenor at Longbridge says: 'In a situation where the Corporation try to enforce rationalisation and redundancy it will be resisted with all the organisation at our command. We are preparing for any eventuality. If, after Ryder, steps are necessary to rationalise the Corporation, it has got to be done in such a way that it does not lead to large scale redundancies.'

On this, the BLMC stewards are dead right. The Combing Committee's call for a conference of representatives from all the major car companies—including Vauxhalls, Fords and Chryslers as well as the accessory firms—on 23 April at Digbeth Civic Hall in Birmingham should be the beginning of an industry-wide fight back by the car workers.

The employers are now launching their second wave of attacks with further lay-offs and appeals for voluntary redundancies. This is the prelude to a third stage of compulsory sackings. The failure of the union leaders to organise a united response is being paid for by the workers.

Short-time working was the first step towards redundancies. The action of the stewards at Vauxhall's, Ellesmere Port in occupying part of the plant against the re-introduction of lay-offs, coupled with the demand that the workers must get a full week's pay regardless of the hours worked, shows the way forward. This demand must be the keynote of the Birmingham conference.

Unfortunately, there is every indication that the conference will not be organised around such a line.

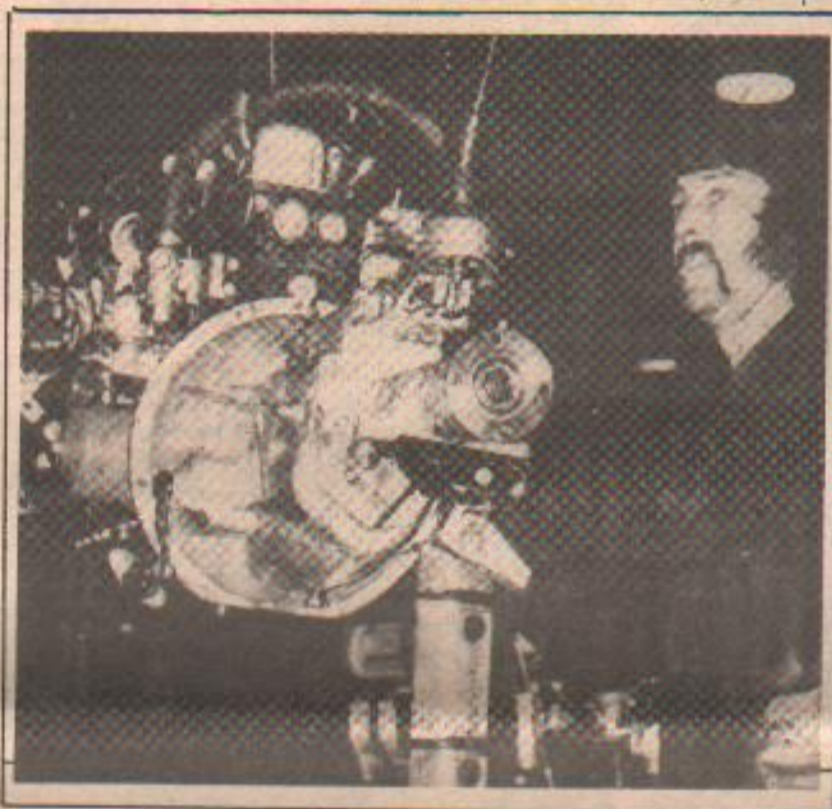
RESTRICTED

Jack Dickens, secretary of the Longbridge Works' Committee, has really only fought for the suggestion that if volunteers for redundancy are not forthcoming, then the shop stewards should fight for an extension of the time allowed for voluntary redundancies. At Rovers, SU Carburettors, and BLMC Tractors and Transmission, all that has been proposed is again that the redundancies be 'voluntary'. Such a policy only encourages the employers to 'up the stakes'—for example, at Longbridge the original 1,200 sackings have now been increased by 1,900.

The lobby of Parliament suggested at the Birmingham Trades Council is a small step forward, but in and of itself is completely inadequate. Without mass strike action and occupations to back up such a lobby it means relying on the 'left' MPs and the trade union bureaucrats to fight sackings.

The bankruptcy of such policies have been shown only too clearly in recent weeks with the lobby of Parliament called by the TUC failing to get Warren and Tomlinson out of

Not only is there no real mobilisation of the shop floor, but also no programme is coming forward which can unite all car workers. The only policy which some stewards are talking about—the policy of import restrictions—is reactionary and utop-



jail, and with Jack Jones' role in helping to defeat the London docks containerisation redundancy strike. Such policies are no substitute for the direct action of car workers.

Up to now it appears that attendance at the Birmingham conference will be restricted to the senior stewards. If the entire workforce is to be mobilised then much wider representation is needed. At the very least mass meetings should be held in every factory so that delegates, subject to re-call by those meetings, can be elected by all the workers.

DISCUSSED

Of course, in many, if not most cases, it would be the senior stewards who would be elected, but they would be elected on the basis of policies discussed by all the workers and the campaign would be one which involved the entire workforce.

IMG militants in the motor industry will be fully supporting this conference. They have been calling for such a conference since the beginning of the crisis. But they also point out that the way the conference is going at the moment, it won't enable real action to be taken.

The IMG puts forward the following proposals as among those which should be adopted at the 23 April conference:

- Set up a National Motor Action Committee.
- Each factory to hold mass meetings to elect delegates and decide policies.
- All decisions to be reported back to mass meetings.
- A one-day national strike on the day of the proposed lobby of Parliament. This to be the first step towards mobilising the shop floor against redundancies.
- The Conference to pledge full support including solidarity strike action for any factory fighting redundancies.
- Occupations of all factories threatened with redundancies.
- Against all sackings. For work sharing with no loss of pay.
- No increase in track speeds. No reduction in manning levels.
- No short-time working. Work or full pay.
- Right of the workers to veto management plans on job loss and manning levels.
- Open the books of the industry to workers' inspection.
- For the nationalisation of the entire motor industry—including all the accessory firms—without compensation.

DENMARK— FIGHTING BACK

Unemployment in Denmark has been rising even more rapidly than in Britain. In fact, it has gone up from 3% to 12% in the course of one year. Such a massive economic attack has led to big demonstrations and strikes of workers against attempts to impose incomes policy and other reactionary laws.

Two months ago workers occupied the print factory of the Uniprint firm against lay-off threats. Replying viciously, the police intervened and threw the workers out of the factory. The workers replied by producing over 200,000 copies of two issues of a solidarity newspaper.

More than 40 solidarity committees (some in Sweden) were established. An international blocking of the Whinter company, which owns Uniprint, was carried out in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Holland and West Germany. At the same time the workers formed a 24-hour picket to prevent the employers moving vital machinery from the plant.

On 14 March the Uniprint struggle took a new turn. The owner announced that a third of the workers would be rehired but not the rest. At the same time a financial committee revealed that Uniprint would not have been in financial difficulties if other sections of the Whinter company had paid full prices to Uniprint.

The immediate response of the workers was a new occupation of the plant. The workers re-entered the factory and started production. While the struggle was going on at Uniprint other workers began to take up their example. In particular, foundry workers of Sabroe-Ost went on strike against layoffs.

While some struggles are ending in defeat—and the Uniprint workers finally lost—a real fight back is starting against redundancy in Denmark. The latest development is that the workers of Sabroe-Ost won all their demands.

IN FOCUS

LABOUR & THE EEC

The Scottish Labour Party conference demonstrated the developments which are taking place in the anti-EEC campaign. On the one hand big sections of the trade union bureaucracy, and the overwhelming bulk of the shop stewards and trade union activists, are lined up against the market.

The vote of 346,000 to 290,000 for a TGWU resolution urging opposition to the EEC on the grounds that it was an 'anti-working class organisation serving to prolong the interests of the capitalist class,' showed the strength of the 'left' wing forces in the Scottish unions. Furthermore it was out of this victory that work is being carried on to build the body called Scottish Labour against the Market (SLAM). This campaign shows the real suspicion of important sections of the working class of collaboration with any bourgeois forces—in particular against collaboration with the Scottish Nationalists.

At the same time however the impossibility of providing a solution to the working class's problems through a chauvinist campaign on the EEC is already beginning to show in Scotland on the oil issue. Delegate after delegate to the Scottish LP conference gave overwhelming evidence of the havoc being brought by the oil monopolies. One speaker summed it up by saying that they were 'ravaging the cities and rural areas leaving a trail of dereliction behind them.'

The left bureaucrats have absolutely nothing to say on what to do about this. Instead of a campaign for nationalisation without compensation of all oil related industry, the Oil Petroleum Tax announced by the Labour Government will give the oil companies something like £1,000 million in tax concessions and a tax rate of about half of what was promised by the Labour Party in their election manifesto. Not one single serious move to break the business secrecy of the companies or to attempt to get international backing in the event of investment strikes by the monopolies was proposed.

This complete failure to take up any alternative economic policies to those of capitalism leaves the Labour Party 'lefts'—not only in Scotland, but throughout Britain—with no cutting edge in the EEC campaign. SLAM is an attempt to maintain some semblance of organisational independence from the open class collaboration of the Communist Party and the Great Britain Out Campaign. This is being done to defend the electoral basis of the Labour Party. The lefts however can offer no alternative other than the uninspiring picture of a siege economy wracked by economic storms off the North West coast of Europe. Naturally the working class is less than enthusiastic about this prospect.

This failure gives Wilson increased room for manoeuvre on the EEC. On most issues he is scared of too open a break with the 'left' because he fears that they will have the support of the mass of the working class. On Europe however, he calculates that the bankruptcy of the 'lefts' allows him to appeal over the heads of the bureaucracy, and of the shop stewards, and get working class support for his policies.

Furthermore he thinks he can deal with the lefts on the EEC with increasing impunity. If the lefts ignore Wilson's guidelines he calculates that he will win the referendum and this will be seen as a big vindication of his policies.

The EEC campaign is assuming a dual significance in the labour movement. Firstly, the bankruptcy of Benn and company means that Wilson is winning hands down in sabotaging any real campaign for withdrawal from the EEC. Secondly, if he can appeal over the heads of the trade union bureaucrats and shop stewards on one issue then he will be greatly tempted to try it again on another—incomes policy for example.

If Wilson and the right wing are not to succeed, the campaign against the EEC must be stepped up. By allowing it to remain in the chauvinist gutters the Labour 'left' play into Wilson's hands. A vigorous, genuine internationalist campaign can not only defeat the right wing over the EEC—it can shift the relationship of forces in favour of the left on a whole series of issues.

Anti-abortionists' lies

In the campaign for James White's anti-abortion Bill a central weapon has been the vicious anti-abortion book *Babies for Burning*. Now this tract has been revealed as a tissue of lies, fabrications and profound ignorance.

Even the *Sunday Times*, hardly noted for its progressive views on the matter of abortion felt compelled to give eight columns in its 30 March issue to exposing what it called the 'fantasies' of the book's authors, Michael Litchfield and Susan Kentish.

Litchfield claimed that an unnamed doctor with supposed Nazi sympathies was prepared to sell him foetuses. As Litchfield had presented himself as a soap salesman the implication was that the foetuses were for soap. The same doctor turned out to be old, deaf and Jewish who had lost a wife in the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz.

INVENT THEM

If facts do not exist then invent them is obviously a maxim to which Litchfield firmly adheres. The book claims that a Doctor Malcolm Ridley of Boston, Massachusetts had confessed that he aborted babies so late in pregnancy that their mothers were already in labour. There is however no record whatsoever of a Dr Malcolm Ridley living in either Boston, or for that matter in the United States. Nor has any one with that name ever been granted a licence to practice in Boston.

Susan Kentish wrote that seven pregnancy tests found urine samples positive although she was not pregnant. Mr Alan Driscoll, a consultant gynaecologist at the private Mount Alvernia nursing home in Guildford told the *Sunday Times* 'the urine she had given to the agencies had not been passed in the presence of the agencies testing it.' The Kentish

allegations rest therefore on samples which were never checked by an independent investigator nor passed on any of the seven different agencies' premises.

Litchfield himself is a proven public liar. This Conservative candi-

date in the election last year claims to be a Pulitzer Prize-winner. Professor John Hohenburg, administrator of the Pulitzer Prize, says no Michael Litchfield has ever won the prize. Litchfield also claims to have been educated at Boston University. Well

he must have been a brilliant child prodigy or a remarkably fast worker - the US Immigration Files show that between 1955 when he was 16 and now, Litchfield spent less than six days in the US.

The two authors have not been short of enthusiastic camp followers. The *News of the World* very early jumped on their bandwagon when in April 1974 it front-paged selections from their book entwined with its own lurid allegations.

The two main protagonists of the campaign to toughen up the Abortion Act, James White and Leo Abse, also banged the drum for *Babies for Burn-*

Over 1,200 women met at the seventh National Women's Liberation Conference in Manchester last weekend. In addition to many workshops on the demands of the WLM, issues such as equal pay, the situation of lesbian teachers, women in the media, battered women and so on were discussed. Particularly important was the stress placed on concrete campaigns and the international dimensions of the struggle against the oppression of women. There were sessions on Indochina, Chile and Spain - particularly the defence campaign for Eva Forest. Also taken up was the continuation of the Working Women's Charter Campaign.

The fight against the vicious anti-abortion Bill introduced by James White was recognised as a central priority. The

ing. Now that the gaff has been blown on Litchfield and Kentish, both Mr White and Mr Abse are becoming coy about their support for the book. Neither has yet of course denounced it as a distorted and lying volume.

UNPAID LABOUR

As this book shows, the ruling class and its servants will go to any lengths to defend their system. Litchfield and Kentish have been exposed as cheap little liars. But do not worry, capitalism will find other such hacks it can buy to do its dirty work.

The workers' movement cannot simply restrict itself to exposing such books. Its task is to fight to drive all sexist ideas out of the labour movement and to campaign in earnest for the full rights of women. That means giving absolute and unconditional support to the right of women to free abortion on demand.

Following resolution was passed: 'This Conference supports the aims of the National Abortion Campaign, that is to fight current attempts at legislation to restrict a woman's right to choose. That therefore women's groups should affiliate to, and work closely with NAC. James White's Bill will take away the few rights we now have over the control of our own fertility. We urge women to make the abortion campaign the focus of their activity over the next few months and to make this a starting point for a continuing campaign to extend a woman's right to choose.'

The ways and means to take this and other campaigns forward will be one of the crucial questions facing the forthcoming conference on the organisation of the women's movement.



Women's Charter splits teachers' conference

ONE OF THE most important trade union debates to date on the issue of women's liberation took place at the National Union of Teachers conference over Easter. Discussion focused around a motion to adopt the Working Women's Charter.

The importance of this debate stemmed from the fact that the Charter brings together the fight to end women's disadvantaged position at work in terms of training, opportunities and pay with all aspects of women's oppression in the family and society at large. The Charter recognises that demands for equal pay and opportunities will only have real meaning if linked to demands for contraception, abortion and state-financed 24 hour nurseries which begin to challenge the general oppression of women in capitalist society.

The Labour and Communist Party dominated Executive campaigned against the adoption of the Charter. But the motion was nevertheless supported by over 300 delegates and won support from broad sections of the left - including two women members of the NUT Executive.

ROLE OF SEXISM

In proposing the motion Tina

Pamplin from Nottingham NUT elaborated the way in which sexism in education not only prepared girls for a future role as wives and mothers but adversely affected the conditions of women teachers as well. Despite Executive claims that women teachers get equal pay, over half of all women teachers - a large majority of the NUT's members - are on the lowest pay scale, while over half of all male teachers are on scale four or above.

Cath Young from Hackney NUT pointed out in seconding the motion that women will never get equal pay without equal opportunity, and that they will never get either without tackling the social problems brought about by women's double role in the home and at work.

CALL FOR CONFERENCE

Unable to oppose the Charter without being exposed in practice as opponents of women's liberation, the Executive manoeuvred to substitute for the Charter a vague, non-committal statement on women's rights. But even speakers for the Executive's amendment - as well as those who opposed it - stressed the need for continued local action around the Charter.

The Executive is thus unlikely to succeed in its attempt to fore-

stall the rapidly growing Charter campaign amongst NUT members. Calls to take the Charter back into local associations were well received by delegates.

Marginalised in the debate on the Charter - and in the whole conference - was the International Socialist-controlled 'Rank and File' group, despite the presence of two of their members on the Executive. They refuse to openly support the Charter.

The failure of IS's sectoral politics led Beth Stone, a Rank and File member of the NUT Executive, to call the conference 'disappointing'. But what disappointed her was the large number of delegates who want a broader framework of socialist debate and action than that offered by the confines of Rank and File policy.

Despite Rank and File's decline, socialists were able to provide a direct political challenge to the line of the bureaucracy and the Communist Party on the questions of women's oppression. The struggle in the NUT must be a springboard for taking the Charter into all other unions.

LOYALISTS RAMPAGE



The Provisional ceasefire held over last weekend. By Monday morning, however, 10 people were dead and 80 had been wounded. This was almost exclusively the work of the Loyalists.

Merlyn Rees, Labour secretary for Northern Ireland, went to Ireland last weekend with a handful of further false promises to the minority to keep the ceasefire going. The Provisionals had threatened to end it because of the continuing harassment of the minority and the killing of two Republicans by the army.

The Loyalists, however, think the army is too soft by half. The Ulster Special Constabulary Association, an organisation of the ex-B Special policemen who were disbanded in 1969 for their extreme sectarianism, demanded that Rees stop the army's namby pamby attacks on the minority and 'go directly for the total surrender of the IRA.' If he didn't, then they would.

PUB BOMBINGS

This is what the Loyalist murder gangs are up to. In full view of the British army, they are blowing up, shooting and maiming Catholic workers in order to demoralise them into submission. On Saturday they threw a bomb into a Catholic pub, killing two and injuring 15.

In an attempt to equal things out a bombing of a Protestant pub three hours later was blamed on the IRA. But the latter was clearly part of the feud between the two Protestant paramilitary gangs, the UDA and the UVF. The car used in this bombing had been hijacked in a Protestant area - something which no Catholic could possibly have got away with.

What the events of last weekend

show is that violence is inevitable whilst the artificial Six County state exists. Any 'solution' based on the Six Counties can only succeed if the minority is totally crushed under the heels of the extreme Loyalists. The sectarianism is built into the very existence of the Six Counties.

SELF DEFENCE

It is now clear for all to see that it is not the actions of the Provisionals which are at the root of the violence. The actions of the Provisionals, like those of all the organisations of the minority, are absolutely necessary to defend that minority.

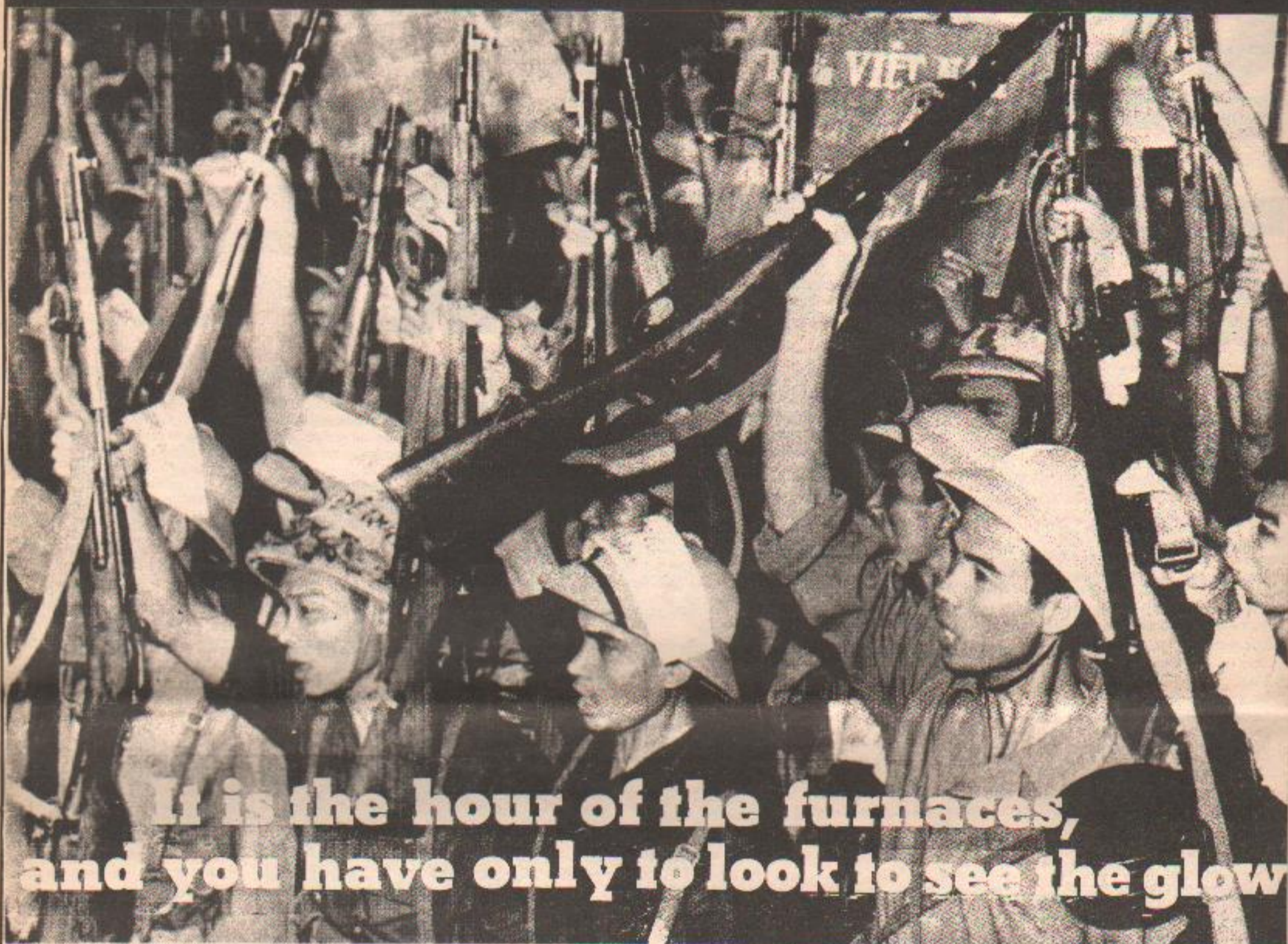
It is these defences which the army is in Ireland to break down. It is the army which guarantees the artificial Six County state. British workers have to be won to understanding this. This is the task of the TOM Trade Union Conference on Ireland called for 24 May. Every militant must fight for their trade union branch to send delegates to this conference.

So far 15 MPs are supporting this Conference. It is also being sponsored by Harrow, Luton, Hackney, Oxford, Barnet and Yeovil Trades Councils. Many trade union branches are already committed to sending delegates. Credentials from Troops Out Movement, 103 Hammersmith Road, London W.14.

Brian Grogan

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VIETNAM: HOUR OF THE FURNACES



**It is the hour of the furnaces,
and you have only to look to see the glow**

Three times since the end of the Second World War, the ruling class of the United States has thrown itself against the workers and peasants of Asia.

In 1945 its plan for intervention in China was only thwarted by the millions of American soldiers who refused to serve as cannon fodder in yet another war. In 1950 the United States hurled its might against the people of Korea and left three million dead in its wake. Finally in Vietnam the American ruling class unleashed its most fearful savagery so far.

One hundred and forty thousand million dollars of American war effort was poured into one small country. Twelve million tons of explosives were used by the Americans and their puppets. After more than 40,000 American dead, four million Indochinese casualties, and ten million refugees, the United States was still unable to break the workers and peasants of Vietnam. Now its puppets are crashing to defeat.

WORLD CHARACTER

The victories in Vietnam, the victories in all Indochina, are not merely the triumph of the magnificent people of these countries. The Indochinese victories are the greatest living example since the Russian Revolution of the world character of the working class revolution. Literally tens and hundreds of millions throughout the world have participated directly or indirectly in the victory of the struggle in Vietnam. Although the Indochinese people have borne the crushing weight of imperialism's assault, and the overwhelming share of the glory is theirs, they too know that their triumph is only possible because of mass action and pressure throughout the world.

Those who have participated in the struggle range from the hundreds of thousands who marched against the war within the United States itself, through Che Guevara who gave his life in the attempt to open a second front in support of the Indochinese struggle, to the martyr Nicolai Didyk who burnt himself to death in protest against the refusal of the Soviet bureaucracy to send support brigades to Vietnam. It is one of the proudest episodes in the entire history of the Fourth International that in many countries its sections have been able to play an important role

in the development of the world-wide Vietnam solidarity movement.

But if it was the world-wide development of the solidarity struggle with Indochina which helped create the conditions, even in a small way, for the triumphs of last week, then we must also understand that this solidarity was never just a moral gesture. No-one was ever more short-sighted than those who considered the tasks of solidarity with Vietnam as secondary in comparison to the intervention in the working class struggles of their own country. Not one single event of the last decade, least of all one single trade union struggle, could have compensated in the slightest for the defeat of the Vietnamese revolution.

The crushing defeat of US military might in Vietnam is the greatest blow ever delivered against the American ruling class's ability to undertake direct military counter-revolutionary activity everywhere in the world. A repeat of the landing of the marines in the Lebanon in 1958, a repeat of the 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic, are rendered far less likely following the crushing debacle in Indochina. Already the fear of another Vietnam is a factor holding back the American ruling class from its insane schemes for military occupation of the oil states of the Arab East. The next workers' state created anywhere in the world will owe an incalculable debt to the Vietnamese revolution in this sense alone.

THE COLOSSUS WHICH BROKE

The war in Indochina struck the American monster in its very economic and social vitals. For seven years through direct armed intervention, and for twenty years through indirect sabotage and subterfuge, the greatest economic power in the world sought to crush the people of one small state. Seven hundred thousand million dollars of industrial and military might were thrown against the fighting capacity of one nation and the sympathy of every class-conscious worker in the world. And finally it was the colossus which broke. Its economy could not stand the strain of the war as inflation and expenditure soared. Its

ghettos exploded as its own black workers refused to bear the effects of a war in which their only real interest was to support the other side. Millions of its finest youth rebelled in disgust against mechanised butchery on a scale Hitler or Mussolini could never even have envisaged.

Finally, Vietnam was the fuse which first relighted a wide consciousness in the imperialist countries of the need for socialist revolution. Millions of people first clearly understood the bankruptcy of the capitalist system through its barbarity in Vietnam. Throughout the world millions of workers, peasants and students saw with their own eyes that the imperialist monster could be defeated. In every country in Europe the revolutionary organisations which were later to link themselves with the upsurge of the workers' movement grouped their first large forces from the solidarity struggle with Vietnam. In that very deep sense the mass of revolutionaries in the world today are real children of the Vietnamese revolution, whatever differences we may have with its leadership.

What will come from the third Indochinese war is not the final solution. Many fights, many terrible struggles, many bitter defeats will be gone through before either the Indochinese people or the world working class finally settle their accounts with world imperialism and the reactionary bureaucracies which it spawns. We will have many future struggles, even with the leadership of the Indochinese workers and peasants. Perhaps through a new phoney peace the victory in Indochina will be postponed for a few months.

But for all time the international revolutionary movement will glory in the triumphs of the Indochinese workers and peasants. It is now that we may grasp to the full the magnificent words of Che Guevara: 'What grandeur has been shown by this people! What stoicism and valour in this people! And what a lesson for the future their struggle holds! How close and how bright would the future appear if two, three, many Vietnams flowered on the face of the earth! It is the hour of the furnaces, and you have only to look to see the glow.'

THE STEPS TO VICTORY

- 1859 French occupation of Saigon and three surrounding provinces. By 1883 whole of Cochinchina (South Vietnam), Tonkin (North Vietnam) and Annam (Central Vietnam) occupied.
- 1887 Vietnam and the kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia united to form the French 'Indo-Chinese Union.'
- 1908 Local insurrection by nationalists, which like further ones in 1912 and 1916 is ruthlessly crushed by French.
- 1925 Ho Chi Minh founds 'Revolutionary Annamite Youth'.
- 1930 Nationalist organisation Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang leads insurrection at Yen Bay. Soviets formed in Nghe-An and Ha-Tinh provinces. Indochinese Communist Party formed.
- 1932 First Vietnamese Trotskyist organisations founded.
- 1933 United front of Indochinese Communist Party and Trotskyists has two candidates elected in Saigon.
- 1937 Strike wave sweeps Indochina. Three Indochinese Communist Party-Trotskyist united front candidates elected in Saigon. But a few months later Indochinese Communist Party breaks united front with Trotskyists and votes in Saigon Council for 'national defence' of France.
- 1939 Trotskyists win 80% of vote in Cochinchina. French commence wave of repression which totally destroys all legal apparatuses of the Trotskyists and Indochinese Communist Party.
- 1940 Japanese occupy Indochina. Seventh Plenum of Central Committee of the Indochinese Communist Party decides to orient toward a united national front against the Japanese and the French. In November insurrection in Saigon crushed.

- 1941 Insurrection of civil guards crushes Communist Party and Trotskyist forces, create the Vietminh.
- 1944 First organised army unit of the Giap.
- 1945 In August Japan surrenders and workers' militias organised by the Saigon and crush workers.
- 1946 Vietminh organise elections and leader Ta Thu Thau murdered. Patriot and we mourn him', but a line I have laid down will be broken. In March Franco states it will re- French Union'. In November French Haiphong, killing 6,000 people. He leave Hanoi by invading French.
- 1946-49 Prolonged guerilla war as Vietminh of land to peasants. French establish as head of state. Laos and Cambodia French union'.
- 1950 Vietminh commence offensive.
- 1953 'Free Laotian Government' (Pathet Lao) opposition to 'neutralist' regime. On 7 May 10,000 French troops armed French resistance ceases. country. Ngo Dinh Diem forms areas. At Geneva peace talks Viet Chinese to allow partition of country. elections to unify the country. States prevents holding of elections admits, Vietminh would win over.
- 1955 Diem becomes head of state in South.
- 1957 Guerilla struggle restarts in South of National Unity' including the as right seizes opportunity to meet attempts meet similar fate.
- 1960 North Vietnam begins support to Front (NLF) founded.

THE LIBERATION OF DA NANG by the forces of the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) provided two scenes which strikingly summarise the present situation in Vietnam.

The first was the riots at the airport and harbour as thousands of troops from the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) tried to flee the city—throwing grenades at the aircraft, crushing women and children, clinging to the undercarriages of planes. This episode, widely reported in the capitalist press, vividly showed how deep is the crisis of Thieu's army and his whole regime.

The second, which has received no coverage, occurred only hours later when the liberation forces entered the city to be greeted by thousands of cheering people with flowers, PRG flags and refreshment, while key areas of the city, such as the port and bridges, were guarded by armed workers and peasants to prevent sabotage.

To understand how the PRG have achieved such spectacular victories in the last few weeks, it is necessary to go back a little further in time.

PARIS ACCORDS

In the spring of 1972, the National Liberation Front (NLF) succeeded in liberating nearly half of South Vietnam. Two factors stood in the way of complete liberation then: the treachery of the bureaucratic regimes of China and the USSR, which doled out aid with an eyedropper, and the massive US aid given to the Thieu regime, including the mass saturation bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong. As a result of this, the PRG were forced to negotiate and sign the Paris Accords in January 1973.

However, despite the conditions under which they were signed, the Paris Accords represented a great victory. They formalised the situation in South Vietnam as one of dual power between the PRG-controlled zones and those controlled by Thieu, raising the revolutionary struggle for the cities to the centre of the stage. Implicit in the Accords, and the withdrawal of US forces from Indochina, was the admission by the USA that it could no longer guarantee the existence of any pro-imperialist puppet state in Indochina.

The 'ceasefire' was followed by a short period during which Thieu's army and repressive apparatus were rapidly strengthened and re-equipped by the USA. His prisons were filled with hundreds of political prisoners, and newly liberated areas were nibbled away by the ARVN. But at the same time, thousands of people were deliberately moving into the liberated zones. The PRG used this breathing space to refresh their cadre, resettle refugees, and begin to reconstruct the war-shattered countryside.

The next phase was the beginning of activity by local NLF units to repulse ARVN encroachments on the liberated areas, and the sending of cadres into the puppet-controlled zones to begin the crucial task of building a firm political foothold.

In October 1973, the PRG warned that in future operations against the liberated zones would be severely punished, and then proceeded to carry out their threats. Isolated ARVN bases were mopped up one after another, while in the Mekong Delta guerilla

Throughout all this, an infrastructure was being built up to link all the liberated areas in a comprehensive system of roads so that the PRG zones were rapidly consolidated. The important example of the liberated areas should not be underestimated. Al-

and the exploitation of the poor peasants is at an end. This revolutionary transformation of the liberated zones provides a very powerful magnet for those forced to live under the puppet dictatorship.

It is certainly a contrast with the situation in the puppet-controlled areas, where inflation has been running at 85% alongside mass unemployment, ill health and starvation (even though there is probably a rice surplus—but most of it is hoarded to raise profits, export, and prevent the loss of US subsidies, while the rest is sold on

vide investment have all flopped.

This deepgoing crisis has resulted in massive corruption on the one hand, and the slow growth of an urban opposition on the other. Thieu has thus found himself in a steadily closing trap. His response to the crisis has been to increase the repression, jail militants, and ban newspapers. However, far from halting the opposition, this has simply accelerated its development, even forcing Thieu to make important concessions (such as the freeing of some political prisoners, and the abolition of VAT).

Ever since the signing of the Paris Accords, there has been a steady growth of trade union activity in which the working class has won some significant economic struggles. More importantly, trade union committees have developed which put forward political demands and back them up with action. This step has increased the militancy of the working class, fusing with the growth of opposition student, intellectual and politico-religious groupings to produce a broad, active opposition in the cities which has organised big demonstrations, mass meetings and demonstrations.

OPPOSITION CURRENTS

These opposition currents reflect the chronic crisis of the regime and the deepening radicalisation of the masses, who have a tradition of class struggle that goes back to the beginning of the century. It is a situation that rules out the emergence of a capitalist alternative (for all the condemnation of Thieu in the National Assembly), and has polarised the petty bourgeoisie to the left.

Of course, the opposition is very diverse and mixed, but under the impact of the PRG victories, the increasing repression, and the recently re-introduced conscription laws, it has begun to crystallise into two clear currents.

The People's Anti-Corruption Movement, whose chief spokesman is the priest Tra Huu Thanh, is firmly based on the State bureaucracy and the Catholic hierarchy which formerly constituted Thieu's social base. Their programme aims basically to remove Thieu and replace him with an administration that can more effectively combat the PRG.

They quite cynically admit that their campaign is based on anti-corruption populism because only by doing away with the corruption of the regime can the masses be mobilised against the PRG. It was members of this grouping who were recently arrested after a meeting with ex-dictator Ky, out of which Thieu suspected a coup was being hatched.

The other main opposition grouping is the Forces for National Reconciliation, which are under the nominal leadership of the militant An Quang Pagoda. This movement embraces

ON THE ROAD TO SAIGON

DAVID JOHNSON, who has reported regularly on events in Indochina for Red Weekly over the last 18 months, explains the background to the dramatic advances made by the liberation forces in recent weeks.

activity rapidly resumed and small army posts and air bases were repeatedly harassed. Over 800 outposts were simply abandoned by the ARVN in this period. Rear bases of the ARVN such as the airfield of Bien Hoa near Saigon were rocketed, and the oil refinery at Nha Be was destroyed. The main highways linking the regime-controlled towns in the Central Highlands were rapidly cut by the NLF until they were all totally isolated. The bulk of Thieu's army—pinned down and spread out through the entire South—were denied any possibility of initiatives and became increasingly demoralised. Desertions climbed to 18,000 a month.

The NLF were now better equipped than ever before, being able to match the ARVN in effective firepower for the first time. They began to extend their tactic of 'strategic counter-offensives', carrying the fighting into the more populated areas of the Mekong and Central Provinces. At Ben Cat, just north of Saigon, a massive battle developed in which the NLF re-liberated the district. Elsewhere two other district capitals were freed and over 115,000 ARVN troops put out of action.

though life is still tough, many Vietnamese are now experiencing stability there for the first time in 30 years. Agrarian reform has given land to the peasants and produced an actual surplus of food (this on land previously cultivated by bombs, mines, shrapnel, barbed wire, and murderous explosive booby traps). Rice, water and fuel are all readily available, and a comprehensive education and health programme is being developed.

Although the land is not fully collectivised, the class of rich peasant capitalists has been swept away for ever.

the black market at grossly inflated prices).

URBAN CRISIS

The economy is in a deep depression, and attempts to change this through massive taxation have failed (not least of all, because of mass resistance). Furthermore, because of the international recession, it has become more and more difficult for Thieu's imperialist masters to bale him out. Repeated attempts by the US to set in train multinational commitments to pro-

regime and the Pathet Lao insurgents.

Far from this halting the class struggle, as some feared, it has recently begun to develop new dimensions with the Pathet Lao delegates assuming ever greater authority in the administration. Furthermore, in areas formerly controlled by the puppet regime—and still under their nominal control—there have been mass demonstrations and strikes raising far-reaching political demands.

These new developments, which are tacitly supported by the Pathet Lao, demonstrate the development of class struggle on the urban arena and the start of a new phase of the Laotian revolution.

LAOS - revolution enters new phase

The uneven rhythms of the Indochinese Revolution are also at work in Laos, where the result of the Accords of 1973 was an uneasy coalition between the Vientiane



NLF are also mounting offensive south of Saigon in Mekong Delta

Da Nang and Da Luong, Indochinese
with bourgeois nationalist

ish created by Ho Chi Minh and

s occupy Saigon. Vietminh disarm
skists. Then French troops enter

erwhelming victory. Trotskyist
Minh comments, 'He was a great
All those who do not follow the

Vietnam as a 'free state within the
plate agreement and bombard
Minh Government forced to

anises army and begins distribution
puppet state with Emperor Bao Dai
recognized as 'free states within the

al established with Vietminh help in

nder at Dien Bien Phu. Significant
ish controls two thirds of the
government in French-controlled
pressured by Russians and
They agree on condition that free
held within two years. United
cause, as President Eisenhower later
ning victory.

Vietnam.
nam. In Laos a coalition 'Government
t Lao is established but soon collapses
inst Pathet Lao. Further coalition

thern guerillas. National Liberation

- 1961 American military 'advisers' begin to arrive.
- 1963 American-backed coup overthrows Diem in attempt to whitewash Saigon regime and head off resistance.
- 1964 'Tonkin Gulf incident' used as pretext by Americans to start bombing of North Vietnam.
- 1965 Thieu becomes President of South Vietnam. American 'advisers' now total 23,000. Americans step up bombing of North Vietnam and commence full scale involvement of troops. At height of involvement Americans have over 500,000 troops in Vietnam. Other foreign troops include 50,000 South Koreans, 11,000 Thais, as well as a contingent from Australia. There is also the entire South Vietnamese army (ARVN).
- 1968 On 30 January the NLF launches Tet offensive. Hue captured for several weeks and every major city attacked. US President Johnson's credibility shattered by offensive—he announces he will not seek re-election as President. In March limitations placed on bombing of North Vietnam. In May Paris 'peace negotiations' commence.
- 1969 New President Nixon announces withdrawal of US troops, but steps up air war in the South to unprecedented levels. Establishment of Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam in liberated areas.
- 1970 Sihanouk Government overthrown by Lon Nol in CIA-backed coup in March. This paves way for invasion of Cambodia by Americans and South Vietnamese.
- 1971 Americans and South Vietnamese invade Laos. Invasion routed.
- 1972 PRG launches general offensive in South Vietnam. Takes Quang Tri and surrounds An Loc. United States recommences bombing of North and mines Haiphong and other northern parts.
- 1973 Paris Peace Accords signed in January. Americans start to withdraw remaining forces and end bombing. Gigantic American arms supplies to Thieu stepped up. In one month 50 transport planes, 230 fighter bombers and 270 helicopters handed over to Thieu.
- 1974 Heavy fighting continues in South Vietnam. In Laos, Pathet Lao enters new coalition more or less on its own terms. In Cambodia, Red Khmer insurgents now control most of country.
- 1975 Phnom Penh surrounded and Mekong River blocked. In March PRG launches offensive. Within weeks Saigon is only major city left in Thieu's hands. Lon Nol flees from Phnom Penh.



Which face of Vietnam? Left, one of the thousands of prostitutes in Saigon recruited to serve American GIs. Below: children in North Vietnam being cared for in one of the excellent community nurseries.



them closer to Saigon and in the string of coastal bases built by the US in the late 1960s. What he left out of consideration was firstly, the incredible demoralisation of conscripted troops who had been trapped in isolated bases and subjected to continual harassment for the last year; and secondly, the massive political base built by the PRG over this period.

The result was that as soon as the

just deserted (at the rate of a thousand a day).

As the troops ran from one threatened town to the next they herded along in front of them thousands of refugees—partly for protection, but also probably because of instructions to depopulate the territory. Many of the refugees, of course, are genuinely afraid of the PRG—some with good reason—and often are the families of fleeing soldiers. But many are forced evacuees. At least two ARVN battalions refused to 'guard' the evacuation in this way and went into the liberated zones, taking several thousand refugees with them. Hundreds of thousands of refugees have also fled to the liberated areas by themselves.

The impact of this rout has been phenomenal. The liberation forces are in some places only 20 miles from Saigon, and 80% of the country is now freed from puppet rule. Half of the ARVN has been destroyed.

In Saigon there have been growing demands for Thieu's resignation, and demonstrations against him have turned into victory celebrations. Hoarding has pushed the price of rice up by 10% already, and individual capitalists are hurriedly trying either to leave the city or convert all their money into dollars. However, it seems that Thieu has now temporarily consolidated his remaining forces around Saigon. The US has for the last few weeks been shipping in by air tons of ammunition, guns and tanks to strengthen the city's defences.

WHAT NEXT

What happens next depends on a number of factors. Of first importance are the initiatives of the PRG, who have repeatedly stated that they are prepared to negotiate the formation of a coalition government of national reconciliation if Thieu is overthrown.

It is true that they have repeatedly exposed and warned against rightist manoeuvres in this context (and reasserted their position that the PRG is the only legitimate representative of the Vietnamese people in the South). But the loose formulation of their statements—at one with their policy of 'national concord'—are dangerous

because they gloss over the class conflicts underpinning the Vietnamese Revolution.

It is these which prevent any sort of reconciliation between the proletariat and peasants on the one hand, and the weak national bourgeoisie (which is in any case tied hand and foot to imperialism) on the other. This can only hamper the motivation and political clarification of the Saigon opposition. Similarly, the PRG's failure to develop a strategy for building organs of popular control weakens the ability of the opposition to organise independently and confront the puppet administration in all spheres of life.

ARVN MORALE

Another key factor is the morale of the ARVN. Certainly Thieu has—and for at least a short time, will continue to have—sufficient arms to resist a direct offensive. But these will be useless if his army won't fight, and this is so far an unknown factor.

Troops arriving back in Saigon from the Central Highlands have been herded into concentration camps, with hundreds of them being shot, in an attempt to prevent them from affecting the morale of the troops based around the capital. But it is clearly an impossible task in the present atmosphere. When the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh is liberated their will to fight can be expected to take another dive.

Last but not least of these factors will be the aid given to the PRG by China and the USSR—minimal in the past when not directly treacherous—and by the international solidarity movement.

In 1945 Saigon was for a short time free after the defeat of the Japanese and the massive hammering taken by the French during the war. Then the British Army stepped in to retrieve the situation for imperialism. But today, when imperialism is once again losing its hold, the world context is such that it cannot hope to recoup its losses. We can expect the 30th anniversary of Free Saigon to be celebrated by the raising of the PRG flag again in the city.

POLITICAL VICTORIES

This crisis of Thieu's regime came startlingly into focus when the PRG launched the present offensive only a few weeks ago. This was almost certainly intended to be a limited drive to further split the ARVN and push Thieu closer to the brink. The first step was the massive battle which freed Phuoc Binh and isolated Tay Ninh (north of Saigon). Once it was clear that this time there would be no firm response from the US, activity was concentrated in the Central Highlands.

It must be understood that the victories which followed were primarily political rather than military. Every major town was liberated through a combination of NLF offensive and local insurrection.

Ban Me Thuot—the main town in the Central Highlands—was opened up by mutinying Montagnard tribesmen whose sympathy for the PRG flows from the latter's policy on autonomy. In Da Nang, 5,000 ARVN troops (three battalions) changed sides following a PRG appeal and supplied workers in the city with arms; in Hue, thousands of troops joined the insurrection; Qui Nhon was already in the hands of a revolutionary committee by the time the NLF units arrived; while in Nha Trang the wealthy had fled long ago

and the peasants and workers stayed to welcome the insurgents.

It is now clear that Thieu's strategy after the fall of Ban Me Thuot on 10 March was to pull back his forces, reducing losses, and then to regroup

withdrawal from Kontum and Pleiku was attempted it turned into a rout. Half of the entire ARVN just disintegrated and ran. As the panic spread officers fled from their units, and the troops left behind either rioted or

The dynamic of permanent revolution exists throughout the whole of Indochina. Because of its long history and high level of class struggle, Vietnam is the focal point of this process. But is Cambodia which is the weakest link.

Partly because of Cambodia's late entry into the arena of struggle, and partly because of the rapid response by the resistance, the US was unable here to erect the sort of semi-autonomous regime it built in Vietnam. This made the Lon Nol puppet regime weak from the start, heavily dependent on outside intervention and extremely sensitive to any opposition.

Because of this, the simple strangula-

tion of the capital, Phnom Penh, by the forces of the FUNK (National United Front of Cambodia) has forced the regime into a complete impasse. With the closing of the Mekong River, the capital is completely isolated except for the US-financed airlift. This in turn is threatened by the reluctance of pilots to fly into Pochentong in the face of the daily barrage from the Red Khmer rockets and howitzers. Three times in the last month it has been stopped altogether.

In this situation, the hypocrisy of the Soviet bureaucracy appears to know no limits. It is barely a fortnight ago that they finally decided to close down the consular

offices of the Lon Nol regime in Moscow and pledge their undivided support to the GRUNK (National United Royal Government of Cambodia). But this support does not apparently extend as far as supplying the insurgents with a few SAM-7 anti-aircraft missiles, with which the US airlift could be stopped permanently.

Nevertheless, a puppet outpost falls almost every day to the Red Khmers, and very few troops now stand between the FUNK and the city. On the Northern defence perimeter there is only one puppet division, and this is repeatedly outflanked. On the East, the Mekong River will soon be low enough to cross.

The last important puppet base guarding the approaches to Phnom Penh, Neak Luong, was liberated last week. And at the puppet enclave of Battambang there have been mass demonstrations against the regime.

Within Phnom Penh itself the crisis has deepened still further as the militant opposition re-forms. Rapid changes of government culminated in the dismissal of General Sosthene Fernandez (blue-eyed boy of the 1970 coup); and now Chang Heng, Long Boret and Lon Nol have finally fled on the pretext of a 'state visit' to Indonesia. The fall of Phnom Penh and the final liberation of Cambodia is very close.

CAMBODIA - THE WEAK LINK

LABOUR AND VIETNAM

BRITISH TROOPS BOMB, SHOOT NATIONALISTS

AT THE END OF 1945 it was British troops under a Labour Government who bombed, shot and mortared the Vietnamese nationalist forces in Saigon and in the villages of the Mekong Delta.

On 22 July of that year, the three big powers—the USA, USSR and Britain—had agreed at the Potsdam Conference to place southern Indochina under British command. This had been done at the suggestion of the British Chiefs of Staff, with the agreement of the new Labour Prime Minister, Clement Attlee.

French imperialism was determined to re-establish its hold over its pre-war empire. In 1944 the so-called Free French Government in exile had declared 'The attainment of "self government" in the colonies, even in the distant future, must be excluded'. But France on its own, emerging from the years of Nazi occupation, did not possess the military power to crush the Vietnamese nationalists, the Vietminh.

SUSPICIOUS

The Americans, however, were not too keen on restoring French colonial rule in Indochina—they had their own fish to fry in Asia. As Roosevelt said in August 1944: 'The destinies of the peoples of the whole Pacific will for many years be entwined with our own destiny'. The far-sighted Roosevelt did not fight a war for American capitalism in the Pacific just to put France and Britain back in the saddle. He wanted to make the area an exclusive US sphere of interest.

So when an invasion of Indochina was being projected in May 1945 to oust the Japanese army of occupation, the British began flying sorties over the area even though it was supposed to be still under US command. The American Commander, General Wedemeyer, protested vigorously at first, but the British were not to be deterred. Eventually military requirements and the need to maintain the political alliances between the imperialists made the Americans shift their ground.

WAR OVER

In August 1945 the Americans atom bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan surrendered and the war was over.

On 13 September the Commander of the British forces, General Gracey, flew into Saigon. Sandhurst-educated, he had served much of his time with the hated Indian Army, which throughout the colonial war was correctly seen as the vicious instrument of British oppression.

At the airfield, Gracey's plane was met by Japanese troops, and later he

rode into the city with Gurkhas and Japanese soldiers acting as armed guards. Gracey summoned Terauchi, commander of the Japanese forces, and told him that the Japanese Army had to help in restoring order. The French were desperate. On their own they simply did not have the power to remove the Vietminh nationalists.

Gracey never hesitated. His mandate from the Labour Government was simple and to the point. If he discussed with the Vietminh he would grant them *de facto* recognition. His job was to get back to the pre-war *status quo*.

The Vietminh were administering Saigon and trying vainly and wrongly to cooperate with the British. Gracey simply ignored them and proceeded on the assumption that Vietnam belonged to the French. Protesting against British connivance with the French the Vietminh staged a series of strikes and closed down Saigon market. Gracey replied by shutting down the Vietminh press and demanded the disarming of all Vietnamese with weapons.

Two days later the British posted a proclamation which was really a declaration of martial law. Demonstrations and processions were banned as were street meetings. The British were putting the boot in against the nationalist forces.

ARMED COLONS

At the same time the British started to arm the French settlers—the *colons*—with 303 rifles. On Saturday, 22 September, the British took over Saigon jail, disarmed the Vietnamese staff and released the French prisoners. With British permission the French then launched a *coup d'etat*. Tom Driberg, who was then writing for *Reynolds News*, described the French attack as being one of 'maximum ineptitude and considerable cruelty'.

For two more days—benignly presided over by the British occupation troops—the French went on the rampage and war erupted again in Saigon. As full-scale war broke out between the nationalists and the British, the

Japanese troops were brought into action.

The *Daily Mirror* of 25 September 1945 reported: 'Jap troops



British declaration of martial law being posted by Japanese trooper

have been fighting alongside the British and French in an effort to re-establish order in Saigon....' The same paper reported: 'They [the Japanese] are in charge, and they could clear out the Allied forces in one night, but their behaviour is excellent.'

It was not until 30 November that Admiral Louis Mountbatten, South East Asia Commander, arrived in Saigon to accept the formal surrender of the Japanese. By that time the French had been able to ship in reinforcements. The *History of the Indian Armed Forces* was able to record: 'All the dirty work to fight and disarm the Annamites was assigned to Japanese troops.' When it came to the colonial revolution the imperialists—be they from the Axis powers or the Allies—were absolutely clear where they stood.

PREPARED

The ground had now been prepared for the return of the High Commissioner from Paris, Vice-Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu—a fanatical imperialist, described by one of his aides as having 'the most brilliant mind of the 12th Century'. Under his regime the French troops ran wild. The war in Indochina entered its 30-year-long tortuous and bloody course—a course that was prepared by British imperialism. For there is no doubt that the French could have never returned to Vietnam without the aid of the British.

The newly elected Labour Government was responsible for this naked imperialist adventure. Protests rained down on the Government including one from Harold Laski, then Chair-

man of the Labour Party, who asked the Government '...to reflect upon the impact of this policy upon colonial peoples all over the world.'

Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Minister, replied to questions in Parliament on Vietnam by saying: 'The liberal attitude on the part of the French Government has been reflected in the very conciliatory manner in which local French representatives have dealt with the Annamite leaders'. At the same time *Reynolds News* was reporting: 'Disgraceful scenes of vengeance against helpless Annamites continued all Sunday.... French municipal police roam the streets all night in small bands, occasionally shooting or provoking shots.'

IGNORED

The Prime Minister stood loyally by the British Army and the French imperialists, and warned people about not 'accepting at their face value reports of this kind'. He ignored the fact that the report in *Reynolds News* had been written by Tom Driberg—a fellow Labour MP!

The disgraceful, pro-imperialist behaviour of that Labour Government in 1945 was to be repeated again when Labour came to office in the 1960's, when the people of Vietnam were once again to be subjected to the full barbarism and cruelty of the imperialists.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL RALLY INDOCHINA—on to final victory!

Speakers: Pierre Rousset, Robin Blackburn

Thurs 17 April, 7pm, Conway Hall

LABOUR MUST RECOGNISE P.R.G.

Previous Labour Governments have committed the most vile crimes against the people of Vietnam. As the rotten regime of the money-lenders and the landlords enters its well-deserved death agonies, the labour movement has a plain and clear duty. It must demand the immediate recognition of the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

As the South Vietnamese armies disintegrate—unleashing an orgy of rape, loot and murder—Thieu and his American masters hypocritically and ruthlessly exploit the refugees. No doubt the Labour leaders, who could spare no sympathy for the napalmed victims of the US bombers, will use this issue to try and build up support for the collapsing puppet Government. But there should be no aid for Saigon because that aid will go to the rich parasites who have battered on the poor of that country for too long.

Vietnam is a tortured country. Its people desperately need assistance. But that assistance must go to the poor peasants and workers so that they can embark on building a planned society, free from the capitalists and the landlords and the imperialist nations who have perpetrated such unspeakable horrors on them.

Labour must launch an immediate programme of aid without any strings being attached, and that aid must go to the Provisional Revolutionary Government.



EVERY U.S. OUTRAGE DEFENDED

WHEN LABOUR took office in 1964 the situation in Vietnam had changed. In 1954 the French had been routed at Dien Bien Phu and driven out. But American imperialism had since stepped in to fill the breach.

The Wilson Government, like its 1945-51 predecessor, placed itself on the side of imperialism against the revolutionary struggles of the colonial masses. Without compunction or shame it dutifully defended every outrage and atrocity committed by the US. The depths of obscenity were finally plumbed when Cabinet Minister George Brown uttered his repugnant apologies in defence of the atrocities and massacres of My Lai.

The ominous words of Harold Wilson at the Trades Union Congress in September 1964 foreshadowed what would underlie Labour's attitude to the Vietnam war when he told them: 'You can get into pawn, but then don't talk of an independ-

ent foreign policy....'

IN PAWN

British capitalism was certainly in pawn, and the Labour Government cravenly held out its begging bowl to Washington. In return it offered connivance in US imperialism's counter-revolutionary war against the peoples of Indochina. In the period 1968-1977 the British Government expected to spend £1200 million on American made weapons. The 'realistic' economists of the Government knew that one of the ways to help plug the hole on Britain's balance of payments was to get in on the Vietnam war.

Companies like Rolls Royce, Elliott-Automation, Plessey, Hawker Siddeley, Handley Page, Short Brothers & Harland, British Hovercraft Corporation and Decca Navigator all did get in on the act. The mangled and tortured bodies of the Indochinese peasants counted for nothing against the rattle of dollars that flowed into the coffers of British capitalism.

Never noted for accuracy or adherence to socialist ideas, George Brown told the House of Commons on 22 January 1968: 'Although Her Majesty's Government do not place any restrictions or conditions on arms sold to the USA, it continues to be our policy not to sell arms specifically for use in Vietnam.'

This was nothing more than a bare-faced evasion, as was proved by the joint Rolls Royce-General Motors contract to supply their Spey engines for the Ling-Temco-Vought Corsair US Navy attack plane. This was the plane widely used from 1967 onwards for bombing and strafing the Vietnamese.

British assistance was not simply restricted to military hardware, however. When the US navy was clearing estuaries blocked by debris British frogmen were used to help in that operation. Questions by left Labour MPs in the House of Commons on the subject of arms for Vietnam were met with downright duplicity. When John Mendelson tabled a question to the Foreign Secretary on the

use of the Skyvan transport plane, it was diverted to the Minister of Technology. This made the question eligible only for a written answer, and excluded any follow-up questions.

DEFENDED

Wilson defended the US right down the line. In a letter dated 16 February 1969 to Bertrand Russell, he claimed: '...the dangers of the situation in Vietnam were not created by the action taken by the United States and South Vietnamese aircraft against certain military targets in North Vietnam.'

When Professor Nguyen Van Hieu, Mr. Dinh Ba Thi and Mr. Pham Van Choung from the liberation forces in South Vietnam wanted to come to Britain, the Labour Home Secretary Frank Soskice curtly refused them permission to enter the country. Roy Jenkins, Soskice's successor at the Home Office, also refused to grant visas to people from North and South

Vietnam claiming that 'it would not be in the national interest'.

Wilson, who has always excelled himself in duplicity and hates to let the chance of a good smear campaign go begging, surpassed himself in this respect at the Labour Party Conference in 1965. Rounding on opponents of British complicity in Vietnam, he told them, 'the right place to take that banner is the Chinese Embassy'. Wilson conveniently ignored the fact that there were no Chinese troops in Vietnam—but then he was looking for US dollars, not talking about socialist principles.

In those six years from 1964 to 1970 the Labour Government peddled its arms to stoke up the imperialist butchery. Its Ministers led for imperialism and shamelessly slandered the heroic struggles of the freedom fighters in Vietnam.

In 1945 it had been the Attlees and the Bevin. In 1964-70 it was the Wilsons, the Jenkinses and the Stewarts. In both cases their commitment to capitalism demonstrated the bankruptcy and treachery of social democracy.

The Provisionals and the bombing campaign - a relevant tactic?

An article 'Behind the Irish Ceasefire' in *Red Weekly* of 20 February asserted that a ceasefire call became inevitable for the Provisionals. The article also castigated the Provisionals on their political acumen (or lack of it) and their political bombing. That you carry such reportage seriously undermines the sincerity of your interest in an Irish revolution.

Your man suffers from a surfeit of advice. Has it ever occurred to him that perhaps an ounce of the IRA's experience is worth more than a ton of his advice. I have always qualified my support for the Irish Republican Army, and in six years of guerrilla war I have seen them emerge as the decisive factor of success against the imperialist. Your reporter says, '...the Provisionals proved more and more unable to get out of the blind alley of their bombing campaign'.



First, there are a number of excellent reasons for the bombing campaign. Symbolically, buildings and factories owned, controlled and exploited by the foreign imperialist are attacked and seen to be attacked. To protect the property of the capitalists the enemy finds it necessary to mount road checks, patrol, and search civilians in the business zones; thus its important tactical value of tying down soldiers who would otherwise be employed in suppressing guerrilla strongholds.

The Government unable to stop the bombings, has to foot an enormous and costly bill, which brings involvement down to an unprofitable level. Profitability—the *raison d'être* of Occupation—is attacked at the roots. The bombing is complementary to the military attacks waged by Provisional units from their areas (the ghetto, the estate, the suburb) against a now depleted force. To a true revolutionary its polarising effect must be seen as favourable. It divides and commits the society into two camps—those for the IRA and those against.

The immediate effect of this is the visibility and magnitude of a mandate. There are no fence-sitters—even the fences have been blown to bits! It creates ammunition for unimaginable propaganda victories: the recent daring raid into the Europa hotel by a bombing team in broad daylight seriously demoralised the Security Forces who thought it impenetrable. Now to call such a tactic with so many propitious effects 'irrelevant' is crass ignorance.

Politically, the bombings increase instability and demonstrate by widespread disorder that the rule of even oppressive laws is impossible. More importantly, it demonstrates that the long, khaki-coloured arm of the law is of capitalist design. The Irish Republican Army of the working class have shown the working class their capabilities and indomitable strength whilst led by a revolutionary vanguard with good politics.

Implicit in the aims, methods and outcome of Provisionalism is the existence of a revolutionary nucleus. The leaders are the only people capable of creating a 32-county, Socialist Republic. They have considered how to carry this out; and if bombing is an ancillary tactic in their arsenal then its use has been decided upon by an authority—the revolutionary guerrilla—and is not to be attacked by an armchair critic.

Second, your man congratulates the Provisional leadership for abandoning (indeed, they have not!) the 'irrelevant' bombings which he insists led to the ceasefire, and then he castigates them for accepting the same ceasefire! Such misrepresentation of the situation is bound to confuse those outsiders attempting genuinely to understand the political violence of the IRA.

The ceasefire is indefinite, and could end tomorrow. It will certainly end soon, for the feeling in Belfast is that the Government are not prepared to relinquish and that certain suspicions of the Provisionals seem to be justified. When it does end, and it becomes patently clear to your man that the Provisionals—apparently *voilà* face—have resumed bombings, how will he explain this to your readers who have been led to believe something different? Not at the expense of the Provisionals I hope.

PETER ARNLIS, Belfast

Living standards - up or down?

I am not satisfied with Chris Balfour's reply to Mike Polley's letter on living standards in *Red Weekly* of 27 March.

Apart from tax bites reducing the percentage of average earnings, we should remember that:

- (a) included in that percentage for the past year are the increases in London allowances for teachers and others;
- (b) during that twelve-month period many groups of workers had a chance to obtain larger settlements to catch up on price increases in previous years under the Tory Government. In fact, if by magic we could keep prices static, it could take up to two years or more for wage increases to be paid to compensate for increased living costs prior to such magic point. Pressure for higher wages follows price increases;
- (c) the Cost of Living Index includes items which, if at all, enter into the budgets of only the tiniest minority of employees. Second-hand Rolls-Royces is an extreme example. If an Index was compiled reflecting the increased living costs of employees, the percentage would be far higher—ask any shopper;
- (d) the decline in quality of many goods. Clothes never last as long as they did, and need to be replaced at shorter intervals—for an extreme example, ask any woman about nylons! Take shoes—some are not even repairable; the synthetic materials used these days are, generally speaking, not as healthy for the feet as leather; others come to pieces (and will the shops always replace them?).

A relative of mine in 1968 replaced an electric shaver which had lasted him ten years—the replacement needed replacing in 1973! Cars are another example; compare today's cars with pre-war makes (which also reflects itself in motor insurance costs). And is furniture as sturdy as it was?

- (e) interest rates are not included in the Cost of Living Index;
- (f) if unemployment is rising, some wage increases are at the expense of redundancy and a lesser number of employees are getting wages which make up the average;
- (g) there is a tendency to pay much higher wages to younger people to deter them from changing jobs. If the average percentage increase for the nuclear family was—or

could be—arrived at, it could be lower.

No doubt there are other factors, but these should be sufficient to indicate that where living standards have risen, it is due to more wives going out to work, with all the extra strains that entails. In my opinion, comrades Polley and Balfour have taken too narrow a view of this matter. —BUNNY EASTON, Southall.

BIRMINGHAM RALLY—Against the Common Market, For a United Socialist States of Europe! Speakers include Ernest Mandel. Thursday 1 May at 7.30pm in Digbeth Civic Hall Assembly Halls. Organised by Birmingham IMG.

RALLY AGAINST THE EEC in Manchester, Friday 2 May at 7.30 pm in the Houldsworth Hall. Speakers: Ernest Mandel; Ernie Roberts (Asst. Gen. Sec., AUEW), Tribune MP. Chair: Bernard Panter (AUEW District Committee).

SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN with the Portuguese Working Class: public meeting Friday 25 April at 7 pm in Friends House, Euston Road, WC1. Speakers from PWOC and British trade union movement.

DAY CONFERENCE to educate and mobilise women for the National Abortion Campaign. Women only. 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 12 April, South Bank Poly Students Union, Rotary St., SE1. Canteen facilities available. Everyone welcome to fund-raising disco after conference 8-12 pm. Late bar.

WEST LONDON THEATRE WORKSHOP, a socialist touring theatre company, with a campaigning play for higher pensions, 'Herpes Fit for Homes', and a second project on the 1926 General Strike for Tech Colleges and TU audiences, needs another administrator, with trade union experience and general administrative skills. Needs flexibility and desire to develop policies/perspectives of work. Involves organising of tours. Driving licence desirable. £30 p.w. Tel. 01-969 9348. 11 Acklam Road, W.10.

Milestone revisited

The Iron Heel by Jack London paperback 75p from the Journeyman Press, 97 Ferme Park Road, London N8 98A

THE APPEARANCE AGAIN in paperback of Jack London's *Iron Heel*, first published in 1907, is perhaps a good time to reassess this milestone in the somewhat sparse history of socialist fiction.

The publishers obviously see the book as a prophetic vision of the rise of fascism and fascist methods—the cover design shows a jackboot stamping on a pro-Allende placard. And to some extent this is true, since it was first published 15 years before the rise of Mussolini. However it contains serious weaknesses of a type which are too often overlooked when judging novels and poetry which identify with the workers' movement.

BASIC CONCEPTS

The novel has its strong points, however. In the early sections, London sets out to explain some of the basic concepts of marxist theory and the ways that capitalism works, through debates and discussions that Eyedhard has with academics and small businessmen. This he does admirably. Similarly Avis's investigation of the case of a worker called Jackson who has had his arm torn off in a mill accident—revealing to her the interrelation of industry, the state and the

REVIEW

The book is in the form of a supposedly unfinished script, written by Avis Everhard, the daughter of a university professor. During its course she becomes a revolutionary under the influence of her husband, Ernest Everhard—depicted in the book as the revolutionary 'superman' extraordinary—and it is the depletion of the relationship between these two which is the book's central flaw.

MOUTHPIECE

Avis is simply the mouthpiece of the author, and nothing of her individual personality is revealed. Ernest, on the other hand, is so crudely over-drawn as the physically, intellectually and politically perfect revolutionary that he appears ludicrous. Avis's adulation of Ernest, the complete identification of her own character and ideas with his, must remain one of the least liberated visions of interpersonal relationships in fiction.

This sharply illustrates the unevenness of revolutionary consciousness at a time when personal and sexual areas of life were still seen as 'private' and unrelated to the class struggle. Avis's conversion to socialism as a result of Ernest's influence, their marriage, her continued devotion to him are taken by London as the unquestionably natural course of events.

Everything is in harmony, love is

press in its relentless quest to extract profit and protect its interests—is excellent.

However the later sections of the novel, when the workers' uprisings are suppressed and the revolutionaries go to the underground, read more like science fiction than socialist writing. London's 'revolutionary party' is an elite group of subversives, using semi-terrorist methods, which is mainly concerned to infiltrate the organs of the class enemy to gain information, rather than build roots in all sections of the masses. Given that the novel was written before the full development of the Bolshevik theory of the party, this is not too surprising, perhaps.

This conception of revolution, which neglects the role of the masses, inevitably colours his depiction of the 'people of the abyss'—unemployed and unemployable, low in intelligence and culture—whom it is the job of the party to free. His vision of the masses fleeing the ghettos, during the ill-fated Chicago Commune, borders on contempt and is full of fear of the dynamic of mass action. Indeed they are portrayed as basically impotent, venal, drunken, and half-mad—a vision of working class anger and action closer to that of the bourgeoisie in its more fearful moments, rather than what one would expect from the pen of a socialist.

Carl Gardner

What's On? *****

'FIGHT THE PROPOSED anti-abortion law—the Abortion (Amendment) Bill' 'No return to back street abortions!' Public meeting Wednesday 16 April at 7.30pm in Grand Committee Room, House of Commons. Broad platform including MPs, trade unionists, speakers from women's groups, etc.

'TO LIVE IN FREEDOM—Israelis/Palestinians in Israel/Palestine?' Film showing by Middlesex Poly Socialist Society, Thursday 17 April at 6pm in Room 525. Admission 30p.

BATH Chile Solidarity Committee public meeting with a film and speakers from the Trades Council and Labour Party. Tuesday 15 April, 8pm, at Labour Party Rooms, Century House, Pierrepont Street, Bath.

FREE THE 14! Free the Press! A special meeting on the forthcoming conspiracy trial of 14 people for leafletting troops and the general question of press freedom, to coincide with the Cardiff ADM of the NUJ. Main speaker: Eamonn McCann. Also: John Hyatt (NUJ member and one of the 14), speakers from local groups of BWNIC 14 Defence Group and Troops Out Movement. Chair: Wynford Hicks ('Wildcat'). Thursday 24 April at the Marchioness of Bute (Upper Room), Frederick Street, Cardiff.

'RECENT TRENDS in Police Organisation'—RAP public meeting, Weds 23 April, 6.45pm in LSE Union Room 5101A, Clare Market, WC2. Speaker: Maureen Kans (teacher in Sociology, Brunel University).

WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER Campaign—London Delegate Conference. 17/18 May at City University, St John's Street, EC1. Open to delegates and observers from all women's groups, trade union branches, Trades Councils, etc in GLC area actively campaigning for the demands of the Charter or interested in joining the Campaign. Closing date for credentials, 19 April. Further information and application forms for credentials from WWWC, 49 Lowther Hill, SE23.

HISTORY WORKSHOP 9: 'Britain between the Wars'. Friday 2 May to Sunday 4 May at Ruskin College, Oxford. Further information from Sid Wills & Sarah Bennett, 49 Elder Avenue, Crouch End, London N.8.

FOR CHEAP, reliable IBM Typesetting with fast turn-around phone Carl or Martin on 01-837 9987.

IMG GAY GROUP: contact J. Mills, 153 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds.

DEFEND THE 14: Public meeting in defence of the 14 pacifists charged with conspiracy to contravene the Incitement to Disaffection Act. Speakers include: Joan Waynard MP, Maureen Colquhoun MP, Ernie Roberts (Asst. Gen. Sec. AUEW), Bill Hetherington (defendant). Saturday 3 May at 2 pm in NUFTO Hall, Jockey's Fields, Holborn, WC1.

SHEFFIELD RED CIRCLES: Every Wednesday at 7.30pm in the Lion Hotel (corner of the Wicker and Nursery St).

African regimes play Vorster's game

On 28 March the Zambian Home Affairs Minister, announced the arrest of a number of Rhodesian nationalist leaders—mostly belonging to the Zimbabwe African National Union. They were said to have been rounded up and detained for questioning in connection with the murder the previous week of former ZANU chairman, Herbert Chitepo.

The arrests took place at 7pm 23 March when ZANU members were still mourning Chitepo at his house in Lusaka. The Minister, Aaron Milner, refused to give the number arrested, but witnesses said that armed police stormed into the house and ordered 'at least 70 men' into trucks. Some of the arrested men had come from the rural areas and from overseas to attend the funeral.

At the same time Milner announced the closure of the offices of ZANU, ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union) and FROLIZI (Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe) in Lusaka. Only the ANC (African National Council) would be allowed to continue operations in Zambia. The registration of the other three groups (necessary by Zambian law for any organisation) would be cancelled 'until the nationalists honour the Lusaka accord which brought them under the umbrella of ANC'.

GRAVE EFFECTS

The possibly grave effects of this action for the armed wing of ZANU, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), were underlined in Salisbury by Robert Mugabe, ZANU Secretary General. If the detained men were all effective members in the military wing then it would provide big problems for maintaining the supply lines to the freedom fighters in the field.

However Mugabe stressed that 'they would certainly carry on on the strength of their own supplies and what they could manage to bring in on their own'. Underlining ZANU's determination to continue the campaign of armed struggle, he said: 'It would not mean that the war had come to an end'.

At a press conference on 28 March, Milner, referring to the murder of Chitepo, said: 'One cannot say it wasn't Smith's agents. One cannot say it wasn't ZANU'. This disgusting betrayal of the Zimbabwe revolution effectively places the militants of ZANU alongside the racist Smith regime, instead of exposing the fact that the murder of Chitepo was clearly directed by the latter.

The purpose of this campaign is to smash up the wing of the movement which has most consistently argued and fought for the principle of immediate majority rule. If this can be done then perhaps a deal can be reached with other sections of the movement, none of whom have adhered consistently to immediate majority rule, and none of whom have the effective guerilla force in the field possessed by ZANU.

'DETENTE' STRATEGY

This action to cripple ZANU is a logical part of the whole strategy which the Zambian Government of President Kaunda has been pursuing for the past six months in its attempts to reach further 'detente' with South Africa. A settlement of the Rhodesia question has been the lynch pin of this effort. Without this it would be quite

Recent events in Rhodesia amount to a big crisis for the much-vaunted 'detente' in Southern Africa. The efforts of the white racist Rhodesian Government to frame the leader of the militant ZANU wing of the nationalist movement, on a charge of conspiring to murder his more 'moderate' colleagues, have blown up in their face. They have shamefacedly had to drop these absurd allegations, and lock up the Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole on the straightforward charge that he was opposed to selling-out the interests of the black majority of Zimbabwe (the nationalists' name for their country).

But it is not the racists alone who want to smash the militants in the hope that 'moderate' elements in the African National Council (ANC — the 'unification' of all the different nationalist groups engineered by the white racists and leaders of the black African states last year) can be bullied and cajoled into going along with a sell-out. This is also the tactic of several major black African Governments in the area, who hope to make up for their own inability to break with imperialism and world capitalism by fostering close economic ties with the white racists of Rhodesia and South Africa.

Several weeks ago the self-proclaimed 'socialist' Government of Tanzania shut down ZANU offices in their capital city, and they have now been joined by the Zambian Government. In this article JOHN BLAIR, writing from Zambia, discusses the repressive moves being taken in that country against the Zimbabwe militants, and warns of the dangers for the fight against imperialism in southern Africa.



Racist justice in Rhodesian court—major obstacle to 'normalisation' of South Africa's relations with black states to the North

impossible to maintain the illusion that Zambia stands in the forefront of the struggle against the racist regime.

To this end talks between Smith and the liberation movements were set up in Zambia in December. Here a commitment was supposedly made by Rhodesian representatives to the holding of a constitutional conference before the end of March, to lay out the steps towards majority rule. The Rhodesian Government was also supposed to have undertaken to release the 400-odd political detainees currently in his prisons. Of course nothing has been done towards these ends—bar the release of about 60 detainees.

In this situation it was fast becoming clear that the militants of ZANU had been correct when they said that the 'detente' moves were simply a cover for the indefinite continuation of white rule. By making this frontal attack on ZANU, Kaunda hopes to persuade Smith that Zambia is carrying out its side of the deal. In this way Smith can perhaps be persuaded to make some concessions to the 'moderate' (read 'sell-out') sections of ANC. This will then be sold to the world as a victory for 'detente'.

In the face of these manoeuvres by one of the smoothest of Africa's neo-colonial operators, the task of the revolutionary movement world-wide is to demand:

1. Immediate release of all the detained ZANU militants in Zambia;
2. Increased support for the ZANU fighters;
3. A complete end to any contacts and negotiations by any African state with the racist regimes of the south;
4. Recognition that the only authority to negotiate the future of Zimbabwe rests with the people of Zimbabwe themselves.



DEATH OF FAISAL - BLOW FOR US IMPERIALISM

Just as Kissinger was leaving the Middle East after his failure to negotiate a deal between Egypt and Israel, US imperialism had the misfortune to lose its most reliable ally in the entire area: King Feisal of Saudi Arabia, murdered by one of his nephews.

The assassination of Feisal threatens to undermine the political gains so carefully pieced together by the US over the last ten years. Through its oil production, and its strategic geographical position, Saudi Arabia had managed to achieve a dominant position inside the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

At the time of the last oil crisis, King Feisal personally took charge of the situation, refusing to go against the interests of his American allies. The Saudi monarch's action neutralised the stand of countries like Algeria—to the advantage of the US. The Pentagon didn't hesitate to give Saudi Arabia vast amounts of arms and technical aid—in return, naturally, for a share in the extraction of the 'black gold'.

Feisal's second role was as policeman for the Arabian peninsula, alongside the Shah of Iran. Not only did he establish a reign of terror in his own country, but he played a major role in 'maintaining order in the region'. His 'advisers' are in the field today in the struggle against the heroic people of Oman. Feisal was also instrumental in setting up the reactionary Federation of Emirates, made up of a number of tiny sheikhdoms.

But his role didn't stop there: a fanatical Arab nationalist, he gave financial support to certain regimes like those in Egypt and Syria in order to bring about a reactionary solution to the Palestinian problem.

Feisal's personality was undeniably important in helping to establish his dominant position. A devout Moslem to the point of trying to halt all social progress in his country; the descendant of Bedouin tribesmen; the guardian of feudal traditions—he succeeded, thanks to his country's riches, in creating around himself a mystique which was vitally important in his dealings in the Arab world.

His death leaves a gap which will hardly be filled by his successor, King Khalid. The latter is a colourless figure, an invalid engrossed in camel racing, who is incapable of following in Feisal's footsteps as a distinguished servant of imperialism. The strong man of the regime will be the new Crown Prince Fahd—who, however, will have

to face an internal struggle against an emerging capitalist class which has so far been relegated to the background of events.

In foreign policy, there is no alternative but to continue on the course set by the assassinated king. With the death of Feisal, however, the US will be more and more inclined towards reliance on the Shah of Iran instead. And for revolutionaries, the fact that they have just lost one of their most reliable allies can only be a matter for rejoicing.

INTERNATIONAL A NEW ISSUE OF THE IMG'S THEORETICAL JOURNAL

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THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN EUROPE

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE BRITISH RULING CLASS

PORTUGAL - ONE YEAR OF TURKISH
CHILE - THE COUP AND AFTER

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PORTUGAL

Armed Forces Movement intervenes in elections

THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT, the main political force in Portugal today, has run into difficulty with its attempt to make a deal with the various political parties taking part in the upcoming election. The AFM had hoped to get the main parties to agree in advance that the new constitution they are to draw up will leave political power centred in the hands of the AFM for the next 3 to 5 years.

But so far only the Communist Party and what is basically its front group, the Portuguese Democratic Movement, and two groups to the left of the CP—the Left Socialist Movement (MES) and the Popular Socialist Front (FSP)—have accepted the AFM's scheme.

The rejection of this proposal by the main bourgeois parties—the Popular Democrats and the Centre Democrats—stems from the fact that they are not satisfied with the record of the AFM in holding back the mass struggles, and want an army which will be a reliable instrument of repression on behalf of the capitalists. They are convinced that the only way to do that is to get the military out of politics and away from the mass pressures to which they are subjected at all levels in their present role.

REVOLUTIONARY LEFT

But it was not only the bourgeois parties that turned the AFM down—they got the cold-shoulder as well from groups on the revolutionary left. These groups understand that the AFM is a very diverse grouping, which contains within it all sorts of different political currents, including outright reactionaries. To hand political power to the AFM does not avoid the struggle over the different ways forward in Portugal, it simply bottles it up inside the army (indeed, inside the ranks of the officers) where the ability of the working class to make its demands felt is relatively weak.

But there are even more basic reasons why the Communist Party's strategy of relying on the AFM to defend democracy and working class interests is disastrous.

As the Portuguese Trotskyists of the International Communist League point out, the development of capitalist crisis and working class upheaval in Portugal not only makes it possible

for the working class to take power, it rules out any long term 'middle ground' solution between working class power and a new reactionary takeover. The only way to defend democracy and choke off the threat of reaction for good is by smashing the political rule of the capitalist state and putting in its place a workers' state.

This is certainly not a fight which the AFM can lead. Indeed, even the more 'progressive' elements in the AFM are opposed to workers' power. For example, one of the most left-wing elements in its leadership, Brigadier Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, commander of the military security force COPCON, spent most of the three days following the abortive coup demanding that the workers give up their barricades, roadblocks and armed patrols and let him run things.

Of course, the ranks of the army

can be a part of the mass movement—provided they are able to break away from the hierarchy and system of discipline that the capitalist state has imposed on them (something the AFM seeks to defend). Certainly, there may also be many left-wing officers who would be prepared to support such moves and place themselves alongside the working class in the fight for a socialist Portugal.

WAY FORWARD

But the way forward is shown not by the class collaboration of the CP, but by developments like those that have taken place in RAL 1—the left-wing artillery unit that was attacked on 11 March. There the military hierarchy has been partly pushed aside and replaced by democratic mass meetings of all ranks.

The role of those who want to build socialism in Portugal is not to sow illusions in the mixed political bag that leads the AFM, but to promote the independent, democratic organisation of both workers and soldiers, and to encourage the linking up at all levels of elected soldiers' committees and workers' committees.

This would destroy the capitalist army—the lynchpin of capitalist class rule. It would push the AFM aside, but allow it to be replaced by a workers' government basing itself on the organised struggle of the masses—including the 'workers in uniform'.



SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED IN BRITAIN

AN IMPORTANT move has been taken by the Portuguese Workers Coordinating Committee (PWCC)—a group of militants in this country who have been organising links and forms of solidarity between Portuguese workers and British workers for the past two years.

In response to the 11 March coup and the growing crusade against the gains of the Portuguese working class in the press of the imperialist world, the PWCC has decided to launch a 'Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class'.

As they point out in the Manifesto of the Campaign:

It is not by accident that the British mass media are simultaneously supporting right-wing coups in Portugal, campaigning for the Common Market, and attacking the British labour movement, accusing it of greediness and excessive wage demands, calling for statutory wage controls. If thought necessary, British troops, now being used to break the Glasgow dustmen's strike, will tomorrow be

sent to Portugal to crush the Portuguese working class. When the system is in crisis, wherever it may be, the workers must pay...

Portuguese workers are now bearing the brunt of the attack carried out by the united capitalist class of all Western countries. Through their agencies, within and outside Portugal, whether they be ex-General Spínola, the National Republican Guard or NATO, CIA, Interpol, the CBI or the CII; they are determined to smash the Portuguese working class by whatever means necessary.

If they succeed and a Chile-type coup takes place, ending in the massacre of Portuguese workers, it is the whole of the European labour movement that will be defeated. Then the bosses will gain strength and it will not just be Industrial Relations Acts, imprisoned pickets and social contracts that British workers will have to face. It will be Industrial Relations Acts and statutory wage controls, anti-picketing laws and anti-immigration legislation, backed up by the whole might of the state's repressive apparatus.

It is our duty to stop the intervention of NATO and foreign troops in Portugal. It is our duty to stop any economic boycott of Portugal, whether by the multinationals or by the finance institutions. Without the support of the British and European working classes, Portuguese workers cannot succeed.

UNITED WE SHALL WIN—DIVIDED WE SHALL FALL.

The PWCC urges trade unionists to support the campaign by: 1. inviting a member of the PWCC to speak at branch, trades council or shop stewards meeting; 2. moving resolutions of support for the Portuguese working class in its struggle for socialism to go to union conferences, and urging union National Committees to invite PWCC speakers to Conference; 3. subscribing to the PWCC newsletter *Our Common Struggle*; 4. getting trade union and Labour Party bodies to affiliate to the campaign.

For further details of the campaign write to: PWCC, 18 Fleet Road, London, NW3. Subscriptions to *Our Common Struggle* (latest issue just out) to the same address: £1 for 10 issues. Single copies also available from Red Books, 97 Caledonian Road, London, N1. (price 8p., including p&p).

Why Trotskyists are standing

THE REVOLUTIONARY ELECTION CAMPAIGN of the International Communist League, Portuguese sympathising organisation of the Fourth International, got off to a good start on Tuesday 1 April when a member of the LCI's Central Committee, Francisco Sardo, appeared on national television to discuss 'the lessons of 11 March'.

The LCI opened up its campaign immediately after a highly successful national meeting of its 'adherents'—those who had declared their support for the LCI and its programme in order to put it onto the ballot. Below we reprint an extract from the Election Manifesto of the LCI, in which the comrades explain why they are standing.

Defeated on the terrain of mass struggle, the bourgeoisie is seeking to channel onto the electoral terrain the combativity of which the masses have shown themselves capable. They are seeking to turn the attention of the masses away from the real centres of struggle where their future will be decided—the anti-capitalist struggle of the masses in the factories, the working class neighbourhoods, the barracks, and the streets, the creation of autonomous organisations of the workers' struggle, independent of the bosses and their state—and to turn their attention towards a false objective: elections, where the bourgeoisie hope to see a major victory of their parties (the Popular Democratic Party, the Centre Democrats).

On the basis of such a victory the bourgeoisie will seek to reconstitute and reinforce the machinery of the state which serves them, place new limitations on the social, trade union and political rights of the working class, and so prepare for a new offensive against the living and working standards of the workers and all working people...

Nevertheless, we understand that it is important to raise the voice of

Assembly to restrict the trade union and political rights of the workers, peasants and soldiers;

'To defend the unity of the working class, the united front of the class, as the only effective way in which to struggle against exploitation, reaction, and the political power of the capitalists, to defend proletarian methods of struggle, and to criticise the reformist methods of class collaboration and the gradual and peaceful passage to socialism;

'To advocate the programme and revolutionary government of the working class;

'To advocate the road of the revolutionary general strike and the armed insurrection of the masses to destroy the capitalist state and set up the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism;

'To fight colonialism and neo-colonialism, and imperialist penetration in Portugal;

'To promote proletarian internationalism, through revolutionary support for the struggles of workers throughout the world.

It is for these purposes that the LCI is presenting candidates in the elections, aware of the role which it must play in the electoral process: to promote the unity of the working class and, at the same time, to present an alternative, a revolutionary solution, to the economic and political crisis of Portugal, and a solution to the crisis of revolutionary leadership for the workers' struggles: the construction of a mass revolutionary workers' party...



LCI leaflet put out during abortive coup

revolutionaries in the election campaign and in the Constituent Assembly itself.

'To denounce all forms of capitalist oppression and exploitation of the workers, peasants, and soldiers, and to push forward the struggle to defend their working and living conditions, the struggle for their social and economic rights;

'To denounce all the manoeuvres of capitalist reaction—economic sabotage, the preparation of new reactionary attacks—and to promote forms of struggle and organisation against capitalist reaction, both internally and internationally;

'To expose the intentions of the capitalists to use the Constituent

RED WEEKLY

SHREWSBURY Shell shows the way

'When is the Labour Government going to release Dennis Warren and Eric Tomlinson?' wrote Alan Tattam, London Regional Organiser of UCATT, the building workers union, in the Communist Party's paper the *Morning Star* on Friday 4 April. He then answered his own question: 'The evidence is only after massive industrial action.'

But the 'evidence' is that little action will be forthcoming from

the Communist Party in the wake of the TUC's decision to 'leave on the table' the resolution from the Transport and General Workers Union Executive calling for a one-day general strike to free the Shrewsbury Two.

Nothing can now be done by the TUC before its next General Council meeting at the end of April. In reporting the TUC decision the *Morning Star* (27/3/75)



Lobbies of the TUC have not produced the desired effect. So why has the LCDTU not lived up to its promise that it would then organise a stoppage?

wrote: 'The conference organised last weekend by the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions decided if the TUC did not call the stoppage and day of action on May 1 then the liaison committee would.'

SILENCE

Since then the Liaison Committee has been silent. Its leaders have not even issued a statement since the TUC meeting saying they are still in favour of strike action on May Day. And if they are, serious preparation has been conspicuously absent. No mass meetings in factories or local areas have been called. No leaflets have been published and distributed explaining why such a strike is necessary.

Meanwhile the Labour Government's attacks on picketing go on. The strike at the Eldon Square site in Newcastle is now four months old and the ten pickets arrested in late January and formally committed to Crown Court have still not been told the date set for the trial.

The Communist Party, which has been significantly silent about this

new attack on pickets, in a strike which the local T&GWU and UCATT bureaucracies have done all in their power to smash, have instead been busy denouncing the 'slander' that they have wound up the North Wales Shrewsbury Defence Committee. This body has merged into the National Shrewsbury Coordinating Committee which is holding a national conference on Saturday 19 April.

Quite what initiatives this committee has 'co-ordinated' to date remains a mystery, but delegates must fight for it to take up the defence of the Eldon Square pickets as well as fighting for strike action to free the Shrewsbury Two.

At the rank and file level some steps have been taken. Stewards at the Shell Stanlow site at Ellesmere Port are recommending strike action to 350 construction workers on 1 May to demand the release of the jailed pickets. The fact that this action is being taken even at this late stage, and despite the demoralisation caused by the pointless protest campaign of the Communist Party leadership and the bureaucracy,



GLASGOW: Spread the strikes Troops out now

FOR THREE WEEKS NOW, strike-breaking troops have been in the streets of Glasgow. They have been carrying out a massive scabbing operation on behalf of a Labour Government determined to defend the social contract, and a corrupt and bankrupt Labour Corporation determined to defend its own position.

The Corporation's dustcart drivers and electricians, against whose strikes this onslaught is directed, have displayed the same fighting determination that highlighted the Scottish strike wave at the end of 1974. But despite the tenacity of the strikers, no clear strategy has emerged for a fight by the entire labour movement of the West of Scotland to get the troops out of Glasgow and defend the wages and living standards of the Corporation workers.

While the trade union bureaucrats sit on the rest of the Glasgow labour movement, the army are becoming increasingly ambitious in their operations. The troops are now clearing over 2000 tons of rubbish a day, compared with 600 tons a day at the beginning of the operations when they were faced with mass pickets at the incinerators.

Only council drivers in Dundee, Port Glasgow, Gourock, Greenock and Bellshill - who have struck in solidarity with the Glasgow drivers and Glasgow firemen - who have refused to put out fires caused by spontaneous combustion on the rubbish dumps because of the use of the army against their strike in 1975 - have taken the type of action necessary to halt Labour's strike-breaking.

SETBACKS

The strikes have suffered serious setbacks in the last week. The electricians' action which closed Glasgow airport has ended, and the pickets have been withdrawn. The sparks are now the subject of a witch-hunt by Frank McElhone, Labour MP for Queens Park, who is trying to blame

shows that a serious campaign for strike action to free the two could still succeed.

Shrewsbury Two National Co-ordinating Committee National Conference, Saturday 19 April, 2 pm - 5 pm Congress House, Great Russell Street, London W.C.1. Basis of representation, two delegates from each organisation. Apply for credentials (10p each) to: S. Fraser, 33 Hatton Gardens, Liverpool, Merseyside L3 2AA.

Donations and resolutions of support to the Newcastle Scaffolders Strike should be sent to Strike Committee, c/o Eddie Brady, 86 Beuwell Lane, Newcastle on Tyne (phone 0632 32365).

eshold payments to give automatic protection to all salaries against the effects of inflation.

These tasks will be amongst those facing the open conference of socialist teachers called for by many delegates at Blackpool.

For a full report on the NUT debate on the Working Women's Charter, see page four.

by the trade union bureaucracy to build action against the use of troops and in support of the strikers. The Scottish Labour Party conference in one of the most disgraceful votes in recent years, voted overwhelmingly against a resolution calling for the withdrawal of the troops.

Meanwhile, last week the General Purposes Committee of the Transport & General Workers Union rejected out of hand a call to make the twelve-week-old drivers' strike official. Jack Jones, praised and defended on the picket lines by Glasgow Communist Party bureaucrat Hugh Wyper, had a 'previous appointment' and left the drivers standing on the doorstep of Transport House.

NEGOTIATIONS

Not surprisingly the mood within the Corporation's Establishment Committee, which is responsible for the negotiations, is confident. A move from their 'sawdust Caesar' James Cannell to regrade offers to manual workers was rejected by 20 votes to 12.

The Communist Party elements in the bureaucracy, who have for three weeks held back all the strikers' attempts to organise support action through a West of Scotland stewards meeting, are now cautiously muttering under pressure about the possibility of such a meeting. For them, however, its only function would be to applaud their own efforts up to now as a 'back to work' squad.

The real task facing a West of Scotland stewards meeting is to turn the fighting spirit of the Glasgow strike waves from simple defence of individual struggles to an all-out offensive to get the troops out of Glasgow, win the strikes, and smash the social contract.

by
GLASGOW IMG

the death in a high-rise flat of an old woman with a heart condition on the electricians' action which put lifts out of action. This smear has been seized on by Labour's Corporation hacks and MPs, who are demanding that BEPTU boss Frank Chapple instruct the electricians to put the lifts back in action. The actions of McElhone, one of the three Labour MPs who originally opposed the use of troops, have only been made possible by the abandonment of any attempt

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PRENTICE RAVES ON Continued from page 1

This could have provided the framework for workers within education to gain broad support in the labour movement, and put teachers in a better position to defend both their own interests and those of the working class as a whole in defence of the education system. The Executive also moved hard against attempts to get Conference to accept the Working Women's Charter

It is clear that the fight back in the NUT against the social contract and the education cuts is going to be a hard one. The executive managed to get the conference to accept the 1975 wage claim - a claim within the social contract. While the moves to the sliding scale of pensions is a step forward it needs to be extended to wages by demanding across-the-board increases and 'nil-norm' thr-

eshold payments to give automatic protection to all salaries against the effects of inflation. These tasks will be amongst those facing the open conference of socialist teachers called for by many delegates at Blackpool.