

The Red Mole

No.41 1 May 1972 Price 7½ p

NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COURT

**NO
RECOGNITION!**

**TOWARDS POLITICAL REVOLUTION IN EASTERN EUROPE
ENGINEERS CLAIM - LEEDS AND MANCHESTER
IRELAND - NEW STRUGGLES, NEW FRONTS
WIDGERY REPORT • NUS CONFERENCE
VIETNAMESE OFFENSIVE • ROBIN BLACKBURN JOINS F.I.
LABOUR PARTY**

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Red Mole TUC RETREAT LETS IN GOVERNMENT

The dispute over the railwaymen's pay claim and over the blacking of lorries in the Liverpool docks has not been as spectacular as, for example, the shootings in Ireland, the previous miners' strike and so on. Nevertheless the outcome of these struggles is having important effects on the form which the class struggle will take in the next few years.

The first thing to note is that the government has in no way altered its fundamental policy with regard to the tactic of dealing with the trade unions. It has upped the accepted norm for wage increases by a few percentage points but that is all. The basic strategy of the government is still not to seek a deal with the leaders of the trade union bureaucracy, but rather to weaken the trade union movement as a whole. It is precisely in such a situation that the hopelessness and bankruptcy of the TUC is shown most clearly, because it is a situation in which room for manoeuvre is virtually nil. The previous situation which the TUC in particular sought was one where it was the arbitrator between the men engaged in a struggle and the employers. The two great 'conciliation' services for the bourgeoisie were the government and the TUC. They were supposed to stand outside both parties in a dispute and arrange a 'just' settlement. Now, however, this is no longer the case. The government no longer even makes the pretence of being neutral, and intervenes directly and immediately on the side of the employers. In that situation there is little role for the TUC because its only real role has been as messenger boy between unions and government, and where the government does not want to talk then the TUC has no message of importance. The situation of 'free', 'independent' bargaining, and therefore the idea of 'impartial' arbitration by TUC and government is now severely dented.

The big political danger for the ruling class in all this is of course that the working class will draw lessons as regards the nature of the law and the State. Of course the implications of the Industrial Relations Act have been spelt out on paper for a year and a half, but the working class does not have legal training. It is only now, when the act is actually being used, that it can clearly begin to understand what all the fuss was about. From now on a long drawn out and bitter fight is certain.

Amongst the first to feel the reality of this new situation have been the TUC and the 'left' trade union leaderships. Previously they appear to have thought that they could maintain an apparent image of militancy simply by doing a lot of talking and making a few empty gestures. *Tribune* probably reflected their opinion when it said that it was "out of the question" that the government could use the Industrial Relations Act against a work to rule. Now they have been brought down to earth with a jolt. The £55,000 fine on the TGWU ensured that. This has been rapidly followed by the finding that a union is responsible for all the acts of its members, and reports that the TUC will be held in contempt of court if it expels the National Union of Seamen. Their windbags punctured, the TUC has begun to beat a hasty retreat. The government is indeed correct in believing that the decision to allow unions to appear before the NIRC will only be the thin end of the wedge to complete *de facto* recognition of the Act. The Union leaderships of the railwaymen have of course already gone a long way down the slippery track by their recognition of the Court's ruling. Once however the TUC embarks on this course it has to face new dangers—this time from the left. The fear of the TUC leadership must be that if they do comply with the Act the leaderships of the TGWU and AUEW, in order to maintain their own positions in their unions, will start a process of differ-

entiating themselves from Feather and Co., The first sign of this may be the decision of the AUEW conference to oppose any recognition of the NIRC, at the same time that Feather is hinting that unions will be allowed to appear and defend themselves in the Court. Typically, however, the AUEW also decided to call on the TUC to set up a fund to pay any fines incurred under the Act—when to pay is *de facto* to recognise the right of the Court to impose such fines. Once however the facade of unity is destroyed anything could happen. An eventual split in the TUC along purely political lines could not be ruled out.

The Labour Party is caught in even more of a cleft stick. If it is to become an alternative government to Heath in the eyes of the ruling class then it must show it can keep control of Scanlon and Jones. The best way to do that would be if the TUC can maintain its own internal unity. To achieve that, however, Feather must be able to give some indication that the Act will be removed from the statute book by any future Labour government. But the ruling class is extremely unlikely to swallow that, and it is hardly likely to accept Jack Jones' scheme for the setting up of 'independent' arbitration machinery as a substitute. What is likely to occur is simply vague promises of 'modifications' to the Act which will satisfy neither working class nor bourgeoisie. Wilson is in fact relatively trapped in a dead end with little obvious way out. The Labour left is equally trapped. Not one significant dissenting voice

Lorry is blacked by Liverpool dockers

came out against Callaghan's assertion that the law must be observed in the railwaymen's dispute.

THE NEED FOR RANK AND FILE ORGANISATION

In a situation where trade union militants will be squeezed by government, employers, and trade unions, caution is likely to become the watch word. On the one hand many militants are likely to think twice before launching even a local struggle which will run into head on conflict with the government and power of the State. On the other many trade unionists will be swayed by arguments about 'not being responsible for dealing the union a financial blow'.

Isolated unco-ordinated actions are hardly likely to be successful in such a situation. A more solidly built rank and file organisation to fight both the government and inside the union will be needed. There is almost certain to be the intensification of a process which is already underway—the creation of rank and file movements, newspapers, tendencies and groupings. The success of these will depend on how far they are capable of thrashing out a real programme for struggle. But from now on one thing should be clear—it is impossible for any rank and file organisation to avoid the question of government. It is not possible to fight the power of the State simply through one or a few trade unions. The only way the trade unions can be defended is through a struggle at the level of government and the State. To convince trade union militants of this fact is the task of revolutionaries in the coming period.



EDITORIAL BOARD: Tariq Ali, Dave Bailey, Robin Blackburn, J.R. Clynes, Peter Gowan, Alan Jones, Pat Jordan, Branka Magas, Martin Meteyard, Bob Purdie, Daniel Rose.

DESIGN: David Craddock

DISTRIBUTION: Phil Sanders

Published by Relgocrest for *The Red Mole*,
182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.
01-837 6954.

Printed by F.I. Litho (T.U.) Ltd.
182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.
01-837 9987

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ENGINEERS PAY CLAIM LEEDS

The following is an interview with Terry Jaques, the shop stewards convenor at the Hoe-Crabtree engineering plant in Leeds. The workers at the plant decided to occupy the factory on Monday, 17 April, following the suspension of six men after a work to rule was imposed in support of the engineers' claim for better pay and conditions. At the time of writing the factory is still under occupation. Terry Jaques is also a member of the Leeds District Committee of the AUEW.

—Can you outline the origins and the details of the engineers' claim in Leeds.

The origins of the claim date back to the 1970 National Committee of the AUEW, which decided to submit a claim for a basic rate of £25 for skilled engineering workers and £20 for labourers with varying amounts for intermediate grades. This was to be the basis of the new wages application after the termination of the three year package deal in December 1971. There was a whole host of other details such as the reduction of the working week from forty to thirty-five hours, the abolition of penalty clauses for holidays, one week extra holiday with average pay or time and a third—whichever is the greater—and equal pay for women.

When the negotiations broke down at national level the National Committee decided to ask the districts to submit the claim at a district level. The Leeds AUEW District Committee decided to ask all shop stewards committees to submit, basically, the national claim but they were allowed a certain amount of autonomy to alter any details which they felt did not apply to their particular factory.

—What do you think of the decision of the National Committee to refer the claim back to the districts?

I disagree with this decision. I disagreed then

and I disagree even more now. I feel that this is an abnegation of their responsibility to lead a national struggle in the engineering industry which I think we could have fought and won, and if we had adopted the policy that we in Leeds and other districts have adopted we could have crippled the country in a very short space of time.

—How did the present dispute at Hoe-Crabtree start?

We gave notice to the management that we were going to work to rule in support of our claim and we made clear that this meant one man one job, that is, we would only expect people to do the work they were set on to do. When the work to rule started the fitters gave notice that they were no longer prepared to carry on doing slinging work, which is recognised throughout the industry as a specialised job for slingers. The management claimed that custom had established that slinging was part of a fitter's job and that they expected them to continue doing this work. Our local District Secretary suggested that the fitters should in fact continue to do this work but the fitters shop stewards disagreed and refused to accept this suggestion. The management then issued six men with written suspensions. I immediately called a meeting of all the shop stewards in the establishment and we agreed that we had to support the six suspended men. The shop stewards then asked the men in their departments to stop work and not resume until the suspension had been lifted. Thirty minutes later we were all informed that payment of wages had been stopped and that if we weren't prepared to start work again we might as well all go home. We regarded this as meaning we were all suspended.

What is the situation at the factory now?

There are approximately 800 men altogether employed at the factory but only 515 come under our claim for better wages and conditions and this is the number actually involved in the lock-out and taking part in the occupation.

—What has the attitude of the men been to the idea of using occupations as a tactic?

Well, the whole situation that has developed this week took everybody by surprise, even

myself to a certain extent. We didn't think that the work to rule would result in a confrontation so quickly. When we were all suspended we had to take a decision quickly and we hadn't given this much thought. So, when I suggested to the workers that we ought to occupy the factory the lads were a bit perplexed and wondering what it was all about.

It's only now, after nearly a week of the occupation, that they are beginning to organise themselves and some of the shop stewards are beginning to realise that there is some merit to this type of industrial action as against the orthodox strike situation where we would all go down and man picket lines in the cold and wet.

Factory occupations seem to be becoming an increasingly popular tactic amongst workers generally, yet a few years ago the idea of factory occupations would have been regarded as ridiculous. Why do you think there has been this change of attitude?

I think there has been a gradual change in the attitude of workers generally over the last ten years. Workers are far more militant now than they ever were and are refusing to tolerate things which a few years ago they took as the natural course of events. I see the trend towards factory occupations as just one more step in the direction of the general increase in militancy and workers insisting on a far greater say in the running of the industries in which they work.

—Do you think that the victory of the miners strike had a big impact amongst other sections of the working class?

Oh yes, without a doubt the miners strike was a corner stone in this general trend. There was a danger that with the advent of the Industrial Relations Bill and the defeat of the Post Office workers that this militant trend could have been reversed. The miners put a stop to this and I think that they gave a lot of confidence to workers who were feeling a bit depressed and were thinking that the pendulum was now swinging the other way and that the employers were getting the upper hand with the help of their Tory government and the Industrial Relations Act.

—The government have taken their time in using the Industrial Relations Act but the re-

cent attacks on the railwaymen and the T&GWU suggest that they might now be intending to use the full force of the Act against the Trade Unions. Do you think that the government are now going to intensify their attack on the Trade Unions and continue their policy of a direct confrontation?

Well, the government's whole philosophy is to attack the working class movement, so I don't think there has been any change in that respect. I think they have been a little clever and have been biding their time to find a section of the working class they think they can defeat with the Industrial Relations Act. They could have invoked the Act against the miners and there's no shadow of a doubt that they would have received an even greater defeat than they did. Quite frankly, I think they have taken a terrific gamble in trying to use it against a section of the T&GWU in the Liverpool docks because I don't think they can defeat the dockers. The question of the railways is a different kettle of fish. The NUR has never really been militant. We've always had a lot of midnight confrontations with Sidney Greene making noises which very rarely ever got anywhere. I feel that the government think they can use the Industrial Relations Act against the railwaymen because they have a good chance of getting the railwaymen's leaders to back down and I think they're right. It was the same with the Post Office workers. The government knew they were on a good thing in taking on the P.O. Workers Union, a union with very little history of militancy, and they defeated them overwhelmingly.

—Do you think there is a danger that the ruling class will turn to people like Harold Wilson in an attempt to do a deal with the Trade Union leadership and integrate the Trade Unions instead of taking them on in a direct confrontation?

Yes, I think that this is a serious possibility. A lot of people thought that the Trade Unions would be weakened by legislation. This is clearly not the case. There is more industrial strife than there was before. There is certainly a strong possibility that overturned will be made to certain leaders inside the Trade Union movement who would be only too willing to respond.

Interview by Ron Thompson.

MANCHESTER

The engineering dispute in Greater Manchester is almost deadlocked. Since the report in the last *Red Mole* was written there have been several new occupations. There has also been one settlement - at Davies, Metcalfe in Romily, the second plant to be occupied.

But the general pattern is one of about equal moves on either side. About 30 firms, including a lot of firms in the Engineering Employers Federation, have settled. Most of the agreements reached include concessions on the four points - pay, hours, holidays and equal pay for women (in the cases in which women are affected). Agreements that do not include something on all points are not being ratified by the AUEW engineering district committee. Also those which include concessions on hours contain a 'no publicity' clause as the individual firms involved don't want to follow in the footsteps of Scraggs and be thrown out of the E.E.F.

An example of the role of the E.E.F. is the case of a large engineering firm in East Manchester, Mather and Platt. One of the directors - Morton - is the chairman of the local E.E.F. A very bad settlement, involving only money, nothing on hours and conditions, was accepted by the stewards on Monday, 17 April. The next day, at a national level, the E.E.F. announced the sending of £1 million plus to its member firms in this area to help them fight the claim.

And on the same day, locally, an offer of concessions on all three points at one Openshaw factory was withdrawn by management after a phone-call from the management at Mather and Platt. This is concrete evidence that, given the way the unions are fighting the claim, some firms are bound to breach the solidarity of the E.E.F., especially because the E.E.F. position is a negotiating one. But on the union side weaknesses in particular factories, and a lack

of information, are causing discontent among the men.

Besides its unevenness, and other limits on the way the claim is being fought, has been the fact that the sit-ins are being conducted "tactfully and diplomatically". Given the confrontation between the State and the unions - NIRC vs TGWU and the railway workers - one of the best things that could have happened in Greater Manchester would have been for a similar confrontation to be fought through to the end by the workers. A defence of Sharstons when the Court gave an injunction against the sitters-in as trespassers, a decisive ejection of the management from the factory, would have had a powerful effect in putting pressure on the rail unions to also defy the NIRC. Unfortunately this hasn't happened, and in one or two cases - such as Hawker Siddeley Aviation in Woodford - after there was an effective move by a section of the workers to lock out the management, a leading union official hurried down to the factory to speak against it and the decision was reversed.

At other places the workers have been in a less militant mood, and nothing along these lines would have been possible.

On the Social Security front (the biggest strike fund of all) there is also deadlock. A number of claims committees have, on our recommendation, been set up in individual plants to organise claiming. These have been very successful in winning claims and putting pressure on the Social Security to pay out more than their "£4 maximum" for single strikers, as well as reverse their blunt refusal to pay out for married men as well as their dependants. Following a deputation organised by ourselves and the Gorton and Openshaw Joint Shop Stewards Liaison Committee, appeals against these decisions have been flooding into the Social Security offices. As the regional office in Manchester

claims that it can only deal with around 60 appeals a week, up to 20,000 appeals could prove rather embarrassing.

Given about 30 settlements, 25 sit-ins, and the extension of the struggle to other areas - to Leeds, Oxford and other areas by the

union, to a national level by management - there is still a long fight ahead. Manchester IMG

Workers occupying the Kearns-Richards engineering factory in Altrincham.



THE EVOLUTION OF THE LABOUR RIGHT

It is a fault of our analysis that we have concentrated our attention on the evolution of the Tories and the Labour Left to the exclusion of a serious consideration of the Labour Right and Centre. This can lead to bad misunderstandings such as merely posing the anti-Common Market policy of the Labour Party in the context of Wilson's opportunism. In fact, this policy is only one aspect of a re-orientation of Labourite strategy and a consequent deep split in the Labour Right.

A convenient point of departure for an examination of the Labour Right is the early Fifties. The Bevanites, in the wake of the 1951 election defeat, launched a series of attacks on the Labour leadership, who were being stoutly defended by union bureaucrats such as Lawther, Deakin and Williamson. But while the T. U. Barons could deliver the block-votes to save the Labour Right, they were totally unable to provide any ideas to cover over the ideological nakedness of Attlee and Morrison. The political fight was waged over two major issues: foreign policy and nationalisation. The Left argued for a socialist foreign policy based on critical support of U.S. imperialism and against German rearmament. The Right argued for a socialist foreign policy based on a less critical support for U.S. imperialism and for German rearmament. The nationalisation issue was polarised between the options of more Morrisonian nationalisation and a long 'shopping-list' of industries to be taken over or a short 'shopping-list'. The area of debate was completely shifted by the group of Right-wing intellectuals around Gaitskell which included Jay, Jenkins, Crosland and Healey.

Gaitskell was unpopular within the Constituency Parties, then a stronghold of the Left. He did, however, impress Deakin of the TGWU because of his extreme anti-communism which had led him to denounce "one-sixth" of the 1952 Annual Conference delegates as communists. The Gaitskellites savaged the Left arguments unmercifully. There was no such thing as a "socialist" foreign policy but British foreign policy should consist of total support of America and the Free World in its fight against the Communist menace. The debate around nationalisation was similarly transcended by stating that Britain was no longer a capitalist country. Furthermore — "The power previously wielded by the owners of property has now largely, though not entirely, passed to a class of managers—working directors, managing directors and higher grades of salaried executives."¹ From this analysis it could be shown that there was a difference between ownership and control and therefore nationalisation became irrelevant. The Labour Left were defeated in the realm of ideas and then organisationally routed by the block-vote of the Trade Union Right. In 1955 Gaitskell was installed as Party leader and in 1957 the policy statement *Industry and Society* was adopted which encapsulated the ideas of the 'revisionists'.

The 'revisionist' Right had captured the Party and destroyed the Labour Left but its classless pragmatism still failed to win electoral success. The 'revisionists' decided that it was necessary

to rip out the vestigial remnants of "socialism" inherent in the fabric of the Party. Jay evolved schemes to stop trade-union participation in Party Conferences. Labour was too much associated with the working-class and "we are in danger of fighting under the label of a class that no longer exists".² This strand in revisionist thinking was a clear break from the ideological norms of Labourism. It threatened the basis of the Labour Party, which, from the start, has been based on an alliance of liberals, trade-unionists and social-democrats. The revisionist assault was continued by Gaitskell who wished to formalise his previous victories by removing the commitment to public ownership expressed in Clause IV of the Party Constitution. Between March and July 1960 Gaitskell suffered a series of humiliating defeats as the Centre and the Unions revolted. It was not merely that a left current was running strongly in the trade unions; there were defections from his previously solid right-wing backers as the A.E.U., N.U.M. and N.U.R. swung against him.

The alliance between the Labour and the Trade Union Right was re-established to fight off the unilateralists in 1960 and 1961. The right-wing Campaign for Democratic Socialism had broken the power of the Left in the Constituencies. The battle was won and the Labour Left in full retreat but Gaitskell realised, particularly with the rise in industrial militancy, that no Labour leader could sever the link with the trade unions or even, over a long period of time, carry on a fight against the union leaderships without sawing off the branch he was so comfortably astride. In 1962 Gaitskell was forced to reassess his strategy of trying to turn the Labour Party into an explicitly bourgeois party with a middle class base and took refuge in an extraordinary display of patriotic ranting on the Common Market issue. Overnight, he became the hero of the Centre and the Left. The sacrificial offering to seal the covenant was his own revisionist Right. The initial manifesto of the C.D.S. had pledged support for the needs of the big bourgeoisie: "... we are convinced Europeans, certain that Britain's destinies are inextricably bound up with those of a resurgent and united Europe". Roughly three quarters of the C.D.S. came out against Gaitskell but they were isolated and suffered a defeat even more severe than that inflicted on the Labour Left in 1961. The disorganisation was such that no revisionist candidate could be found to compete for the leadership on the death of Gaitskell and the inheritor of these crises was the "anti-Gaitskellite" Wilson.

In fact Wilson proved to be a faithful disciple of Gaitskell. He, for a time, successfully synthesised the two styles of the old leader. The plan to turn Labour into the party of government by attuning it more finely to the needs of neo-capitalism than the "Edwardian" Tories had a populist rhetoric grafted onto it. The 1964 programme, *The New Britain*, was the entirely revisionist document that made no demands for nationalisation but was very strong on modernisation and vigour; yet it contained enough vaguely radical verbiage to enrapture the Tribunites. Wilson's strategy was to change

Labour from a party of protest into the normal bourgeois ruling party along the lines of Swedish Social Democracy. The crisis of British Capitalism made such a strategy, which entails the Labour Party balancing with one foot on the shoulders of big capital and the other on those of the Labour Movement, impossible. The lack of money for welfare reforms and the necessity to smash wage militancy toppled Wilson from his precarious perch so that he fell with both feet on the side of capital. *In Place of Strife* opened a wider chasm between the Party and the Unions than the controversies of the late fifties.

The debate after the 1970 election failure was mainly carried out by the Right and the Centre. The strategy of Labour as the party of government had failed. Workers and capitalists had turned against Wilson. The Constituencies had become depopulated as the working class came to see the unions as their most effective weapon of defence.³ Roy Jenkins, very early in the discussion, demanded that Labour should not change its course, that it should regain the confidence of the capitalists and therefore must continue to support British entry in the E.E.C. Above all, the Party should not give in to the temptation of leftist demagogery. He spoke on this theme to the 1970 Party Conference: "We must not expect a full-scale peaceful revolution every time a Labour Government is elected. If we do, I think the occasions on which we are elected will not be as frequent as we should wish to expect. We must keep our radical cutting edge. But we should now see our role as being able to make substantial progress at frequent intervals rather than cataclysmic jumps forward at extremely infrequent intervals."

The most fierce antagonists of this view were a tendency that had also emerged from C.D.S. — the Labour Populists. Jenkins was pilloried as a progressive liberal, an admirer of Asquith, a defender of civilised values and a supporter of such middle-class causes as the Arts Council and the Race Relations Board. To this was opposed populism. Crosland argued the case against the liberal progressives. "I have long been locked in conflict with a middle-class element on the left which seems to me to show an elitist and even condescending attitude to the wants and aspirations of ordinary people. . . The need for a populist streak in our thinking becomes greater as the social composition of the Parliamentary Labour Party changes and college graduates (often lecturers) increasingly outnumber trade union M.P.s."⁴ Roy Hattersley, a firm supporter of Jenkins, has written an article in *The Guardian* describing the history of American populism and ending with the ominous message that populism does not win elections. It is, however, the populist current that is making the running in the Labour Party and two major themes have been developed; nationalism and participation.

The case for Labour populism was first argued in an extended form by Haseler and Gyford.⁵ Their starting point was a dissection of the thesis that Labour must turn itself from a party of protest into a party of government. They pointed out that Labour had very regularly provided governments and that, within the context of a democratic mixed economy, it was highly unlikely that any party should govern continuously. If, on the other hand, Labour alienated itself from its working class base, as it had done from 1964-70, then the possibility of retaining the present percentage of success in elections would be slim. The cause of the election defeat was "liberal progressivism". Liberal progressivism was internationalist and believed in individual rights as opposed to class rights. Labour populism stood for a patriotism appealing to popular sovereignty. Labour's "concern for permissive legislation, the arts, higher education and technological efficiency could not mask its failure to deal adequately with housing, unemployment and the cost of living." These views may seem surprising from ex-C.D.S. supporters but they claim Gaitskell as their inspiration. His views "contained serious populist messages which appealed to large sections of the British working class. Gaitskell's defence of a national nuclear policy, his ingrained suspicion of Britain's commitment to join the Common Market and in his articulation of this view his use of the phrase 'a thousand years of history' were hardly liberal, progressive or international and not, on the whole, likely to inspire his middle-class supporters in the Parliamentary Labour Party." This whole theme finds its expression in the anti-Common Market rhetoric of Labour. After a period of Government characterised by savage attacks on trade-unionists the Labour Right seeks to re-establish its links with the working-class by a retreat to the chauvinism that is structurally built into the British Labour Movement.

The second theme of the Labour populists is participation. This was a thread that ran through the first serious attack on the Wilson

Government, again written by a group primarily of the Right and Centre.⁶ One contributor commented acidly on the elitist ethos of the Wilson Government: "Almost the only decision in which the public has felt it has had a say in 1968 has been the retention of the Esso Tiger." Wedgwood Benn saw the failure to redistribute political power as the reason for the '70 election defeat.⁷ The drift away from the Labour Party had its corollary in the growth of groups such as educational campaigns, amenity groups, noise abatement societies and shop stewards movements that were seen as more relevant and effective than working through the party system. The task of the Labour Party was to relate to these groups and to turn them into its allies. The key question was that of workers' control, which is seen as an anti-authoritarian gesture, need not be revolutionary, indeed, it is not of necessity anti-capitalist. "The old crude industrial authoritarianism is now being attacked as directly by modern management thinkers as it is by the trade unions who are determined to change it." Modern industry requires a sophisticated information that feeds back continuous reports on how the system is functioning.

Benn argues that workers' control is merely an extension of suffrage, or "voters' control". Workers' control "means the power to plan their own work and to hire and fire the immediate plant management just as M.P.s are hired and fired by the voters." Benn spiced this with 'leftist' noises about Mao and Black Power and vigorous attacks on consultation and participation. Benn warns us that it is impermissible to present his version of workers' control as a panacea. "With real power will come real responsibility for dealing directly with some of the outer realities of our competitive world, including the inescapable market mechanisms and other inter-connections which will set severe limits on the freedom the new power will bring." Benn has succeeded in exposing strategies of workers' control that limit themselves to anti-authoritarianism and refuse to pose the question of the state and the productive relations, as sophisticated exercises in participation. It is particularly worrying that the Institute of Workers' Control has welcomed Benn's ideas and failed to expose their integrationist logic. It is also necessary to see that Benn is evolving a strategy that could be exploited by sophisticated representatives of big capital. "The gap between some of the best of management thinking . . . and the workers' demand from below for real power at the place of work, is now so narrow as to be capable of being bridged . . ." It is possible to see Benn as having, in a very imaginative way, reintegrated the "managerial revolution" concepts of the revisionists of the early Fifties into a Labourite strategy for the Seventies.

Marxists have correctly interpreted successive Labour Governments as agents of bourgeois power. It would be totally incorrect to assume that Labour politicians consciously operate within this conceptual framework. Not only are they buffered from reality by the consoling myths of bourgeois ideology (which also ensure that it is not possible to pose ideas that do not fall within a capitalist framework) but they have to get the majority of the working-class to vote for them. And if they fail to get those votes they are then of no use to the capitalist class.

Therefore the Labour Party has adopted an E.E.C. stance which is clearly opposed to the needs of big capital but will rally wide support amongst the labour movement. It is quite likely that, in order to regain popularity amongst the working class, the Labour Party will engage in series of radical actions, e.g., leading rent strikes against the Tory Rent Act. The limitations of any such left shift are also apparent. Labour cannot win elections in the face of outright and consistent opposition by the capitalist class. It is most likely that the nationalist strand in Labour populism will have to be moderated and an ambiguous acceptance of the Common Market engineered before Labour can again form a government. The failure of the Heath confrontation strategy with the unions could be the signal for Labour to be allowed to try a policy of emascinating shop floor militancy under the banner of "workers' control". Whistle stop tours of futuristic U.C.S. and Fisher-Bendix situations and the talk of participation can become an ace card for Labour if Kearton, Stokes, etc. decide that open confrontation with the unions cannot work and an integrationist strategy is necessary.

A. Jenkins

NOTES:

1. C. A. R. Crosland, *New Fabian Essays*, 1952.
2. *Forward*, 16 October 1959.
3. Jenkins and Marshall, 'Whatever Happened to Labour Left', *The Red Mole* 36.
4. *The Sunday Times*, 4 April 1971.
5. Haseler and Gyford, *Social Democracy: Beyond Revisionism*, 1971.
6. *Matters of Principle: Labour's Last Chance*, 1970.
7. A. Wedgwood Benn, *The New Politics*, 1970.



NUS: REVOLUTIONARIES BEGIN TO ORGANISE

The April conference of the National Union of Students was held in Birmingham between 10th and 14th April to the sound of the hammer blows of the ongoing State offensive against students unions and militant students. At this most crucial of conferences the communist dominated executive failed to pose, let alone solve, the key problems facing NUS and its constituent organisations. Instead they managed to reverse even the small beginnings of a correct policy which had been forced through at the special conference in January. But this ostrich-like approach didn't this time go unanswered. Although not yet finding support amongst the majority of delegates the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Students Unions (LCDSU) brought to the fore the concerns of those students in the colleges facing the real brunt of the State's attack.

REFORMISM AND UTOPIA

The essential theme of the conference was that of complacency. The stage was set by Digby Jacks, the C.P. President, in his opening remarks. We have forced the Government to retreat on the question of student union autonomy, opined Jacks, now the NUS must go on to bigger and better things—grants, the binary system, Vietnam, etc. must now be taken up by the student "movement". The complete lack of understanding as to the nature of the attack on students unions and the complementary soggy tokenism on important Digby Jacks, NUS President.



RACE RELATIONS INDUSTRY

The magazine 'Race Today' will continue to appear despite the split in the Institute of Race Relations

It is too crude to see racism as being totally advantageous to the capitalists (nor do they see it as such). It is true that racism helps them in that ultimately it leads to the demoralisation of the working class as a whole. However, on the other hand it is wasteful for capitalism both in economic terms of under-used labour resources and in political terms of potential and actual black revolt.

The solution to this problem adopted by one wing of the ruling class is the usual liberal tactic of trying to diffuse the whole situation by throwing in a few reformist sops. This is one explanation for the vast race-relations industry that now exists in Britain; but it is precisely because reforms cannot abolish racism, which is itself a product of capitalism, that there are also divisions and antagonisms within the race relations industry.

'INDEPENDENT' MACHINERY

Apart from the various strands within the State machinery, which constitute a good part of the race-relations industry, there are also various so-called 'independent' bodies who see themselves as examining the 'race problem'. The main ones are the Runnymede Trust and the Institute of Race Relations. However, blacks can do without such 'independence'. Thus:

1. As regards financial backing, the I.R.R. is heavily financed by foundations such as the Ford Foundation and the Gulbenkian (which is controlled by the Portuguese government). The Runnymede Trust is mainly financed by the Joseph Rowntree Social

extra-student issues couldn't have been more clearly revealed than by these remarks. While Jacks was pontificating in this utopian fashion Vice-Chancellor Carter at the University of Lancaster was in full flight against radical staff and students alike. Students at Portsmouth Poly were sharing with Lancaster students an assault by the Courts, and other bubbling struggles at Northern Poly, Thames, L.S.E. and so on were simply enjoying an enforced vocational truce. In direct contra-distinction to the executive opinion that the attack has been thwarted, or even that there is a lull, these struggles indicate that the attack is intensifying. It is not mere executive dishonesty or even its bureaucratisation that leads them to this completely wrong assessment of what is going on. It essentially flows from their reformist politics.

If one starts from the view that the State or any of its parts is neutral in the class struggle; if one starts from the view that there is not a fundamental identity of interests between all the agencies of the State; if one starts from the view that one arm of the State can be used against another; if one starts from the view that democracy under capitalism is anything other than bourgeois democracy; then one gets executive and CP conclusions. In this way the limits of the struggle are determined by the enemy, the State. Any attempt to go beyond their fiats or their law, any attempt to defy their constitutions and their Courts is ruled out from the beginning. In this situation all that can be offered is the utopia of democratic control, of participation in effecting those transformations which oppress us.

THE EXECUTIVE PRESCRIPTION

The action of the executive in the conference and the resulting 'policy' for the NUS to meet the State's offensive were precisely within this framework. Proclaiming its intention to beat back any nasty Tory proposals, it insisted, in reversing a LCDSU amendment, that college authorities were potential allies in fighting these antediluvian elements. In line with this policy it opened the way for it to negotiate with the Government without, as previously, calling a special conference explaining its reasons.

On the question of so-called 'public account-

ability' of students union funds, the executive argued in another amendment that this could be effected through 'democratic channels' and the government be allowed to 'specify the purposes for which the finance could be used'. But it is important to ask, what do these democratic channels amount to? A system of workers' councils representing the class which produces the wealth of this society? Not a bit of it. It is exactly those State agencies which are the instigators of the attack in the first place. In other words, the executive would have it that the very force which we are fighting should be allowed to call us to account at will. Public accountability cannot be other than State accountability.

One might have hoped that the emergency motions, on the situation in Lancaster (and one, not discussed, on the situation in Portsmouth Poly) would at least have brought into question the role ascribed to college authorities by the CP. In the event, however, the executive went one stage further in the opposite direction. Not content with confusing the issue in relation to that arm of the State which college authorities represent, they went on to make an analogous mistake in relation to the Courts and bourgeois law. The Courts had made an order to forcibly evict from occupation the students at Portsmouth Poly, the Director of Public Prosecutions had indicted nine students at the University of Lancaster. Rather than initiating a campaign of resolute exposure of the paraphernalia of bourgeois law, its content and function, they were content to accept these as the limits of the struggle and simply call for a fight for 'academic freedom' which in the context means so much hot air. The nearest they got to suggesting anything was to offer to 'black' the University of Lancaster with all the historical success that that sort of tactic has had at Hornsey and elsewhere.

THE LCDSU: A SOLID BASE IN THE COLLEGE

Throughout all this, the LCDSU was of course mounting its opposition. The LCDSU had been established at the previous November conference on the initiative of the IMG after it had become clear what sort of fight the executive was going to mount. Since then it has attracted other forces around it, including I.S. At this conference, it felt itself sufficiently strong to offer an oppositional slate to that proposed by the CP. Of course there were no illusions that the LCDSU ticket would actually win the elections. In the event, the average 25 per cent support gained by the LCDSU slate showed that it had won significant support up and down the country. All the forces round the LCDSU had got the most basic question right: that the Thatcher proposals were only one element of

the State's attack on the political autonomy of students unions. There has been, however, no clearly agreed programme for fighting the offensive. Or, rather, the particular platform on which the LCDSU was established has remained rather abstract. A certain amount of confusion was revealed at this conference which needs to be cleared up if the LCDSU is going to be capable of leading the struggle.

WHAT SORT OF LEADERSHIP IS REQUIRED?

Leadership is not essentially telling people what to do. It is not the issuing of "calls to action". Leadership is in fact offering a perspective for struggle. What certain comrades, particularly in the IS, tended to suggest was that the answer to most problems was that of more militancy. But this is to be very confused. It is not that the CP and the present executive just refuse to make a call for mass occupations of the colleges, or for mass demos on the streets. The latter, they have in fact done. The point is that, in principle, they cannot offer a perspective for struggle in the colleges which has a chance of success because, as we have explained above, their politics exclude it.

What the LCDSU needs to do is not to make the call to mass occupations its sole reply to all questions. It is to clarify for students the nature of the enemy, why he is fighting autonomy and all questions of that sort whilst delineating the forces at the disposal of students, their potential allies and so on. In other words to provide answers to all the questions which will arise: What is the State? What is the relation of college authorities to it? What is the nature of law and the courts etc. in capitalist society? How can we fight against them? So too with student worker solidarity. What sort of links are possible with workers? What is the social nature of students? Is NUS a trade union? And so on and so forth.

It is the clarifying of these questions and the working out of a policy based on it which is what the April Council of the NUS should have done. It didn't do this. This is why the LCDSU has called a conference provisionally for May 13th to do precisely these things. It is vital that all militants attend and sort out these questions so that we are armed in this vital struggle against the State.

—J. R. Clynes.

For any information about registration for the LCDSU conference, material already submitted, etc. or any information about LCDSU write c/o Students Union, Northern Poly, Holloway Road, London, N.1.

the U.S. Department of State on a visit to the U.S.A. to examine their race-relations industry, and was voted by the magazine *Personnel Management* as "the man of the moment".

INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS

The main indication of the policies of the I.R.R., particularly on immigration control, is found in the study it has produced by Deakin (who is also on the Advisory Committee of the Runnymede Trust). The Marxist argument is that immigration control is against the interests of the working class as a whole, both black and white, because it erects racist divisions in the fight against capitalism. However, the liberal argument against control is always to justify the 'need' for immigration by using some empirical criterion—which is inevitably a capitalist criterion. Thus Deakin comes out against control on the grounds that immigration has "proved beneficial to the economy", i.e., the capitalist economy. Likewise he takes to the logical conclusion the liberal argument that "we" need blacks because they do all the dirty jobs, by arguing that black unemployment is of benefit to the white working class by taking the burden of unemployment from them—the most demoralising of all arguments. There is no mention of the way in which capitalism causes unemployment and forces blacks into the worst paid jobs.

RACE TODAY

However, what makes the situation at the I.R.R. more complex is the existence of its magazine, *Race Today*, which is run by the Institute's staff and which the controlling Council tried to close down on the grounds that it was non-objective, that it was actually on the side of blacks, and that it was being run by revolutionaries. This came to a head with an issue of *Race Today* which came out against the Rhodesian settlement.

In fact, however, whatever the subjective intentions of the staff of *Race Today*, the politics of the magazine come out as an incredibly mystifying liberal hotchpotch. The reason why the magazine is so mystifying is because of the totally eclectic nature of its content. Thus:

1. Some of the articles are indeed of an excellent nature in that they constantly expose many acts of racism which the revolutionary press, with its own usual chauvinism, generally ignores. Similarly it has made many valid criticisms of the Race Relations Board etc.

2. However, on top of this is a completely liberal analysis of issues. For instance, the editorial on Rhodesia regrets that British (i.e. imperialist) troops were not sent into Rhodesia (February 1972). Again the Rhodesian settlement is explained in terms of a 'sell-out' by the present Tory government (January 1972), not in terms of a consistent history of imperialist exploitation by all British governments of which the settlement is merely a continuation.

3. Finally there is an editorial policy of printing "all spectrums of opinion". This is why it carries adverts for the Conservative Bow Group, and articles from members of the Monday Club like Max Hanna (January 1972).

FUTURE OF I.R.R. AND RACE TODAY

In fact the business interests on the Council were defeated by the membership of the I.R.R. They have now threatened to resign; and will probably take their financial backers to the even more openly class-collaborationist Runnymede Trust. However, it is difficult to see where the I.R.R. and its staff can now go—provided they can get money to go anywhere. Thus there is talk of it "serving the community" and moving from Piccadilly Circus to Brixton. However, given the eclectic politics of its staff many of whom are self-professed liberals, it will probably end up alongside the Student Christian Movement and other assorted political parasites on the poor in the soggy morass of 'community politics'.

—S. C.

NOTES:

1. These facts taken from Robin Jenkins's pamphlet, *Production of Knowledge at the I.R.R.*, and also from *Time out*.
2. *The Observer*, 26 March.



TOWARDS PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION IN EASTERN EUROPE

When the workers of Poland's Baltic ports rose in December 1970, their action and their demands highlighted, with brutal clarity, the truth of the bureaucratic regimes of Eastern Europe. A quarter of a century after capitalism had been overthrown and the communist party had taken power, the industrial proletariat rose *en masse* in Gdansk, Gdynia and Szczecin to burn party and trade-union headquarters and confront the "people's" militia and police. Their first objectives: an end to hunger; an end to cold (in one of Europe's major coal-producing countries the workers could not afford to heat their homes); the right to speak; an end to lies in the press and in party circles. Three hundred of those workers died, even by official figures, in the repression that followed. And although they toppled Gomulka, his successors have still not met their demands—nor will they be able to do so.

FROM CLANDESTINITY TO STATE POWER

At the outbreak of World War Two, the revolutionary forces throughout Eastern Europe could hardly have been weaker or in greater disarray. Where communist parties existed at all, they barely maintained a tenuous clandestine life (the anti-Stalinist left had no organized presence whatever). The Polish C.P., never very significant, had actually been dissolved by the Comintern in 1938 and its exiled leaders murdered. The Hungarian party had been virtually eliminated from Hungary itself after the defeat of the Commune in 1919, and its exiled leadership too was decimated in Stalin's purges. The Bulgarian party, strong in the early twenties, was severely defeated in 1923 and driven underground entirely in 1934; it did, however, maintain a certain clandestine presence, and played a resistance role—though not a decisive one—during the war. The Yugoslav party, also strong in the first years after its foundation, from 1919-21, was savagely repressed thereafter, and its exiled leadership once again was almost totally destroyed in the purges; it did, however, continue to exist as a clandestine force within the country and was to emerge as the leading force of a successful mass liberation struggle during the war. Albania did not yet have a communist party at all—it was only to be founded in 1941. The Rumanian party was quite insignificant, and there

is no evidence that it really existed as an organized force inside Rumania itself. The Czechoslovak party alone enjoyed a legal existence for most of the inter-war period, and remained a mass party; but it was driven underground by the German occupation of 1938 and early 1939, and then paralysed by the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. Thus by September 1939, nowhere in Eastern Europe was there a legal communist party, and only in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia was there even a clandestine organization of any significance.

By 1945, the situation could hardly have been more dramatically different. In Yugoslavia and Albania the communist parties had led partisan wars which had liberated large areas of the two countries, held down important German forces, and won the mass of the population to socialist objectives. In Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and to some extent Poland, communist parties had played significant roles in anti-Nazi resistance and thus won a considerable social and political base; in the case of Czechoslovakia, the previous mass character of the party combined with this resistance role to give it the greatest proportional working-class following ever enjoyed by a communist party in a capitalist country. In Rumania, Hungary and the Russian-occupied zone of Germany, communist party leaders arrived in the wake of the Red Army and were given key positions of power. Above all, throughout Eastern Europe the presence of Russian troops and the terms of the Yalta agreement meant that bourgeois forces were effectively impotent (only in Czechoslovakia were they indeed even really to attempt a fight to hold onto power).

TRANSITIONAL SOCIETIES

By 1949 the means of production had been nationalized throughout Eastern Europe, and communist parties were everywhere directly in power. It was now clear that none of the countries of the area could any longer be capitalist. But of course they were very far from being socialist. It is a theoretical heritage of Stalin's "socialism in one country" to equate socialism with nationalization of the means of production. Socialism means first of all a classless society: even the most fully democratic workers' state does not constitute a socialist society. A classless society requires not only the suppression of private ownership of the means of production (as has already been achieved in the existing deformed workers' states), but also a level of development of the forces of production—possible only on a world scale—that would enable commodity pro-

duction, money and the state (the workers' state) to wither away. While the working class is able to overthrow capitalism in one country, it cannot build socialism in one country, or one section of the world. The societies which it establishes are societies in transition from capitalism to socialism. It was a transitional society that was created by the victory of the October revolution, and will be a transitional society that is installed in the aftermath of revolution here in Britain. Thus, no longer capitalist, the states of East Europe after 1949 embarked on what—given imperialist world domination, direct plunder of their resources by the Soviet Union, and their relative economic backwardness combined with political shackling of the working class and bureaucratic mis-management by a parasitical and repressive ruling stratum of privileged functionaries—was bound to be an extremely long-drawn out process of transition to socialism; a transition whose accomplishment was in any case ultimately impossible within the national confines of the countries in question.

The Fourth International, at its 1951 Third World Congress, after a crucially important discussion during the preceding three years, designated the countries of East Europe as deformed workers' states. The designation first of the Soviet Union, and subsequently of the thirteen other countries where capitalism has been overthrown, as deformed workers' states has stood the scientific test of history, insofar as it has provided the sole theoretical elaboration on the basis of which it has been possible to construct and conduct a revolutionary political practice—not only towards and within the workers' states themselves but on a world scale. However, the term also contains a crucial ambiguity: while the state for Marxists, is always and everywhere an instrument of the power and domination of one class over other classes in society, what characterizes deformed workers' states is precisely the political expropriation of their "ruling class"—the proletariat. This contradiction is the root cause of the particular instability of bureaucratic rule—its vulnerability to the violent social and political convulsions which are endemic to it, its oscillations between "left" and "right" policies on both domestic and foreign fronts, its ideological somersaults, etc. The transition from capitalism to socialism has turned out not to be in any sense a peaceful process of cumulative economic growth and consolidation of new social forces and structures. The very contrary has been the case. The experience of East Europe during the past twenty-five years is just one illustration of this.

Although over-all advances have been made in industrialization throughout the area, with growth rates which have intermittently compared favourably with the advanced capitalist countries, Japan excepted, even the crude economic record, when looked at closely, is an extremely unhappy one. And of course the incapacity of the bureaucratic regimes of East Europe to develop their countries' economies successfully is a further cause and effect alike of their social and political deformations and vulnerability.

When we turn to the political apparatus of these countries, we see reflected in the nature of the ruling bureaucracy the contradictory nature of the state in the existing transitional societies. This bureaucracy is compelled to defend the heritage of the social revolution—social ownership of the means of production—against both the penetration of foreign capital and the growth of private capital domestically, even where these are Frankenstein monsters of its own creation. For it is on the maintenance of that social ownership of the means of production that its own social position and privileges depend. At the same time, the condition for the bureaucracy to maintain its rule is the continued total political passivity of the proletariat. It jealously defends its political monopoly, and moves swiftly against forces that threaten this—both inside and outside its national boundaries (witness the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia). But its stability is always a precarious one—hence the violence of its repressive apparatus. Whenever there is any mass movement against it, there are immediate and widespread repercussions within its own ranks. The inability of this party and state bureaucracy to solve the economic and political problems which confront it has led to a series of events over the past four years which signal that what is on the agenda in East Europe is not some "restoration of capitalism" but the re-entry of the proletariat onto the political stage and the beginning of the end of bureaucratic rule. So long as the working class in the countries of East Europe identifies its state with the bureaucracy that has usurped it, the bureaucracy will be able to buy time. Now, clearly, that time is running short.

FAKE CALM SHATTERED

For 1968 was a turning-point in East as much as in West Europe, and the past four years have seen a continuous escalation of class struggle in the area in sharp contrast



Russian tanks in Prague put paid once and for all to the theory of "evolution of the bureaucracies".

to the seeming calm of the preceding decade. After Stalin's death in 1953, the stability of the East European regimes appeared for a time to hang in the balance. But Russian tanks put down the Berlin workers' rising of 1953 and the Budapest rising of 1956, and the threat of them was a powerful weapon in the hands of the Polish bureaucracy in containing its own internal crisis in the same year of 1956. At the same time, the Stalinist old guard was replaced at the top of the Polish and Hungarian parties (in Czechoslovakia all potential replacement leaders had been killed in the trials of 1950-54; in East Germany the situation was too exposed—in the Dulles era—to permit any breach in party unity). By the end of 1956 a new equilibrium had been achieved by the ruling bureaucracies in East Europe which was to last for twelve years (with the exception of the elimination of Rankovic in 1966, no East European regime was to undergo an internal crisis throughout that period).

If the events of 1953-6 were to encourage *spontaneist* illusions of a mass upsurge that would simply sweep away the bureaucratic regimes and install workers' democracy—illusions developed most clearly in certain mythological exaggerations of the significance of the Budapest workers' councils—the following decade was to encourage *evolutionist* illusions in the capacity of the bureaucracies for self-regeneration, and *defeatist* illusions that revolutionary activity outside the ruling parties was impossible. The only consistently revolutionary perspective vis-a-vis the bureaucratic regimes was that based on the complex of inter-related theoretical and practical principles first elaborated in Trotsky's writings from 1933 on and notably in the programme of the Fourth International—principles which have underpinned the latter's analysis of the bureaucracies and its strategy towards and within them ever since. The most important are:

1. the rejection of the idea that Stalinism, and the bureaucratic regimes installed by Communist parties in power, were the *inevitable* result of the victory of the revolution in backward countries dominated by *scarcity*;

2. the rejection of the idea that the bureaucratic regimes would be *gradually* 'liberalized' or 'de-Stalinized' by the ruling strata themselves (or sections of them) under pres-

sure from the masses, economic progress, etc.;

3. the rejection of the idea that the parties of the Third International could be regenerated by revolutionaries working within them;

4. the rejection of the idea that the anti-bureaucratic struggle in the USSR, and subsequently the other workers' states, could be waged in isolation from the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist struggle in the rest of the world.

The four-fold basis of the F. I. position was that a *political counter-revolution* had taken place in the USSR; that a *political revolution* was required to re-establish (or establish properly for the first time) Soviet democracy; that a *new revolutionary party* was required both to lead the struggle for the political revolution and to lead the struggle for socialism after the political revolution; and that the revolutionary struggle, in the epoch of imperialism, is necessarily *world-wide*—socialism could not be built in one country *after* the political revolution any more than it can without it. It is important to be clear about these positions, since they constitute not only the correct basis for analysis of, and strategy in, the USSR and the bureaucracies, but also the fundamental point of disagreement with those who are defeatist—characterizing the bureaucracies as inevitable products of their history—, opportunist—looking for change only from the hands of the ruling cliques—, or spontaneist—expressing a "faith in the masses" which in practice means simple passivity.

THE 1968 WATERSHED

Since 1968 events in East Europe have borne out the above positions with a vengeance. They have demonstrated the actuality of the political revolution; the way in which "liberalization" unleashes forces which escape the bureaucracy's control and threaten its power; the blind alley of attempts to develop oppositional positions within the ruling parties; the huge potential of working-class combativity and at the same time its ultimate powerlessness in the absence of revolutionary leadership; the emergence of the first nuclei of organized revolutionary opposition to the regimes—nuclei which consciously identify both with the Bolsheviks who made the October Revolution and with the revolutionary vanguards leading the fight to overthrow capitalism and imperialism in the rest of the world. The three fundamental elements in the new situation in East Europe are the impasse of the bureaucratic regimes, the growing militancy and political consciousness of the working-class and the beginnings of the formation of new revolutionary vanguards.

IMPASSE OF THE BUREAUCRACY

During the Stalin era apologists for the bureaucracies—hardly able to defend their political order—expatiated rather on their economic and social achievements. In Khrushchev's day, they added a pious faith in the political perspectives opened up by "de-Stalinization". Now, all these heady claims ring equally hollow. On the economic front, the bureaucracies were capable of presiding over basic industrialization and "primitive socialist accumulation"—by dint of a repressive organization of production, imposed norms and quotas, and at the expense of the living standards of the masses. But this first phase once completed, the bureaucracy finds itself in an impasse. Whether it clings to some modified version of "administrative" planning or whether it extols "market socialism", its economic performance proves to be meagre and unbalanced. On the one hand, the Novotny years in Czechoslovakia were years of economic stagnation. At the other extreme, the period since Yugoslavia's 1961 and 1965 "liberalizations" of the economy has seen the country slip from the world's fastest growth rate in 1952-60 to a rate below the world average and little different from that of pre-war Yugoslavia (not to speak of some million workers exported to work in capitalist West Europe and half a million unemployed inside the country even by official figures). On the social front, "liberalization" means that increased economic inequality is reflected in the growth of private medicine, a market in housing, and educational stratification. The shortages which have persisted in all the social services during the period of administrative planning are now compounded by the adoption of criteria of profitability in the economy as a whole.

As for the perspectives for political "evolution of the bureaucracies" the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia made clear that they are gloomy indeed. Under very considerable mass pressure, the Dubcek regime had decided to carry through certain fundamental political reforms. The projected new party constitution established the right of tendency, and legalized revolutionary organisations independent of the party. Censorship and centralized control of the media had been virtually abolished and the beginnings of workers' control were appearing in the factories. These reforms meant the end of the enforced political passivity of the

revolutionary activity. This—and not some imaginary danger of the restoration of capitalism—was the motive for the Russian invasion, and indeed for the complicity in that invasion by a wing of the Czech bureaucracy. It offers, too, the explanation for the subsequent course of events. It was popular militancy organized at the factory level against the invasion that forced upon the Russians a change of tactics: instead of installing those who had invited them in power, they were forced to turn back to the liberal wing of the party in order to diffuse the mass revolt. Furthermore, the abject capitulation of the Dubcek leadership in the face of the invasion made clear both where its true interests lay when forced to choose between the Kremlin and the Czechoslovak masses, and why it is that genuine militants in the communist party were compelled to recognize that any revolutionary opposition in the future could only be organized outside the party—(as Jiri Pelikan makes clear in his interview *New Left Review* 71). That is why today they are either in exile or in Czech prisons together with other militants.

PROLETARIAN RESURGENCE

The impasse of the bureaucratic regimes on economic, social and political fronts alike coincides with a qualitative change in the degree of militancy and the political consciousness of the East European proletariat. On the purely economic level, Popov's article (translated in *International*, 7) gives a unique account of strikes in recent years in one East European country—Yugoslavia. But the really important change by comparison with the demands raised by the German, Polish and Hungarian workers in 1953-6 has been in the political character of working-class action in the last few years.

It is true that the East European proletariat has by no means freed itself from all the consequences of the long political expropriation which it has suffered. Decades of political repression, lies, falsified history, caricatured Marxism, censorship and opportunistic foreign policies in the name of proletarian internationalism could hardly fail to reduce workers to a cynicism and despair that cannot be dispelled overnight. Moreover, it is not just the sheer weight of their experience of Stalinism that impedes the formation of revolutionary consciousness in the working class of East Europe. There is also the fact that the workers are committed to the gains they have won through the overthrow of capitalism; they do not want a return to capitalism and will if the occasion arises take to the streets to prevent it. But they often identify the bureaucratic state that expropriated the bourgeoisie and nationalized the means of production with their own state. Such an identification permits cynical manipulation by party leaders. The confrontation between Gierek and the workers of Szczecin (see *New Left Review*, 72) offers the most blatant example of this, in which Gierek shamelessly plays on his working-class origins and on the objective nature of the state as a workers' state to demobilize the workers' intransigence. Tito, too, has shown himself a master of the tactic of mobilizing the working class to defend "its" state against rebellious students—the very students who raise demands for the reappropriation of political power by that same working class. This is doubly paradoxical in that it is the workers and not the students whom the Yugoslav bureaucracy really fears; as Tito said *a propos* the Zagreb student strike of last winter, "Today the students, tomorrow the workers".

But despite these obstacles to the development of a new revolutionary consciousness among the workers of East Europe, the events of the last few years have shown that in fact when the working class begins to move, cynicism and despair quickly disappear and there is a rapid development, indeed an effervescence, of political consciousness and activity. The events of 1968 in Czechoslovakia saw the beginnings of democratic election of trade-union leaders and steps towards the transformation of factory councils into real organs of democratic workers' power. The fruits of this were demonstrated by the key role played by these bodies in organizing resistance to the Warsaw Pact invasion. But the most dramatic and significant case is that of Poland. When the workers rose in the Baltic ports in December 1970, they presented not just a few economic demands to 'their' party and government, but issued a political programme. They demanded: 1. separation of party and state; 2. independence of trade unions; 3. democratic election of workers' delegates; 4. democratization of the party statutes; 5. limits on the mandates of those elected; 6. freedom of the media. Moreover, the workers' organization created during the strike in, for example Szczecin assumed full control of the political and economic life of the city.

NEW VANGUARDS

But the Polish workers' rising of December 1970 also demonstrated the ultimate impotence of spontaneous working-class revolt in the absence of revolutionary leadership. The third crucial element in the new situation in East Europe is the emergence for the first time of nuclei of an organized revolutionary opposition to the bureaucratic regimes. Since Kuron and Modzelewski wrote their *Open Letter to Communist Party Members* in 1965, successive student manifestoes in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Poland, above all since 1968, have aimed to furnish a programme for proletarian overthrow of bureaucratic rule. These manifestoes have demanded the replacement of the bureaucratic state by a workers' state organized on the basis of councils of workers' deputies; an end to the political monopoly of the communist parties; the abolition of the political police and the replacement of the standing army by workers' militia; an end to censorship; an end to inequality; independent trade unions; a foreign policy based on proletarian internationalism.

Of course, these manifestoes are limited by the very fact that they are the work of students—and the bureaucracy uses all the resources of state power to isolate those students from the working class. The security police who keep 'outside agitators' away from the factories of East Europe are no less determined than the guards at the Renault works in France. But the role which can be played by universities as centres of revolutionary organization under repressive regimes—from China in the early twenties to Belgrade in the late thirties to Latin America today—needs little stressing. And when the working class begins to move, as was clearly shown in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and in Poland in 1970, the divisions between students and workers are quickly overcome and the workers put forward very similar demands to those which appear in the student manifestoes. The essential point is that its total political monopoly is a life and death matter for the bureaucracy. A margin of freedom of political expression inevitably leads on to a margin of freedom of political organization, for which it is a necessary precondition. The Russian bureaucracy demonstrates its awareness of this by the ferocity with which it represses the slightest expression of political opposition. But this is the weakness, not the strength, of the bureaucratic regimes. The Polish insurrection of 1970 showed how vulnerable they are if they go on in the old way. The Prague spring, or the events in Croatia last year, showed that the political consequences of 'liberalization' are fatal for the bureaucracy's hold on power. Thus the room for manoeuvre of the regimes of East Europe is extremely limited, and they can only try to steer a middle course which holds out no rosy long-term perspectives.

PERSPECTIVES

But there is a further lesson to be learnt from the Prague spring, and it is one about which the revolutionary vanguards of East Europe are in no doubt. It is that the bureaucracies maintain their own deformed variety of internationalism, even if they deny it to the workers. The Prague spring, like the Berlin uprising of 1953 and the Hungarian explosion of 1956, was crushed by Russian tanks. The Russian leaders cannot extend their policy of peaceful coexistence to the fraternal countries of East Europe. In Rumania and Yugoslavia too, the threat of Russian invasion is cynically manipulated by the regimes to maintain 'national unity' and domestic order. The Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia showed clearly that events will not be able to develop to a point where political revolution is on the agenda within the confines of a single East European country. The overthrow of the bureaucratic regimes will require concerted action by the proletariats of East Europe, whom their rulers bend every effort to insulate from each other.

Finally, it remains only to stress that the struggle of the proletariat of East Europe is an inseparable and vital part of the world-wide struggle for socialism. We have seen that 1968 was as much a turning-point in East as it was in West Europe. A revolutionary upsurge in the East will shake not only the bureaucratic regimes, and the Russian bureaucracy in particular, but also the communist parties in the West. The establishment of a real workers' state in East Europe would pose as much of a threat to imperialism as to the Kremlin. In the last few years, Vietnam and Cuba, France and Italy, Czechoslovakia and Poland, have been separate fronts in a single global conflict. Those fighting for the political revolution in the bureaucracies and those fighting to overthrow capitalism in the rest of the world are fighting a single struggle, in which a victory anywhere is a victory everywhere.

SPAIN

Interview with leading comrade of LCR - Spanish section of the Fourth International

Since the struggle of the SEAT workers in Barcelona last October, there have been major mobilisations of workers over the renewal of the Collective Contracts, as well as student struggles. What is the significance of the new wave of workers' struggles, given the sharpening crisis of the regime?

Ever since the struggles against the Burgos trials in December 1970, the Franco regime has faced a growing, increasingly political mass movement. This is the context of the present struggles. The lessons of the SEAT strike—the advanced demands, new forms of organisation, and above all the mass response to attacks by the forces of repression, have been learned by broad layers of workers. In any workers' struggles since then, factory assemblies have been set up, common demands have been defended and self-defence pickets formed: solidarity actions are organised throughout the area. There have been real advances in exemplary struggles such as the Michelin strike at Vitoria (42 days) and the Elesa strike at Zarauz (78 days), both of them in the Basque country; and the Commetsa strike in Barcelona.

A major step forward came with the struggle of the Bazan workers at El Ferrol, because of their level of combativity, the fact that the fruitlessness of the Collective Contracts was shown up, and above all, because of the solidarity movement throughout the region and the country as a whole. At the same time, the attitude of the repressive forces again showed the real nature of the 'liberalisation' advocated by some of the forces supporting the regime, as well as the falseness of any illusions that the regime can be overthrown by peaceful means.

All these struggles are very significant politically, because the labour movement, despite its orga-

nisational weakness, is beginning concretely to face the need to prepare for generalised, nationwide struggles to push the crisis of the Franco regime to a decisive point.

What is the real importance of the student struggles in the strengthening of the student movement?

If student struggles weren't very unified or co-ordinated in the period from December '70 to December last year, with the 10th December district assembly at Barcelona and the first struggles of the medical students in Madrid, there was a real upsurge of the student movement leading to the January-February mobilisations in solidarity with the medics. They produced a massive united response in opposition to the application of the General Education Law (especially to selection procedures), and to the presence of the police in the universities and the resulting repression. The mass nature of the campaign, the radicalisation which took place in confrontations with the police, and the extension of solidarity action to other areas of struggle (other universities, schools and hospital medical staff), drove the government back, forcing it to lift penalties imposed on the medical students.

On 14 February, the CP called for a strike of all teachers, which was supported by other organisations including our own. It had a real effect in the schools, and even in religious teacher training colleges. In Madrid the day of action was unsuccessful because of the closing of the university.

Later on, although the mobilisation for the days of action on 1 and 8 March was smaller than in February, it was possible to give the movement a new impulse and organise for future actions. Through all these struggles, the student movement has become much stronger

far from the resistance weakening as a result of the heavy air attacks, it would be strengthened and: "Each factory, each construction site, each state farm, each co-operative, each government office, each school, each city street, must be a combat trench where everyone is ready to fight and to smash any military adventure of the U.S. aggressors and their henchmen!"

While the Vietnamese themselves have warned against any illusions to the effect that the latest offensive would lead to complete victory, there can be no doubt that the timing of the offensive poses a serious challenge to the section of the American ruling class which is represented in the White House. The options before Nixon and the Pentagon warlords are very limited: either the complete destruction of the North by using nuclear weapons or a re-escalation in terms of sending more troops or, of course, withdrawal after the acceptance of a face-saving device. Time has run out for the U.S. administration and Nixon realises full well that the scale of the Vietnamese offensive and the renewed bombing of the North has already upset his chances of re-election, which appeared so bright after the visit to Peking. In that sense the latest offensive

and more politicised than in its best years of struggle before 1969.

What part did the LCR take in these mobilisations?

The LCR participated in certain workers' struggles, such as Commetsa in Barcelona, where the strike was conducted through the Assembly and the election of a committee responsible to all the workers.

In every factory where the LCR intervenes, we try to achieve unity in action with other organisations to help the extension of the struggle and solidarity action; and we also stress the need to organise self-defence from the beginning of the struggle, given that there will certainly be confrontations with the repressive forces.

In the student struggles, in Madrid the LCR has played a very important role in the mobilisations of the past few months. To organise solidarity with the medical students, when the movement began, the LCR called for the formation of Action Committees which brought together some 400 students; they posed the need to broaden the movement, hold a general assembly of the whole university, and they called for demonstrations with self-defence pickets, etc. The CP on the one hand, and the Action Committees on the other, were the main political forces. On 1 March, in Madrid, the CP's student organisation and the LCR student committee issued a joint call for a day of struggle, which represented a step forward in unity of action in the student movement, but was inadequate or ambiguous in some respects (how should the day be organised? the problem of self-defence, etc.). There were lightning demonstrations and actions in the various faculties.¹

Again in Madrid, on 8 March, the LCR proposed joint actions to other organisations (the CP, the Maoists); despite the fact that most refused, there was a public demonstration, with self-defence pickets protecting the demonstrators against the police presence in the area. On the same day the LCR held a clandestine demonstration with 600 students.

Finally on 15 March, the LCR called for a demonstration in solidarity with the El Ferrol workers, which was joined by some 800 people

could well be the last major offensive before the NLF flag flutters over Saigon and Hue.

Despite Chou en Lai's brave talk there can be no doubt that Nixon's visit to Peking encouraged his belief that the Chinese government had now come of age and could be trusted in much the same way as imperialism has depended on Stalin and his successors since the mid-Thirties. Nixon's forthcoming visit to Moscow, which the spineless bureaucrats in Moscow refuse to call off, must have further encouraged him to think that a massive bombardment might finally cow the Vietnamese into an unsatisfactory settlement.

In that sense the Vietnamese offensive is also directed against Big Power diplomacy and is one of the ways in which the Vietnamese militants have expressed their views on the recent antics of both Peking and Moscow. After all it wasn't so long ago that Maoist 'theoreticians' were declaring that it was "Soviet social-imperialism" which was the greatest danger to the "peace in Asia". The implication being that U.S. imperialism was only a "secondary contradiction". Fortunately the Vietnamese did not countenance

including CP members and quite a number of young workers.

In view of the extent of all these actions, how do you envisage the forthcoming struggles, and in particular May Day?

The present political situation is very tense and there will be mobilisations of a political nature in the coming months. Already the Building Workers' Commission in Madrid has called on the workers in this branch (some 100,000) to go on strike in the week 24-29 April; and there will be actions in other sectors too.

The LCR will work with all its strength to ensure that these actions are well-organised and a major step forward in the radicalisation of broad layers of workers. In the case of the building workers' strike, many worker militants have already weighed up the experience of recent strikes and are prepared to organise better this time, despite the CP's role in holding them back, especially from protecting the strikers against repression and organising the movement democratically.

So we hope that May Day will have a political importance and a mass character sufficient to encourage the workers' movement to deal decisive blows against the dictatorship. For its part, the LCR will be calling on other organisations to organise a day of solidarity with the Indochinese revolution, linked to the current international campaign. Given the situation in Spain, we also see this as a part of the preparation for May Day.

NOTE:

The CP leadership is being obliged to employ more subtle tactics with its left wing because of the weakness of its organisational hold over the workers' vanguard, and because the extreme left, despite its divisions, is growing stronger. The 14 March *Mundo Obrero* (CP newspaper) refers to unity of action with the LCR in Madrid in the following terms: "The CP Committee for Student Organisation and the LCR Student Committee have published a joint call for a struggle against the General Education Law and a call to strike on 1 May 'without this meaning that deep strategic and tactical differences have been forgotten'."

The above interview first appeared in *Rouge*, newspaper of the Ligue Communiste, French Section of the Fourth International.

VIETNAM

Not only an offensive against Nixon

The offensive launched by the Vietnamese liberation forces continues unabated. On at least two different fronts—the Central Highlands, where the capital city of Kontum is under siege, and on Highway 13 in the South—the puppet army's defences continue to crumble. 'Vietnamisation' has been demonstrated as an abject failure. The bombing of the North has failed to stem the offensive and Nixon now has a total of 130 B-52 bombers in the war zone, the highest figure yet in the whole war.

The North Vietnamese Workers' Party has responded to the renewal of the bombings by escalating the offensive and by carrying out, for the first time during the war, naval and air attacks on the U.S. Seventh Fleet which is stationed just off the shores of Vietnam. They have further declared that



rubbish of this sort and their response to Nixon is also a response to his past and future hosts.

A few weeks after bombing Hanoi and Haiphong, Nixon will be feted in Moscow. This is the measure of Comrade Brezhnev's 'proletarian internationalism'. Instead of aiding the Vietnamese and using the Soviet Air Force and Navy to fight against attacks on a fraternal country (of course our C.P. friends will say this is 'ultra leftism', but then why is it that imperialism can act with impunity to defend its client states while the most powerful workers' state remains passive?), all the stress is laid on the 'diplomatic offensive'. Soviet tanks could be sent to crush the workers and students of Czechoslovakia in the name of combatting imperialism, but where imperialism really exists and is fighting, there Messrs. Brezhnev and Kosygin are satisfied with mere words in defence of the Vietnamese while they prepare to welcome Nixon to Moscow.

NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

In the face of the attitudes of Moscow and Peking, international solidarity with the Vietnamese remains an important task for all revolutionaries and socialists. Given the fact that the French and Italian C.P.s refuse to mobilise the workers in solidarity with the Vietnamese struggle, the burden falls on the shoulders of the extreme left. Recently there have been big demonstrations in France and Sweden and smaller ones in other European countries. In the United States the National Peace Action Coalition mobilised thousands and thousands of people in several cities (50,000 in New York alone); in many American universities students went on strike and as *The Guardian* remarked, chanted an old slogan with new vigour: "Avenge Hanoi, Avenge Haiphong, Victory to the Vietcong." In Britain alone the response has been marginal and restricted largely to the C.P. and the I.M.G. For opportunist groups like the I.S. and the S.L.L., Vietnam is a reminder of the fact that the colonial revolution still remains undefeated and that it is the Vietnamese who are today in the frontline of the struggle against the most powerful imperialism the world has ever known. Even though, of necessity, our solidarity with the Vietnamese can only be limited we have to re-start a process of educating ourselves and the revolutionary left as a whole in the processes at work in Southern Vietnam, so that when Saigon falls its significance is not lost on the British left.

Clarissa Howard

IRELAND

NEW STRUGGLES - NEW FRONTS

In the weeks since the imposition of direct rule the Tories have had a chance to assess the effects of the abrogation of Orange Law, and the achievements of Whitelaw. As the last issue of *The Red Mole* pointed out, the key element which forced them to change their strategy was the fact that they could not defeat the IRA without first isolating it from the mass of the Catholic minority (a difficult and long-term task), and the effects of the Provisionals' renewed military campaign had made it obvious that some desperate short term remedy was required. When the Unionists stood out against the transfer of security the Government had no choice but to push past them.

But in trying to persuade them to accept Heath's package, and in trying to minimise the resistance within the ranks of their own parliamentary party, the Tories lost vital time. The renewed military offensive has gained an impetus, which although it wavered, was not significantly affected by the new policy. The attitudes of the minority have not been deeply affected either, e.g. the supposed mass resistance by the women of Andersonstown to the carrying on of the campaign was simply a propaganda froth, which has disappeared leaving no trace on the course of events. The British press made much of this story; of course, it failed to report the fact that the Stormont Ministry of Community Relations was subsidising 'Women Together', and that this organisation has no support within the Catholic ghettos. The British government is well aware of the hollowness of such stunts, which they promote solely for home consumption.

The continued high level of military struggle, combined with the deep scepticism of the minority towards the machinations of the British government, is making it necessary to impose precisely those measures which will destroy any hope of a breach between the IRA and the masses. The shooting of Joseph McCann, and the reaction to it, was symptomatic of the dilemma which the Army faces. If it sits back and waits the IRA will have a breathing spell during which to train volunteers, and strengthen its defences. If it attempts to hit back at the IRA, even on the level of one sortie into the Falls, or the arrest of only a handful of volunteers, it will disperse any remaining illusions within the ghettos about Whitelaw's intentions, and fan hotter the hatred for the British army, and the government which stands behind it.

THE FREE DERRY COMMUNE

It has been during this period, when the Tories hoped to achieve a de-escalation in the struggle, that the most important political initiative has been taken; the announcement by the Provisionals of a system of direct elections to establish a popular authority in the barricaded areas of Bogside, Creggan and Brandywell.

In making a proper assessment of this development it is important to emphasise the very particular nature of the Derry ghettos. The geographical layout of the city makes it easy to barricade off and defend the Catholic areas. The proximity of the border makes supply lines, and a potential reserve of defenders much closer. It is in Derry that the contradictions of the Northern Ireland state have been most mercilessly clear; its Catholic majority had been gerrymandered out of any power within the city, it suffered from the economic decline of the area west of the Bann; even in good times its reliance on shirt manufacture meant an abysmally low level of male employment. As Northern Ireland's second city the discrimination it suffered in comparison to Belfast underlined, for its nationalist inhabitants, the real nature of their imprisonment within the Orange State. It is no accident that it was in Derry on October 5th, 1968, that the RUC Riot Squad bore down on a peaceful civil rights march, beating their shields with their clubs and screaming "Fenian Bastards"; thus plunging the North into the crisis from which it seems likely never to recover. In Derry too the bloodiest event in the struggle so far, the massacre of thirteen men, took place.



Official IRA patrol in the Turf Lodge Estate in Belfast, which the Army denies is a 'no-go' area.

The pushing forward of the resistance in Derry is of prime importance. The establishment of community control is one of the ways in which the masses of the oppressed minority will be drawn into a revolutionary struggle, and their resistance will be consolidated. Free Derry will not only be a powerful example for the rest of the Irish people, but will be a focus for solidarity which would prevent the disintegration of the minority, and re-activate support in the South.

Although the example of Derry is spreading, (there have been reports of Army action to prevent the barricading off of areas of Belfast), the fact that the particular factors which exist in Derry do not exist elsewhere, makes widespread adoption of this strategy very difficult. This is particularly the case in Belfast, whose sprawling ghettos are vulnerable to both the British Army and the Orange thugs. To succeed elsewhere a greater reliance on outside help would be needed, thus a pre-condition for an extended "commune" situation in Belfast would be mass support in the 26 Counties, Britain and elsewhere, and a political conjuncture in which the British government would be unwilling to move against the ghettos. Such a possibility is not excluded, but it requires a much deeper level of political awareness amongst the masses and a broader involvement in struggle than exists at present. Given time the Derry Commune could help to create this, but time is extremely short.

For these reasons British imperialism will probably attempt to crush the Bogside/Creggan Commune before it develops much further. Reports of Paratroop exercises in Britain, when soldiers were dropped into a housing estate in Colchester in the middle of the night, are a sinister hint of the methods which could be used. It should be crystal clear to everyone; the developments in Derry are a dagger aimed at the heart of British rule in Ireland, and are the most important challenge to the present policy of the Tories. If resistance in Derry is defeated then the twin blights of disillusion and fear could begin to wither the solidarity of the Northern minority, and the IRA could be separated from its mass base of support. British imperialism will go to any lengths to win such a battle, and could wreak such a vengeance that the Derry Massacre will seem mild in comparison.

Therefore the more the Tories try to change the situation the more it remains the same. As we pointed out in the last issue of *The Red Mole* the imposition of direct rule does no more than eliminate the institution of Stormont, leaving the Unionist State, and the contradictions which flow from it, untouched. British imperialism is going to be forced willy nilly into further attacks on, and repression against the Catholic minority.

PAPER VANGUARD?

It is more clear now that so far as its impact within Northern Ireland is concerned, the much feared protestant "backlash" has been a paper tiger. This was completely foreseeable, given an understanding of the Ulster

Vanguard, and its leadership. The pre-condition for protestant mobilisation was that "great" men should call it forth. There is no real tradition amongst the Orange masses of independent political activity; they have seen their advancement, and the defence of their privileges as indissolubly tied up with the Unionist Party and the Orange Order. While it is true that there have been innumerable splinters from this bloc, either to the right or left, all have been limited in size and have been unable for long to sustain political activity outside the traditional organisations. The same is true of military activity. There have always been a fair percentage of fanatical extremists but their armed organisations have been fragmented, mutually hostile, and limited to a small fringe. The protestants always relied on the RUC, and the 'B' specials to do the job, i.e., they always relied on the Orange State.

That is why it took such a solid political figure as Craig to create the Vanguard, and why he had to have the support of the Orange Order to do it; the inclusion of the Loyalist Association of Workers was a useful, but not essential, piece of demagoguery. Craig and his allies are extremely reactionary bourgeois politicians, but despite the ragged posturing of the Vanguard rallies, they are not going to launch a real struggle for an independent 'Ulster', and they have no desire to lead a violent confrontation with either the Catholic ghettos, or the British Army. Their purpose in creating this movement is to put pressure on the Tory government. While it cannot be excluded that the masses they have mobilised will go beyond their plans, and become involved in violent clashes, this would be against their wishes, and they would attempt to prevent and stop it.

Thus one of the recurrent dreams about the situation in the North, that the protestant workers, finding themselves in conflict with the British troops will suddenly realise their common interests with the Catholic workers, is likely to remain just a dream. And the main target so far as the British Army is concerned will continue to be the Catholic ghettos in general, and Bogside/Creggan in particular.

THE WAR COMES HOME

But in building up a head of steam for his campaign Craig is turning to a potential reservoir of support—in Britain. The sustained propaganda of the British press during the period from July 1970 to February 1972, when the Army was trying to crush the resistance of the minority by military means, has had a deep and residual effect on sections of the British population. It has not only deepened the sectarianism of traditionally sectarian areas like Glasgow and Liverpool, but it has won a large chunk of the lumpen middle class to hatred for the IRA, and support for "our boys". Within the Tory Party itself support for the Unionists' "case" has solidified, and there is a lobby for a return to complete anti-minority policies.

Craig realises that pressure put on the Tories in Britain will be much more effective than opposition in the Six Counties. He recalls the Home Rule crisis of 1912, and the way in which the Liberal Government was forced to back down by a combination of the

drilling of the UVF, and the resistance by large sections of the British ruling class, and middle class. The major difference in the present situation is that the main reason for the defeat of the Home Rule Bill was the development of a deep split in the ruling class which extended to the whole field of policy, and in particular was related to deep disagreements over the attitude to be taken to the British working class. Such a deep split does not exist today, nor is it likely to occur. Nevertheless a lot of effort and money is being spent on this and similar campaigns, substantial support could be won, and this could crystallise a stronger, more vigorous and aggressive right-wing movement than has been seen in Britain since the thirties.

That is why two events should be carefully noted:-

1) The reception given to the Glosters when they marched through Bristol recently, after a tour of duty in Ireland. They had celebrated their last night in Belfast by going on a rampage, and terrorising the inhabitants of Divis Street Flats. The Bristol middle class turned out to applaud them warmly. *The Guardian* reported that Anti-Internment League leafleters who tried to present an alternative viewpoint were openly attacked. Middle class suburbia thus links hands with the brutalised Glasgow Orangemen, a mixture which is not only unsavoury, but which has dangerous historical precedents.

2) Craig's plans to hold a mass rally in Hyde Park on 29 April, followed by a campaign throughout Britain. This campaign will be a decisive one; if it succeeds the Tories will almost certainly take the decisions necessary to quell the present resistance in the North, decisions which will involve a great deal of suffering and bloodshed for the beleaguered minority. This will also push them back onto the course of attempting to break the strength of the organised working class in Britain.

It would be ill-advised to cry "fascism" at this stage but nevertheless this is a potential political development which cannot be ignored, and which means that the building of a solidarity movement with the struggle in Ireland is not only necessary to aid that struggle, it is more than ever before directly in the interests of the class struggle in Britain itself. At no time since the Black and Tan wars have the interests of the British and Irish workers been so closely linked.

THE ISC

The Irish Solidarity Campaign's conference in Oxford on 29/30 April will play an important role in the building of such a movement. The ISC does not pose as the kind of mass movement which is required, but it can make a vital contribution by clarifying the kind of programme which is required by such a movement. While striving for effective unity in action, on the broadest scale, ISC will be trying to lay the basis for a more solid and continuous mass movement, which is based on an understanding of the situation; and which will not be deflected or dispersed by the twists and turns of British imperialism's policies in Ireland.

Bob Purdie

ROBIN BLACKBURN JOINS FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

—You have applied to join the British section of the Fourth International. What led you to this decision?

For some time I have been convinced of the necessity for revolutionary political organization. I began to think in this way when I studied the results of the agitation at the LSE and the attempts to convert the RSSF into an autonomous revolutionary student movement. I increasingly came to conclude that the limitations of spontaneism and movementism could only be overcome by organisation based on clear political ideas.

Obviously the wave of spontaneous social revolt that swept across the capitalist world in the Sixties was immensely positive: it helped to break the impasse of organised left politics by bringing new forces and new tactics into play. It exposed in a dramatic manner many new or forgotten contradictions and antagonisms in capitalist society and this led to the discovery or re-discovery of valuable methods of agitation and struggle. For large numbers of young people the political formulas which had guided the social democratic and Communist parties were thoroughly discredited. But it is absolutely clear now that these movements did not throw up the organisation or program necessary for a revolutionary assault on capitalist society. Too often they had no perspective for uniting the different oppressed and exploited groups which capitalist society divides and sets against one another. Too often they ignored or denied the central role which the direct producers—the working class—would have to play in creating any new set of social relations.

This also meant that they tended to abstract the question of revolutionary violence from the building of new institutions of proletarian power fully representing all sections of the exploited and the oppressed. As for myself I came to realise that faith in spontaneous revolt and denial of the necessity for revolutionary organisation and institutions of dual power really amounted to faith in the spontaneous self-destruction of capitalist society and denial of the role of consciousness in the revolutionary process. I became convinced that both the Lenin of *What is to be done?* and the Lenin of *State and Revolution* were indispensable starting points for building a revolutionary movement. But clearly the last thing that a commitment to Leninism requires is a refusal of the great opportunities for the strengthening of revolutionary practice made possible by the experience of the various movements of social revolt which have sprung up in the last few years.

Both in its theory and in its practice the Fourth International has shown the ability to take

up and develop the new possibilities of revolutionary practice and integrate them within the perspective of scientific socialism and a workers' revolution. The sharpening of the class struggle in Britain and the new openness to revolutionary ideas among political militants makes building the nucleus of a revolutionary party in this country both a practical and an urgent task. The framework of the International enables this to be done drawing on the lessons of the struggle for socialism in other countries and open to the scrutiny of revolutionary militants who have an experience which is needed to complement our own. I think this is essential if we are to break with the narrowness and backwardness of Marxist politics in Britain; the hold of Labourism on the working class can only be broken if the revolutionary left rids itself of its traditional insularity and economism. Part of the reason for my decision to apply for membership of the Fourth International is that I have seen its sections in operation in such different contexts as Eastern Europe and Latin America as well as in Britain. I know that if the socialist movement in the advanced capitalist countries is not based on full solidarity with the fight against imperialism in the third world and the struggle against the bureaucratic usurpation of workers power in the non-capitalist sector of the world, then this can only undermine the force and integrity of its own struggles.

STATEMENT BY I.M.G. POLITICAL COMMITTEE

The Political Committee of the IMG has recently accepted applications for membership from Robin Blackburn and Quintin Hoare. After detailed political discussion it was clear that these comrades were in fundamental agreement with the programme of the Fourth International and the work of its British section. Both Robin Blackburn and Quintin Hoare are members of the editorial committee of *New Left Review*. Since *NLR* is an independent journal of Marxist discussion and analysis, the PC of the IMG welcomes their continued participation in its work. The revolutionary movement can only benefit from free and open debate on the issues which confront it.

The reason that the Fourth International has played such a significant role in fostering international solidarity is that it is able to understand the political relation between these struggles in the light of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and his scientific insight into the nature of the Soviet Union. Those who have rejected or abandoned these perspectives have been unable to respond adequately to the development of revolution in Cuba

tion in terms of arguments developed by Deutscher. But the mistake he made about the formation of the Fourth International was not an isolated one. It becomes apparent that he did not fully hold the Marxist concept of the unity (but not identity) of theory and practice as praxis. In the article 'Marxism in Our Time' he writes: "Practice is sometimes the enemy of thought; thought sometimes suffers from contact with practice. Here is the dialectic in its crystalline form; basically thought can exist only through contact with practice; practice cannot in the long run ignore theory. Nevertheless there are these temporary transitional periods of unresolved tensions between theory and practice . . ."

The significance of this approach emerges in this article as he seeks to locate the cause of what he calls "vulgar Marxism" (a term which in his usage covers "European social-democrats, reformists, Stalinists, Khrushchevites, and their like") solely in practice. He explains the vulgarisation of Marxist theory in terms of the reflection of "the requirements of the labour movement and of the revolutions that were coming under the banner of Marxism".

Thus, according to Deutscher, it is the "all-round scarcity" which is the "basic, decisive, and determining factor" in the rise of "vulgar Marxism", i.e., the Stalinist perversion of Marxism, in the Soviet Union. This is, of course, a one-sided explanation. It is true that the all-round scarcity lays the basis for the rise of a phenomenon like Stalinism and made possible (but not inevitable) its victory in the Soviet Union. But Stalinist "vulgar Marxism" also embodies the needs and position of a social stratum—the Soviet bureaucracy—and a rationalisation of its social position—something Deutscher only partially

and Vietnam. They have been unable to grasp the contradictory, dual nature of the Soviet Union which has consistently sought to dampen down or crush revolutionary initiatives where it can, but at the same time is forced to provide vital material sustenance to Vietnam and Cuba because of its objectively antagonistic relation to the capitalist world. Denial of one or another of these aspects leads either to violations of the need for solidarity against imperialism or to the disasters, betrayals and apologetics which result from accepting the line of the Soviet leadership.

At one time the Chinese criticism of the Soviet Union and the experience of the cultural revolution seemed to provide an implicit criticism of Stalinist structures and politics. But the events of the last year have underlined that this is not the case: the manner of the successive changes in the Chinese leadership demonstrate the absence of revolutionary democracy in the Party and State and the attempt to represent the Soviet Union as a capitalist power has been used to justify deficient solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution and cynical violations of internationalism in Bengal, Ceylon and the Sudan. I believe that the Fourth International is a rallying point for all revolutionary militants who understand the importance of internationalism.

—Have your views on the Labour Party changed over the last year or so?

The discussion which followed my article *Let it Bleed* has certainly led to a development and modification of my view on this question. In my article I underestimated the significance of the Labour Party's institutional links with the Trade Unions. I think I was right to insist that the Labour Party did not furnish the political organisation of the working class in the traditional manner but I failed to make the distinction between the Labour Party as an organisation and Labourism as an ideology. The position of the former within the working class has weakened very much more than the position of the latter. At a time when the trade unions become by far the most important vehicles of workers' struggle, recognising the continuing strength of social democratic ideology is of great importance.

—What role in the revolutionary movement do you believe is played by a journal such as *New Left Review*?

During the ten years or so in which I have been an editor of the *NLR* its aim has become, with increasing clarity, that of encouraging the development of Marxism in Britain and the other British speaking areas it reaches. Given the traditional weakness and isolation of Marxist thought in this milieu we knew that it was essential for us to insist on the richness and scope of Marxism and its relevance to every aspect of building a revolutionary movement. We translated the writings of Gramsci, the young Lukacs, and Debray; we carried discussions of new developments in psychoanalysis and anthropology; we published original

built into his analysis. Deutscher's position leads him to predict in 'Marxism in Our Time' that "The social systems" (of the workers states) "will force the leaders into internationalism even if they are the most chauvinistic idiots under the sun; they will push and drive them aside . . ."

Such an approach does not explain the phenomenon of the crisis of Stalinism getting worse as the productive forces in the Soviet Union develop. Far from the leaders being pushed towards internationalism, their theory becomes more "vulgar". It will not be the "social systems" alone that will "push and drive them aside" but a product of those social systems—a greatly enlarged and developed working class, with a conscious leadership.

It is one of the tragedies of the period we have

analyses of the *Grundrisse* and the oppression of women; and a series of studies in the Marxist interpretation of British history and society; we also published some forty accounts by workers of how they experienced their work situation; and there were articles on the background to revolution in Algeria and Cuba and books on the trade unions and the student revolt.

NLR also revealed unquestionable traces of a number of major deviations to be found on the left in the sixties, at different conjunctures: illusions in social-democracy or passivity towards Stalinism, uncritical Third Worldism or Sinophilism. These were generally sporadic or limited weaknesses, not ones which governed the main dynamic of the *Review*. More serious and persistent was over-estimation of the importance of purely theoretical work, divorced from the practice of class struggle. However, the development of the review through these various episodes was an evolution to the left—gradually away from centrist to revolutionary politics. The year 1968 was for us, as for many others, a turning point. Since then, *NLR* has taken clear and sharp stands on the great, decisive questions of international class struggle: the Tet offensive in Vietnam, the May Events in France, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Polish workers' revolt, the Chinese counter-revolutionary intervention in Pakistan and Ceylon. The dynamic of the *Review* has thus been constantly leftward.

There has been less eclecticism and more open confrontation of basic issues in the history and theory of Marxism. I think this can be seen in the assessments recently published on the Frankfurt School, Althusser and the young Lukacs, in the articles by Lucio Colletti and in the conclusion of the debates on Trotsky and the structure of contemporary imperialism. The *Review* has been and I hope will remain open to free discussion of any important development in revolutionary theory or the revolutionary movement; its aim remains the propagation of revolutionary ideas and culture unencumbered by the absurd notion that this merely consists in laying down the correct line.

I think it very important that this work should continue but at the same time I know that as far as I am concerned it is imperative to extend and deepen my political practice. A growing awareness of the deficiencies of Maoism and spontaneism has helped to decide what form this political commitment should take. Whatever the value, or at times necessity, of isolated theoretical work it certainly must always be enhanced by the lessons and experience of political practice whenever this is possible. I now hope to become in the fullest sense a militant of the Fourth International. In particular I hope to integrate my political and theoretical work and overcome the dangerous separation from which it has suffered. I am pleased to have found myself in agreement with the Fourth International in believing that this need in no way prevent me from continuing to contribute to the work of the *NLR* despite the fact that many of my comrades on the editorial committee have different perspectives and priorities from myself.

been through that a man like Deutscher, despite his contributions (thousands of people must have been introduced to Trotsky's thought by his writings), and material assistance to various movements, did not put his powers at the disposal of the only organised expression of the internationalist tradition of Marxism—the Fourth International. Deutscher was quite wrong to think that connection with the revolutionary movement inevitably leads to a situation where "thought . . . suffers from contact with practice", as many examples show. It is a further aspect of the tragedy that even Deutscher's contribution as an isolated but brilliant intellectual was distorted by his lack of contact with practice and that many potential revolutionaries were disoriented by his writings.

—Pat Jordan

REVIEW

Marxism in Our Time, by Isaac Deutscher (Cape, £2.95)

This is an attractive and well-produced book covering a series of Isaac Deutscher's writings and lectures from 1943 to 1967. The range of the articles both in terms of time and subject underlines an unsatisfactory aspect of the book—there is no rationale for its contents nor an underlying conception uniting them. Yet in some ways, this can be said to reflect a reality rather than a weakness of the theme of the book. Deutscher was a man who had great talents but whose thought and actions suffered from his isolation from political practice. This is reflected in the book, which combines Deutscher's writings at their most lucid and at their most mistaken.

Deutscher's immense talents are amply demonstrated. His erudition is apparent in everything he writes. His ability to explain in simple and lucid language basic Marxist concepts (not without gaps, of course) is shown in 'Trotsky in Our Time'. His gift of being able to present complex social phenomena in broad historical perspective is illustrated in several of the articles, notably, 'On Socialist Man'. The book is interesting and rewarding reading.

A topic which comes up on several occasions is Deutscher's attitude towards the Fourth International. As is well-known, Deutscher took a strong position against the formation of the Fourth International—the two Polish delegates at the Founding Conference voted against its establishment; justifying their posi-

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LETTERS

'IS Hypocrisy in Glasgow'

Dear Friends,

You refer to me, in your last issue, as passing an "Internal I.S." document to the Chairman of the I.S.C.

I would like to make the following two points:

1) That the document referred to was handed to me for my comments, not as an "I.S. internal document", but as a discussion document that was circulated to many people working closely with I.S.

2) That I discussed the contents of this document with Matt Montgomery in good faith as an active socialist in Glasgow, working on the Irish question, not in his capacity as chairman of Glasgow I.S.C. which does not, in my opinion, have an existence independent of the I.M.G.

Although Bob Purdie continually calls for a United Front, in the Glasgow area, of Republicans and Socialists his actions and the actions of I.M.G. do little to promote this. The fact is that I.M.G., in Scotland, is doing precious little on the Irish question. Most of the work is being carried out by individual members of Clann Na H'Eireann and International Socialists.

It is Clann's Policy not to countenance the sectarian demands of the I.M.G. but to work closely with those individuals and organisations who are genuinely interested in building a mass movement in support of the Irish Struggle.

Yours, Gerry Doherty Clann Na H'Eireann

Dear Comrades,
May I be allowed to reply to Bob Purdie's article, "IS Hypocrisy in Glasgow"?

Contrary to what he implies, Glasgow IS is completely in favour of the unity of left and republican organisations in a campaign to "End Internment" and "Withdraw British Troops".

That is why we called the initial meeting last August that formed the Organising Committee for the October anti-internment march. That is why we worked actively in the Committee for Free Speech on Ireland until we were told by the Treasurer at the December meeting that all the fines had been paid. And that is why we are still deeply involved in work on Ireland.

Bob's article does, however, raise some fair questions. Why did IS organise on its own a Bernadette Devlin meeting (900 attending), an Eamonn McCann meeting (220), a series of open-air meetings in the Gorbals, joint literature sales and leafletting to build a Glasgow A.I.L. with Clann na H'Eireann, and again jointly with Clann, the first of a series of 'Join the A.I.L.' public meetings (50)? And why did we not attend a meeting to discuss united front work called by the IMG under the auspices of the "Glasgow ISC"?

We've been working on our own or jointly with Clann since January partly because, as our achievements show, we are actually strong enough to do so. But more crucially, because of deep political differences we have with the IMG on the character and orientation of solidarity work in Glasgow.

Two pages before his attack on us in *The Red Mole*, Bob pledges the IMG to "renew our attempts to build a principled solidarity movement in Britain". And he then defines a "principled" movement as one that "does not hesitate to say: Victory to the IRA."

Now as your readers will be well aware, IS's full programme on Ireland includes "Unconditional but critical support for the IRA", "For a 32-County Socialist Workers' Republic", and "For the Building of an Irish working-class Revolutionary Party". But in order to bring into activity on a proper united front basis as many people as possible we are willing to work around slogans that contain less than our maximum demands.

Thus, both IS and Clann in Glasgow prefer to build what Bob would probably describe as an "unprin-

ciplined" movement around the minimum programme of demands to "End Internment" and "Withdraw the Troops". And IS feels that the wearing of berets and combat jackets, and the "principled" unfurling of the Tricolour by the IMG on the October demonstration does bear out my statement in a local discussion document quoted by Bob, that the IMG are "ready and willing to sacrifice it (the potential of a mass campaign in Britain) on the altar of sectarianism."

We are ready to discuss with the IMG if they are ready to leave aside their maximum programme in an attempt to create a united front, and we always have been. But we are not prepared to allow real joint work to be prejudiced by meeting under the umbrella of an "independent" ISC.

You see, Bob has misled your readers on this one. I know nothing at all about Coatbridge ISC, or any other ISC Branch for that matter, but the following is certainly true of the "Glasgow ISC":

(1) When an "ISC delegate" to the October Organising Committee was asked to pay his organisation's affiliation, he stated that ISC did not actually exist in Glasgow and he would remain as an IMG delegate;

(2) Despite leafletting the Free Speech Committee's November Rally, "Glasgow ISC" was not affiliated to that Committee, not did any of its members ask IS or Clann whether we were willing to speak at their meetings before producing the leaflet with our names on it;

(3) The only ISC members we came into contact with when we called a meeting to organise the February demonstration protesting at Bloody Sunday were IMG comrades.

Thus the problem poses itself sharply: Would solidarity work on Ireland in Glasgow benefit by the formation of a new united front campaign that would spend the greater part of its energies in an interminable (on past experience of three attempts) debate on whether to add to the two agreed immediate demands, others like "Self-determination" and "Victory to the IRA"? Or, as the IMG does not seem prepared in the interests of unity to drop its maximum programme, would it not be better to agree to differ and to test the differences in practice?

This is why we are now working alongside Glasgow Clann na H'Eireann to build the grass-roots support in Glasgow's Irish community that will make the formation of an active A.I.L. Branch a real possibility in the near future. And I would urge all your readers in Glasgow who are interested in working in a non-sectarian manner for the A.I.L. demands to get in touch with us or the Clann.

Yours fraternally, Steve Jefferys,
Secretary,
Glasgow Area Committee,
International Socialists.

BOB PURDIE REPLIES:

Before replying to Gerry Doherty and Steve Jefferys I would like to make it clear that my article was written before I became aware of the fact that an Anti-internment League was to be formed in Glasgow. Had I known this, despite my political disagreements with the AIL, and with the methods being used to form it in Glasgow, I would not have written the article. However, I stand by the political and methodological criticisms made in it.

In response to Comrade Doherty's points: I accept his statement about the nature of the document, however this has little bearing. My article was designed only to show the connection between the politics in the document, and IS's actions in Glasgow. I regret that I gave the impression that the document was given to Matt Montgomery in his capacity as ISC chairman.

Such an inference was not intended, I was merely trying to clarify for *The Red Mole* readers who Matt is. The claim that "IMG in Scotland is doing precious little on the Irish question" is simply untrue. The only major initiatives on Ireland in which we have not been involved have been the Bernadette Devlin and Eamonn McCann meetings, which were IS recruiting rallies, and the current work in preparation for a Glasgow AIL. It is true that this work is being carried out by Clann and IS members, but since we have not been given information about it, or invited to participate, we have a certain difficulty. If we are given an opportunity to participate, and refuse, we will then be open to criticism.

However, this is not the full story. Despite the limitations imposed by the lack of any united front activity in Glasgow we have been very much involved in work in the colleges in Glasgow and Edinburgh, both through ISC, and in other united fronts. We are working in the AIL in Edinburgh and Fife, and a contingent of IMG and ISC members went down to the AIL demonstration in London on March 26th.

It is clear from what we are doing in Edinburgh and Fife that we do not demand that anyone should "countenance our sectarian demands" before we work with them; or does comrade Doherty mean that we have to accept his interpretation of the proper demands before he will work with us?

Steve Jefferys presents a series of reasons for IS's refusal to work with IMG, which consist of political disagreements, statements about ISC, and complaints about IMG's past actions. Not a single one is a serious barrier to united front action.

It is true that IMG members carried a tricolour and wore berets on the October 16th demo. In the context of an Orange counter-demonstration this was a serious tactical mistake. It was not a breach of principle since we have always operated on the basis that individual organisations carry their own banners and slogans on united front demonstrations; IS, for example carried a banner "For a Socialist Workers' Republic", which was not an agreed slogan. However, this cannot be a barrier to unity, since IS co-operated with us twice after this demonstration, and on neither occasion did we repeat our mistake.

It is true that during the preparations for the October demo, ISC in Glasgow had gone out of existence, but then, so had Clann na H'Eireann, both organisations have been rebuilt since that time. It is true that ISC was not affiliated to the Free Speech Committee, this was because that Committee was composed of the organisations which had organised the October 16th demo. However, one of the main speakers was Mike Maguire a (non-IMG) ISC member, who had been detained and interrogated in Belfast, this contributed in no small measure to the success of the rally, since there were no other Irish speakers. Mike's travelling expenses were met by London ISC. It is true that ISC distributed a leaflet, which due to a balls-up advertised speakers from Clann and IS without first having asked them. We have no excuse to offer for this piece of vicious sectarian wrecking.

It is true that IMG considers that a principled programme for a solidarity movement would include "Victory to the IRA" or some other formulation which unambiguously supports IRA action against British imperialism in Ireland, and which is for the defeat of the British Army. We totally reject comrade Jefferys' conceptions about "maximum" and "minimum" programmes, all of our work, and all of our demands are designed to win support for the right of the Irish people to self-determination, which we regard as being the proper principled stance for revolutionaries in Britain. Our demands are designed to concretise the question of self-determina-

tion, i.e., we demand that British troops be withdrawn, and internment be ended because we reject the right of British imperialism to intervene in Ireland, and it is this concept that we try to communicate in our political work. Both of these demands can only be temporary, and related to the immediate situation, for if internment were ended, and the troops withdrawn, the need for solidarity need not necessarily be any the less, the Irish people could be oppressed in just as cruel, if different ways. Because of the need to relate slogans to the changing situation, after internment we adopted the slogan of "Victory to the IRA". This was intended to relate to the fact that a major part of the struggle in Ireland was the armed struggle against the British army carried out by the IRA. A solidarity movement which ignores such a major aspect of the struggle can hardly adequately support the Irish people. And it cannot tackle the problem which press propaganda about the IRA constitutes without an unambiguous position of explaining why armed struggle is necessary. In other words we concretise the demand for self-determination by taking a position on the armed struggle.

Because we have this analysis of the nature of a solidarity movement, which is radically different from that of most other organisations, we seek to build the ISC as an independent united front organisation, composed of all those who agree with a programme of demands which are based on the principle of self-determination. We cannot agree with those who, like comrade Jefferys, have only one criterion for a solidarity programme, i.e., the number of people who will support it, and who therefore tack on, or chop off, slogans without any consideration of the political significance of what they are doing.

However, Comrade Jefferys knows quite well that we have never insisted on acceptance of our "maximum" programme, as he puts it, as the sole basis for unity. In fact we have carried out a number of united front actions with IS and other forces in Glasgow in the past, on the basis of the slogans: "Self-determination for Ireland", "Withdraw Troops" and "End Internment". The meeting to which IS were invited by ISC, proposed a united front on the basis of these same three slogans. It did not propose "Victory to the IRA" since we knew in advance that we could not get agreement on this. Nor did ISC demand that IS work under its "umbrella", the proposal was for the same kind of united front which IS had supported in the past.

None of Steve's "reasons" is a logical explanation of why IS should now switch its policy with regard to united front action; that is why I stand by my opinion that their main motivation is, as stated in the document, to convince Irish workers of the "need while in Britain to join IS". Since Clann has gained considerable support amongst such workers in Glasgow, IS is eager to work with them. To work with other forces would introduce political competition. This is underlined when we note that Steve has not attempted to justify the exclusion of the Glasgow group of the Communist Federation of Britain (M-L), against whom he has made no complaints.

But IS and Clann intend to form an AIL in Glasgow. Good. We will support it; we have no intention of counterposing our Irish work to any attempt to achieve unity in action. Since Steve has issued an invitation to *The Red Mole* readers to work for the AIL demands I hereby apply on behalf of the Glasgow IMG. When do we start Steve? When can we affiliate?

At the same time we have no intention of withdrawing from our work to build a movement on a principled solidarity basis, and while we will not advocate that its activities cut across those of the AIL we will continue to support and build the ISC. We will also make our opinions on the question of a programme clear within the AIL, while avoiding doing so in a way which would aggravate the present strained relations between ourselves and IS.

Bob Purdie

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WIDGERY WHITEWASH

The report of the Widgery Tribunal on 'Bloody Sunday' in Derry, published on 19 April, predictably absolves the Army, with one or two reservations, from any responsibility for the civilian deaths and injuries that occurred on that day. One of the more astute comments came from Bernard Nossiter of *The Washington Post*, who wrote: "There are still innocent souls abroad who think that Lewis Carroll's King and Queen of Hearts are creatures of fantasy. But the publication of Lord Chief Justice Widgery's report on Derry's 'Bloody Sunday' makes clear that Alice's wonderland is very much alive. The King and Queen of Hearts, it will be recalled, presided over the Knave and invented a procedure of first sentence, next verdict and evidence last. Careful readers of Widgery's report... can only conclude that Carroll's method has served as a model."

This is more than borne out by the contents of the report. Several points, specific and general, are particularly striking.

1. In his introduction, Widgery states that: "The limits of the Inquiry in space were the streets of Londonderry in which the disturbances and the shooting took place; in time, the period beginning with the moment when the march first became involved in violence." Yet almost immediately there is a section 'Security Background'—a highly selective summary of the events of the previous six months, which is obviously designed to prejudice the reader before he even gets on to the events of Bloody Sunday.

2. One embarrassing fact on Bloody Sunday was, of course, that so many civilians were killed or wounded while not one soldier was hit, though Widgery estimates that, "As many rounds were fired at the troops as were fired by them". His only answer to this is that: "The



Widgery: business as usual

soldiers escaped injury by reason of their superior field-craft and training". Of course another answer could be that only a few sporadic shots at most were fired (*The Sunday Times* reports that one "defensive" and seven "unauthorised" shots were fired by the Official IRA; none were fired by the Provisionals before 4.30). Certainly this claim of "superior field-craft and training" contrasts oddly with what happened in shooting incidents on 25 April, when no fewer than six soldiers were hit without scoring a single hit in return.

3. One crucial question concerns the orders for the arrest operation. *The Sunday Times* report shows quite clearly that the decision to mount the operation came right from "Ministers" at the top—probably from the Northern Ireland Committee of the Cabinet. Major General Ford emphasised to Widgery that the operation was carefully considered "for a fortnight or more before". This may explain the hints which got into the press, e.g. *The Guardian* report that, "there will still be the Bogside to flush out and that could be a very bloody operation" (17 January); or the *New Statesman* report that, "Catholics in 'Free Derry'... expect what they call 'the big push' soon. This will be,

they say, as bloody an echo of the Great War in deed as it is in name." (22 January)

Secondly, the order for the operation as recorded in the Brigade Log (Serial 159) reads: "Orders given to 1 Para at 1607 hours for one sub-unit of 1 Para to do scoop-up op through barrier 14. Not to conduct running battle down Rossville Street." (Emphasis in original). This emphasis on *not* conducting such a running battle in fact suggests that there was a likelihood that they might do so; indeed it suggests very strongly that the original plan was just this, and that Serial 159 indicates a change of plan at the top which was in the event ignored by the Paras on the ground. However in face of suggestions that the Paras grossly exceeded orders, Widgery simply states that: "I do not accept this conclusion in the face of the sworn evidence of the three officers concerned."

4. His answer to the question, "Who fired first".... probably the most important single issue which I have been required to determine", is equally insubstantial. Faced with conflicting sets of evidence, he concludes, "that the first firing in the court-yard was directed at the soldiers... It is a conclusion built up over many days of listening to evidence and watching the demeanour of witnesses under cross-examination." In other words, he cannot afford to admit of any possibility that the army is lying. The conclusion of *The Sunday Times* that the first shots were fired by Lieutenant N is in fact far more plausible.

5. Four men were killed at the Rossville Street barricade. All the civilian witnesses, including the Assistant Chief Constable of Renfrew and Bute, are emphatic that nothing more than sporadic stone-throwing occurred here; yet a single reference to "soldiers' evidence about civilians firing from the barricade" is enough to justify their deaths and absolve the Paras.

6. Similarly with the shooting in Glenfada Park, which is very hastily passed over by Widgery—"I find the evidence too confused and too contradictory to make separate consideration possible" (of the individual deaths). He is forced to admit that Soldier H could not possibly have fired 19 shots at one target, a man behind a window which miraculously remained unbroken. These shots, he admits, "were wholly unaccounted for". But he makes no attempt to account for them himself, and justifies this by stating that, "there is no photographic evidence". *The Sunday Times*, however, were able to unravel the sequence of events in this area—by using "pictures taken on the day, most by newspaper photographers, and all available to the tribunal".

7. Gerald Donaghy was one of those shot dead in the Glenfada Park area. Four nail bombs were later 'found' in his pockets. Donaghy was wearing tight-fitting jeans, and nail bombs are rather bulky objects. Yet they were not noticed by either the Lincoln doctor or the Medic-

al Officer who examined him. It was only "after another short interval" that they were "noticed" by the army. Yet Widgery concludes that, "the bombs were in Donaghy's pockets throughout.... the alternative explanation of a plant is mere speculation."

8. Two men were killed and another two wounded in Joseph Place (just south of Rossville Flats)—but the army insists that it only fired two shots in this area. Widgery side-steps this contradiction by only dealing with the two deaths as individual cases.

In all these instances, and more, Widgery's approach to the evidence is very clear. *Anything* is possible—except deceit on the part of the army. It is not surprising, therefore, that the report—with a few reservations such as that "in Glenfada Park, firing bordered on the reckless" (but wasn't *actually* reckless?)—comes out as a complete whitewash of the army's activities on that day.

This was perhaps predictable, but in light of the new political situation it is still a trifle surprising. For a month now, the Government's whole emphasis has been on 'conciliation'—release of over 100 internees, closure of the Maidstone prison ship, etc. etc. Yet Eddie McAteer was not far off the mark when he commented that the Widgery Report "means the end of the Whitelaw Mission". There can only be one conclusion: the British ruling class, and its executive committee the Tory Government, is split on the question of what to do about the situation in Northern Ireland. That is the only explanation for the contradiction between Widgery's carefully manufactured conclusions and Whitelaw's stated policy in the North.

—Martin Meteyard

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PORTSMOUTH POLY OCCUPATION

The recently ended occupation at Portsmouth Polytechnic, which lasted for five weeks, has implications for all students' struggles, particularly in the public sector, as the underlying problem at Portsmouth is the State's "expansion on the cheap" attitude to higher education. The struggle was sparked off by an accommodation shortage in one department which led the students to fight the proposed expansion of the Polytechnic from 4,200 to 7,500 by 1981. While in favour of more people entering higher education, the students argued that such rapid unplanned expansion merely to serve the needs of British capital could only result in gross overcrowding, in a city where because of students' ability to pay higher rents they are forcing the working class out of the city.

To prevent the college administration from submitting an expansion plan which failed to take into account the interests of the students and the working class of Portsmouth, the students raised a demand for a "democratic" institution. The students realised the contradictions of this demand, in that even a "democratic" institution cannot escape the financing and regulations by which the State forces higher education into supplying the needs of British capital, rather than the needs of the students and the working class.

This long term demand was never won although more immediate demands were. The occupation was ended by a court order against 10 named individuals and others, legal costs being awarded against the named individuals. Despite the end of the immediate struggle the students are still fighting for the rejection of the college administration's development plan.

There has been no solution at Portsmouth, the same accommodation crises will occur again both here and elsewhere and will be fought again.

Rich Palser
Sally J. Reffin.

HANDS OFF METRO YOUTH!

On May 8th another major trial will start at the Old Bailey. Four black youths, Frank Sweeney, Howard Houghton, Ranny Dufael, and Christopher John Aitchison are charged with offences involving the police attack on the Metro Youth Club on 24 May, 1971.

ILEA CLOSES CLUB

The attack on the Metro was part of the State's attempt to smash the social and political organisation of blacks. The ILEA have always been in a dilemma about closing the club, and have now reversed a former decision by closing it. They were dissatisfied with the elected club committee, and were unable to find any 'responsible' scabs or 'Uncle Toms' to run the club against the aspirations of its members.

Further information on the club and the trial can be obtained from 'Backyard', 301 Portobello Road, or via Notting Hill IMG.

ILEA youth leader hands over keys to Metro Collective: but then the club is closed down.



RODDY KENTISH JAILED

Roddy Kentish—one of the defendants in the notorious frame-up 'Mangrove 9' trial last December—was found not guilty of attempted murder but guilty of assault and carrying an offensive weapon at the Old Bailey on 20 April; he was sentenced to 18 months inside by racist Justice Melford-Stevenson. The lessons of the 'Mangrove' trial, where the defendants successfully turned the trial into a political exposure of the State's repressive machinery, were in this instance sadly not applied. The case was not fought politically; and there was very little support from community organisations and other left groups.

THE TRIAL

The charge of attempted murder arose from an incident in October, 1970, when the Notting Hill police (particularly well-known 'friends of the people' Pulley, Lewis, Langham, Hogarth and Saunders) came to arrest Roddy on a charge of affray in the Portnall Road demonstration ('Mangrove' demo) of August 1970. Since Roddy had not been on the demonstration (he was later acquitted of all charges in the 'Mangrove' trial) he very understandably resisted arrest.

The police alleged that Roddy attempted to strangle P.C. Lewis. Although Lewis supposedly lost consciousness he was however able to make detailed notes on the whole incident just one hour later!

The police doctor was perhaps the funniest witness. Asked in the courtroom why his notes referred to the left side of Lewis's face while the photo was of the right side, he replied that maybe there were marks on both sides of the face, or perhaps for left the court should read right! He also had to admit that the face marks—wherever they were—did not necessarily imply 'manual strangulation' as his notes told him. The whole trial was like this. Mel-

ford-Stevenson was visibly livid when Roddy was found not guilty of attempted murder, and would undoubtedly have given him more than 18 months for the other charges but for his excellent character witnesses and fear of embarrassment at the Court of Appeal.

CONTEMPT

Before the trial members of Notting Hill IMG distributed with Roddy's agreement a leaflet calling for a picket of the court. Once it had started they took copies of a second leaflet giving the political background to the case into the public gallery; and *incorrectly* allowed some to be passed around. The IMG accepts all criticism for this error. A girl in the public gallery informed the police, claiming that a certain black man had given her a leaflet. Melford-Stevenson then accused him of contempt of court. Two witnesses from the IMG came forward, stating that it was in fact they who had given the leaflet to the girl and they who had produced it. Nevertheless the man, a well-known Black Panther, was put inside for seven days.

SUPPORT

Roddy's legal advisers were determined to fight the case 'straight', despite its obviously political nature. They thought they could win on legal technicalities, and were proved wrong. The lessons are clear. The courts dispense class justice: it is only by recognising this and taking the class struggle into the courts that such cases can be fought on anything like equal terms. And that means not only putting up a political defence in court, but also active support in such cases from left groups to destroy the barrier between the courts and what goes on outside them.

—Piers Corbyn
Notting Hill I.M.G.