

MILITANT

FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

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SIXPENCE

Direct from Bogside
barricade

Paul Jones (Derry Lab. Party
Young Socialists) Aug. 26.

NORTHERN IRELAND

FOR A UNITED WORKERS DEFENCE FORCE

- WITHDRAW BRITISH TROOPS
- DISBAND B. SPECIALS AND POLICE THUGS
- FOR JOBS, SCHOOLS, HOMES, TAKE OVER MONOPOLIES
- CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT WORKERS FIGHT FOR
A UNITED SOCIALIST IRELAND

The electric events in Northern Ireland have shaken to their roots the Unionist Stormont Government and and shocked out of its sedate calm the British ruling class. The bloody clashes in Derry, Belfast and other town has meant that the Catholic population is no longer prepared to accept the writ of a Government which rules by police and Paisleyite terror. Forced to defend their area of the Bogside the Catholic workers have taken over the running, policing and organisation of the area through the establishment of defence committees. At the same time, — and it is this more than anything which will strike terror into the hearts of the capitalists, — an increasing section have begun to see their fight not in a religious form but as a class issue.

At bottom the uprising in Derry was against the system itself, the lengthening dole queues, the worst housing in Britain, and misery on a mass scale. This anger against the capitalist system erupted in the insurrection, — and that is what it undoubtedly was, — against the attempts of their traditional enemies, the police, to unleash another reign of terror against the Bogside workers. Above all they were determined to prevent any repetition of the events of January when B. Specials and police beat up women and children, battered a 50 year old man and dragged him fifty yards, which brought on a heart attack and subsequent death. And contrary to the lies of the Stormont Government, the overwhelming force was on the side of them and their armed guards, the police and B. Specials. With sticks and stones in Belfast, the Catholic population confronted an armed mob which bristled with rifles and machine guns. In Derry the workers had prepared well before the August Days, having learnt from the bitter experiences of the past year.

In the 4 weeks preceding the dreaded August 12th Orange Parade, the workers of Bogside and Creggan expected the worst. With 40—50,000 Orange men in Derry, it was expected that the Paisleyite elements would attack the area. In response to this, a Citizens' Defence Committee was

back any Catholic attacks on the Orange Parade, but if the area was to come under attack, to co-ordinate the defence. 1,500 members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary had been drafted into the area to see "there was no trouble." But the sectarian provocations of the Paisleyites, coupled with the attempts of the police to penetrate the Bogside, ignited an explosion.

The fears of the British capitalist Press were confirmed. For weeks they had been urging that the Orange Parade be banned along with all others. In this was expressed the dilemma of the British ruling class. Fifty years ago they had consciously partitioned Ireland in order to reinforce religious prejudices, and so hold on to the most industrialised section of Ireland, where most of their loot was concentrated. By a policy of "divide and rule" they successfully derailed the social revolution that was developing at that time. But, such is the irony of history, the very same Unionist Party, installed as a bulwark against the development of united working class action, is now, by its refusal to bend to the new pressures, threatening to unleash a process pregnant with dangers for imperialism. In Rhodesia, the white elite by their refusal to cede political power to a black elite has provoked an African guerrilla war, threatening capitalist investments throughout Southern Africa. So too, the Unionist Ascendancy has by its whole history been incapable of making the necessary switch in policy in time. To have banned the Orange Parade, would have undermined its base amongst the Protestant population, which has been nourished on discrimination against the Catholic population. Caught in a dilemma they allowed the demonstration to take place. But the changes wrought by the post-war economic developments made it certain that the Catholic population, particularly the youth, would no longer accept the 40-year oppression and discrimination.

The industrial development which has taken place in this period has not been enough to offset the decline in the traditional industries, linen and shipbuilding. Added to this has



EXTRACT FROM "BARRICADES BULLETIN",
DAILY NEWSHEET OF DERRY LABOUR PARTY

WHAT ARE WE DEFENDING ?

We are defending the homes in the predominantly Catholic working class areas of Bogside and Creggan against either organised sectarian terror at the hands of the R.U.C. or semi-organised sectarian terror at the hands of the Specials and Protestant workers who should know a lot better.

This is why the barricades are up. The barricades must stay up until we are sure we are all safe from state controlled terror or victimisation.

We are not defending the social conditions of the people in the area, the low wages, unemployment, bad housing, etc.

In fact the greatest part of our fight is the fight against these conditions.

Just because barricades have to be erected around the Catholic area of Bogside doesn't mean we believe in Catholic power, this would provide no solution to our problems. People in Protestant areas have a perfect right to defend themselves if they feel they are going to be attacked by Catholic bigots.

No-one should believe that the replacement of Stormont by direct rule from Westminster will provide us with jobs or houses or decent wages.

What is needed is to build a party that can defeat the Unionist Government, this would need to be a Labour Party with massive Trade Union backing, and fighting for a minimum wage, equal pay for women and working youth, and also a planned socialist economy, which would be able to supply a decent house, job and wage for all.

Working class unity in a Labour Party on this programme will provide the only real and lasting solution to the rule of sectarian terror and the terrorist rule of rent, profit and interest.

UNIONISTS OUT! BUILD LABOUR PARTY NOW!

On the special edition of Panorama tonight a number of prominent people discussed the situation at great length. At the end of it the Chairman said "we don't seem to be getting anywhere."

And we weren't because the central point was being ignored by everyone—that it is no longer a question of reform or the pace of reform which is at issue. It is the whole basis of this State which has been called into question.

No Unionist Government will ever again peacefully send its police force into this area. That is obvious. As the article above points out direct rule from Westminster solves nothing. The incorporation of the 6 counties into the 26 would only happen via bloodshed, and would in any rate in no way help solve our economic problems—indeed in many ways these would get worse.

The whole system of economic and political organisation will have to be changed—both North and South. We need a movement of solidarity in the South, which fights for us by fighting against the Fianna Fail regime. Only thus can we convince the vast majority of Protestant people that we are not asking them to join the Free State as it stands.

The most cursory study of the history of Ireland in this century demonstrates that British troops are not here to help protect us, the Free State Army will do nothing to help us, and no Unionist Government can give us what we want. So we should stop fooling ourselves.

SMASH THE UNIONIST GOVERNMENT!

NO TRUST IN TORIES!

FORWARD TO THE WORKERS REPUBLIC!

NORTHERN IRELAND

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

been the problem of 10,000 new workers coming on to the labour market every year. The Ulster capitalists have had to use foreign investment to stimulate even the limited industrial development which has taken place. Thus massive "dowries" were given to foreign investors,—sometimes as much as 50% of installation costs. At the moment 40% of all the jobs in the manufacturing industry have come from these sources. The need of the British ruling class to come to terms with demands of the Civil Rights movement was determined by this factor, naked cash calculation. To have stood out against the minimum democratic demands would have meant continued armed clashes resulting in the burning down of factories, the consequent drying up of foreign investment and the collapse of the economy—which would have impelled sections of the Protestant working class into action as well. But always the Unionist hierarchy have conceded too little and too late and given almost a free reign to their armed detachments.

In answer to this the Bogside fought with fury against the thuggery of the police. Under heavy siege for over 50 hours they held off the police attacks. This was despite the indiscriminate use of lethal and heavy CS gas, taken, it is believed from army stocks. As we the Derry Labour Party pointed out in our Barricade Bulletin.... "The maximum amount of gas which is issued to any British police force at any one time is 80 cannisters. These cannisters (the ones used by the British police) contain 30 grammes. The cannisters used here in Derry contained 51 grammes each." As a result of the hundreds of tear gas cannisters, used by the RUC, at the rate of 3 a minute, numerous babies, small children and old people are suffering from diarrhoea and other ill effects. After 50 hours, with the police unable to penetrate the Bogside unassisted, and the wind changing, so as to make the tear gas a double edged weapon, — the police had to retreat.

It was at this stage that they mobilised the B-Specials, the Paisleyites in uniform, hated by the Catholic population. They were laden with 303 rifles, sub machine guns and automatic weapons. A slaughter would have followed in comparison with which the bloodletting in Belfast

would have paled into insignificance, if the Labour Government had not intervened with British troops. But it would be fatal to think that the troops were used solely to defend the Catholic population from attack by the Paisleyites and B. Specials. The calculation of the ruling class again was fear of the political upheavals, destruction of property and "dangerous" political vacuum which would have been created if Civil War had followed. Sections of the workers would have learnt in action very quickly, as many Bogside workers have, to put class action first. Thus even faced with sectarian attack, the Derry Labour Party has increasingly found an eager response to the idea of appealing to the Protestant workers as can be seen by the extract printed in this issue. As absolutely necessary as it has been to defend the area against police and Paisleyite attack an opportunity has existed for appealing to Protestant workers.

NEITHER BRITISH NOR SOUTHERN TROOPS AN ANSWER

The call made for the entry of British troops will turn to vinegar in the mouths of some of the Civil Rights leaders. The troops have been sent in to impose a solution in the interest of British and Ulster Big Business. A cursory examination of their role in Aden, and their projected role in Rhodesia is an indication of this. Wilson, in answer to the demand for use of British troops, against the Rhodesia Front Government, pointedly warned that an occasion might arise when troops would have to be sent, when an armed African uprising threatened private property there.

No different would be the role of the Southern Army. Lynch's manoeuvring and electioneering, using the Irish Army, was designed more for home-consumption than for anything else. Those advocates of Southern Irish Army intervention have forgotten the class basis of the Fianna Fail regime. It is this very Government of Lynch and Co. which has imprisoned striking workers, has tried to abolish proportional representation, something the Unionists used 40 years ago to reinforce their rule in the North. And if that was not enough to dispel illusions in the nature of Fianna Fail, the vicious beatings meted out to

demonstrators in Dublin against Unionism should be. Any intervention by Lynch is for the benefit of Southern Irish capitalists, not for the people of Ireland. Any intervention on a capitalist basis would have resulted in a greater division of the workers on a sectarian basis.

The Northern Irish workers, both Catholic and Protestant, must rely on their own forces. Only common action through a joint defence committee can begin to defeat the grip of Tory Unionism. The vehicle for this is the Labour and Trade Unions themselves. In the heat of the August battles there were a few small signs of what could have been done if the Labour Movement would have given a clear class lead. In the Belfast "Harland and Wolf" Shipyards a mass meeting of 9 thousand workers, protestant and catholic, responded to an appeal to refuse to fall for sectarian slogans and divisions. A Transport and General Workers Union official commented to the SUNDAY TIMES... "The initiative came entirely from the union—none of the credit belongs to the management." At the same time in the Ardoyne area of Belfast it has been reported that sections of Protestant and Catholic workers came together to form common committees to defend their areas. How much more would the sectarian barriers come down if this was on a clear programme and put into practice by a united Labour Movement.

LEADERS INCAPABLE OF UNITING WORKERS ON A PROGRAMME

Those so-called Marxists who write off the Protestant population as one reactionary mass criminally ignore the vital lessons of Irish history. Only the binding together of the movement of Catholic and Protestant workers can bring about a defeat of Unionism, Fianna Fail in the South and the hold of British Imperialism. Any concession to sectarianism will only serve to drive sections of the Protestant and Catholic workers into the arms of reaction. To demand the withdrawal of the British troops, the disarming of the B. Specials and RUC in isolation is not enough. What is needed is to defeat Unionism and the system it represents and replace it with one which can solve the problems of low wages, unemployment and sectarianism.

This will not be done by a bloc of Catholic oriented movements. This has been clearly shown by the experience of the Civil Rights campaign itself.

While this movement played a very important role in mobilising thousands of people to fight for urgent and necessary reforms, its leaders are incapable of putting a clear programme which could solve the real problems

of the jobless slum-dwellers—catholic and protestant.

Only a class programme can harness the enormous energy of the Catholic and Protestant youth, clearly shown in the events of the past month, in the direction of changing society. That programme has already been outlined by the material of the Derry Labour Party (printed here), and has been consistently advocated in the pages of MILITANT. Its aim should be to tie the struggle for equal pay, the minimum wage, a crash programme of housing on the basis of a nationalised building industry, opening up of education facilities to all youth who wish to study, together with the demand for taking over the commanding heights of the economy, democratically managed and controlled by the working people themselves. For this programme to take on flesh it needs to be put into practice by a united Labour Movement committed to a Socialist Ireland. The NILP should take the initiative in calling such a conference of all Trade Unions, Labour Parties to form this immediately. The basis already exists in the 500,000 members of the all-Ireland T.U.C. and in the all Ireland Council of Labour, based on the various Labour parties. A clear concrete programme must be drawn up, putting forward a socialist alternative for all the workers.

No hope should be placed in the British ruling class or the manoeuvres of the Stormont Government. They hope to keep their profitable investments intact. To do this means to replace the traditional Unionist Government with a more "broadly based" Cabinet team. They are first trying this by pressing on the Unionist Party to disarm and dismantle the B. Specials. This was the meaning of the communiqué after the Downing St. meeting between Chichester Clarke and Wilson. The first attempts have been piecemeal. They hope to wear down the resistance of the Unionist ranks and that which is coming from the RUC and B. Specials. Eventually the Unionist Party in its old form will be forced to put on a more "liberal" mask. This would mean that sections of the Catholic middle and capitalist classes would be given more representation its ranks. This in turn will probably result in a split to the Right by a section of the Unionist Party. The British ruling class wish to contain the pressures which have built up within the framework of Parliament. To do this they need a "liberal" image for a traditional-type Tory Party. At the moment, for them, Paisley is redundant. He will only be used in the event of a serious economic crisis. For the "very Reverend" to bellow about 1912 is to ignore that in 1912 the Tory Party and the ruling class backed Carson's arming of the Ulster Volunteers. At the moment they wish to defuse the situation and are prepared to make limited concessions.

SOCIALIST IRELAND

But the Northern Ireland workers must realise that these tardy "reforms" will only serve to paper over the worst abuses of the system. No lasting solution to their problems is possible on the basis of capitalism. The only force capable of this is their own, through their own party, mobilising them for action. One thing the August events will have taught big sections of the workers here, is that they are invincible, once organised and mobilised in action. Sections of the British workers have also learnt from Derry this simple lesson. London tenants are threatening "another Belfast" if eviction notices are not withdrawn. GEEC workers in Liverpool on television, when questioned on their sit down strike decision, used the example of Derry and France in May 1968 when action brings results, i.e. when concessions are forced out of the ruling class. Once the religious shell is discarded, once the parties are realigned so that it is the class issues which come to the fore, the Northern Ireland workers, Catholic and Protestant, together in common action can move to end the rule of rent interest and profit.

Czechoslovakia :

"Liberal" bureaucrats show real face

By ROGER SILVERMAN

On Thursday August 21st. in Prague and Brno, 50,000 peaceful demonstrators, well-disciplined, unarmed, and making few demands on the regime were met by 100 heavy tanks, water-cannon, tear-gas. At least five youths were shot dead and many more were wounded. 1377 were arrested—and the English girl by-stander who somehow got caught up in the melee revealed what happened after the arrests. 200 were being battered by truncheons until they collapsed, the whole police station was covered in a pool of blood.

These were Czech police, Czech troops and Czech tanks. It is not simply a question of National Independence; the clique of officials and party chiefs is savagely clinging on to its privileges in Czechoslovakia as in other "Peoples' Democracies". Only the tactics differ according to the situation. The differences between repressive and "liberal" totalitarian leaders become more and more diffi-

cult to discern. It is "moderate" Husak who is responsible for the present return to police-state methods. The lying slander of the Kremlin which blamed the disturbances on to "criminals with sub-machine guns, hooligans, fascist storm-troopers" was mouthed in turn by Husak and the "reformer" Cernik. (In so far as there was violent provocation it was caused by government agents as revealed in advance, according to the plan "MILAN".)

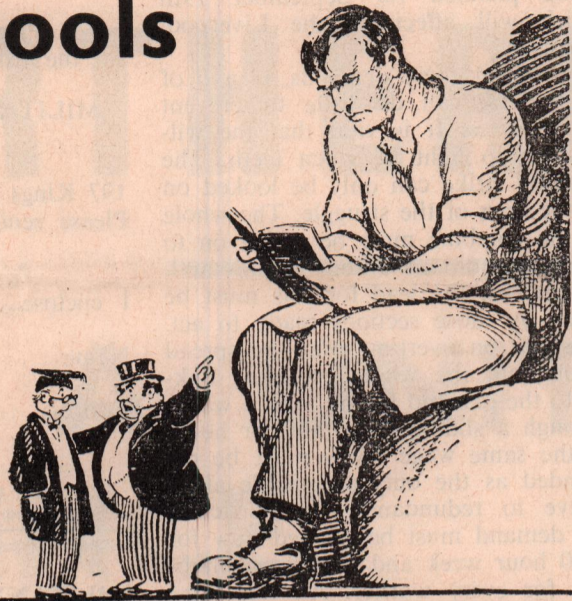
Besides it is not fascists and hooligans who will have to face the new terror laws: any teacher or professor who does not educate the young in "the principles of socialist society" (as decided by the police) faces instant dismissal. So does anyone who is supposed to "have violated the socialist order". Strikes and go-slows are illegal under the new laws and trade unionists will likewise have to face a £70 fine and/or 3 months gaol for infringements. Any organisation may

have its activities banned or be banned itself as an organisation for breaking the new laws, directed, evidently, primarily at Trade Unions. While the crowd was shouting "Dubcek, Dubcek", this same Dubcek was a signatory to the new decree which brings back a reign of terror. In accordance with the new savagely repressive laws, even the mildest form of criticism of the current Party line, (now summed up in the slogan "Together With the USSR Forever!") is punishable by immediate dismissal, exile, termination of studies, or detention without trial or charge. There is no right of representation or of appeal.

For the moment, the bureaucrats have maintained their stranglehold over the party and the state; they are gripping tighter than ever. But their benign masks are slipping away. Once the struggle is understood to be part of the world wide movement for socialist democracy, then it will become possible to remove them for good.

Fighting Programme for Schools

By
HARRY
HATTAN
(West Scotland
Schools Action
Union)



The Boss, (to his University Person) - 'Ere, we can't 'ave this feller thinkin' for 'imself'!

From an old advertisement for
a Labour College

The system of education which exists today means that schools are merely a training ground for people to take their place in a pigeon-hole of the capitalist machine. At the age of 11 children are separated by the 11 plus (there is much talk about abolishing this, but in Glasgow its equivalent has already been abolished and three tests substituted in its place—the net gain is practically nil).

From the age of 11 onwards the best pupils are creamed off and are continually barraged with information coming from the "best" teachers in the "best" schools. This section becomes the doctors, lawyers, scientists etc. of society. Several other sections exist right down to the lowest, where the child is shoved into a corner and forgotten about—being left for a dead-end job. In all streams little attempt is made at developing an individual to think for himself and develop his own enthusiasms.

Moreover, the 'creaming' system acts directly against working class children. In 1960, 3% of the children who came from a background in which the father was a manual worker (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled) were at Grammar schools, or the equivalent, at the age of 17, while 41.5% of the children whose fathers fall into the professional or managerial category were still at school at that age. Quite an end to ALL forms of streaming is required to give ALL children a proper education. Yet this is impossible so long as classes are as horribly overcrowded as they are today.

The Labour Party Manifesto stated: "Our country's investment in people is still tragically inadequate. The nation needs ... a revolution in our education system". Recently, however, the Government has seen fit to cut back on the expenditure on education and indeed the present expansion is not enough even to maintain the present low standards. It has also deemed it necessary to dismiss a number of teachers, while newly trained teachers find difficulty in getting a job, yet classes are still overcrowded by standards laid down 25 years ago. These standards called for 40 in a primary class and 30 in a class in Secondary school. A child cannot hope to receive a high standard of education until a maximum of 24 children per class is introduced.

Too many of our schools are depressing, out of date, dark and dirty. An example of this was brought to light by the Newsome Committee in describing a primary school in Yorkshire.

"The area has an exceptionally high deposit of industrial dirt. The school itself has for neighbours two works within twenty yards of the playground wall and three within fifty yards of the school. Houses are terraced in dirty and badly illuminated streets, and most are due for demolition. This has in fact already started in some streets in which a number of uninhabited houses offer tempting opportunities for mischief. Only one or two % of the houses have indoor sanitation and 36% a hot water supply. A large proportion of fathers spend their working life in an atmosphere of heat, dirt, noise and mechanical violence. Communication can only be carried out by shouting, and there is a great tendency for boys to shout at one another in conversation."

It is seen how typical this example is when one looks at some more facts about the state of schools brought to light by a survey. Nearly half our children go to schools built before 1919, while one in three attend schools built during the last century. Over ¼ of primary schools have no hot water, 1500 schools have no flush lavatories with over 17,000 schools having outside lavatories, which invariably freeze up during the winter months. Most disturbing of all is the fact that over 2,000,000 children attend schools officially described as sub-standard. Slum schools are naturally in areas of slum housing, thus affecting working class children, and giving them a great setback as is shown in the H.M.S.O.'s "Education in Scotland."

"More and more in recent years it has come to be realised that the environment of the child is of the utmost importance in his education and that he develops and prospers best, where physical conditions are comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing, where he is surrounded by stimuli and facilities for learning, and where there is an atmosphere of security and emotional stability."

A crash school building programme is required, however, like other aspects of the building industry this would be quite impractical with the large interest rates etc. We demand nationalisation of the building industry with money supplied by the Government, in order to carry out a massive school building programme.

With a lack of facilities such as the ones I have just described plus the

INDIA: BANKS TAKEN OVER: NOW FOR ASSETS OF RULING 75 FAMILIES!

TED COXHEAD (Finchley L.P.Y.S.)

The rising anger of the Indian workers and peasants against starvation and misery has all but torn the ruling party to shreds. As the masses moved left, the cynical top politicians spent their time manoeuvring for positions. Mrs. Gandhi has finally been pushed into action on the old Congress party decision to nationalise the banks. In itself this is a small step—the real power of capital has not been touched. But the "syndicate", the reactionary clique which has dominated the party for so many years, was shocked to the core. How far might she be pushed, in her attempt to regain popularity for herself and the party? Foreign minister Desai, and home affairs minister Chavan resigned. Mrs. Gandhi put leftwinger Giri forward for presidential candidate against the "official" party candidate, Reddy. In this she was triumphantly successful—and since then has been full of phrases like "the Government and the People" ... "First duty to raise the downtrodden". The party is cracking apart, and the way is being prepared for a future coalition government, possibly with one wing of the respectable "Communist" Party, as has already happened in West Bengal, Kerala and elsewhere.

The Congress Party is a hopeless amalgam of right and "left" united through the "Independence" struggle and ultimately under the control of the big monopolists of India. But, under the monopolists, "Independence" has been proved to be a myth: last year 10-12 millions would have died of starvation, but for special "aid"! Not that the "aid" given by the Western capitalists or the Stalinist bureaucracies, is capable of solving the problems: every year more is paid back in interest repayments than is received in "aid"! The result has been abject poverty and misery for hundreds of millions (326 millions are officially reckoned to be suffering from chronic malnutrition!), while the landowners bask in luxury. The Tata and Birla monopolies control assets, today, of 1.5 BILLION dollars: more than 1/3rd of the entire capital of Indian finance and industry. The monopolies commission in India revealed that 75 families control 80% of the wealth. It is these families and their representatives that seep into government and party circles, that apart from their controlling the ultimate policies of the government, use their contacts and information to work the most colossal frauds. An example

which could be duplicated every day: the Raja of Rangarh was included in the Bihar Government as a minister, when he had held on to land worth hundreds of thousands of pounds incorporating vastly profitable mines and forests, which should, by law, have belonged to the State since 1951.

The capitalists of India tied by a thousand deals to British and World Capitalism, are incapable of using the limitless material and human resources at their disposal. At the present rate there will be 3½ million officially declared unemployed in Uttar Pradesh alone by 1973-4.

Nevertheless in some modern industries, such as steel and nuclear power, thousands upon thousands of workers are amassed together providing a huge potential force for advanced democratic socialism. No longer will the people remain cowed by centuries-old despair.

Immediately following the announcement nationalising the banks, the journalists demanded nationalisation of the press, and the metal workers demonstrated for public ownership of the steel industry. The future of the sub-continent is contained in these demands. If the nation is not going to be broken up, with the danger of army dictatorship always lurking behind the scenes, if the masses of Asia are going to escape the monstrous struggle merely to stay alive, then the steel workers demands must be taken up throughout the workers' movement, and through them to the starving peasants who in Naxalbari and elsewhere demonstrated their ability to fight by their large-scale occupations of the land. If the left wing of the Congress Party and the two "Communist" parties wished to justify the faith placed in them by the masses, they would call for an immediate "enabling act" for the nationalisation of the property of the 75 families. In order to offset the inevitable attempts at counter-revolution they would have to be prepared to mobilise, and arm, the masses.

This they will not do. But this one first small step has already threatened to bring down the whole Tay Mahal of Indian parliamentary politics. The way is open for continued movements to the left. The monolith has been broken. The workers and peasants have shown time and time again their enthusiasm for action. What is needed is for the Indian Marxists to harness this through a clear unambiguous socialist programme.

inherent fact that along with bad conditions goes the teacher shortage, working class children in bad conditions are often denied the very teaching staff required. Indeed school-life becomes a bore and the children are often only too glad to leave at the age of 15. The shortage means that this is actively encouraged. I was absolutely horrified when I was present while a teacher went round a class of 15 year olds and asked each one if they he was leaving, and if not why not. The people who said that they wanted to stay on were subjected to a great deal of ridicule.

In Russia, fifty years ago, the cultural level was on a par with that of India today. But despite this and the wastage caused by the Stalinist bureaucracy, it now spends four times as much per capita on education as is spent in Britain, and trains more scientists and technicians than the rest of the world put together. All this with no streaming until the school leaving age is reached.

The spending on education in Britain is clearly inadequate: the lowest in Europe proportionately. Office blocks lie empty, while children are taught in conditions which are an absolute disgrace. There is a great need for more buildings, and teachers, and only when priorities are realised will we get enough of either.

A government, which was genuinely working for socialism would see to it that all the latent talent of the community was encouraged and used. Schools would be built, buildings taken over for use as schools, teachers paid a living wage, universities thrown open in order to bring about urgently needed reforms in education, which remain pipe-dreams at the moment. The fight for a better education is part of the general fight against the stranglehold of the monopolies on every aspects of the economy.

G.E.C.—A.E.I. SIT-INS: FOR NATION-WIDE ACTION TO DEFEAT REDUNDANCIES

By TED MOONEY (GEEC shopsteward Netherton)

On August 4th, workers of the three English Electric factories on Merseyside were informed of the redundancies planned for them by the bosses of the massive GEC-AEI-EE monopoly. 4,800 men and women are to be sent down the road nationally, over 3,000 of these are from Merseyside, and 1,400 from the Netherton factory alone. This, added to the massive redundancies which have already taken place in the combine, at Woolwich and elsewhere, means that around 12,000 workers will have lost their jobs since the merger took place.

THE REASON—HIGHER PROFITS

The reasons behind the sackings and closures expose clearly the viciousness of capitalism in its greed for profits. According to Weinstock, the closure of Netherton is due to the lack of markets for such commodities as water-turbines and nuclear power-stations. Yet, the low level of industry in the backward countries could provide a huge market. According to the OXFAM NEWS, in Lesotho, men building dams for irrigation and power-supplies—with picks and shovels—are being paid in food! These countries have the necessary geographic conditions for such installations; all that is required is the necessary know-how and materials. But, of course, capital goes where it can make the most profit, not where it is most needed. So Netherton must close and thousands lose their jobs.

Again, the chaos of capitalist production is shown by the redundancies at the East Lancs. Road factory, where the diesel engine division is to close—just at a time when a factory making the same product is to open just down the road! Further Weinstock claims Newton-Le-Willows is to be closed down due to a cut-back in orders for locomotives from British Railways, yet according to the 'Railway Review', new locos will be needed if B.R.'s modernisation programme is to be carried out. Clearly, the cut-backs in orders are part of the general cuts in the nationalised industries' expenditure. Meanwhile bigger bribes, in the form of subsidies, are given to the bosses in private industry.

DEVELOPMENT AREAS 'IMPOTENT'

The profits of the employers are the key to the whole situation. At Netherton, even the benefits of a development area—30/- for each employee and 45% of all new machines bought paid for by the government—are not enough to expose the impotence of the Governments 'development area' policy. Indeed, G.E.C. have done pretty well out of the Government. The divisionalisation of the "empire" following the merger

was helped on by a nice 'wedding present' from the Government. Now each division has to make its own profit, so that on such jobs as power stations, which are sub-contracted through the combine, an extra profit is taken from the Government, which can amount to an extra £5,000 profit on a single contract.

OPPOSITION UNANIMOUS

Despite the enormous profits made by the G.E.C. combine (£65m. this year) "rationalisation" of the empire at the expense of the workers has gone ahead unchecked. Previous redundancies have been piece-meal, in small doses, so that opposition has been weak and isolated. This time, however, the number of jobs to be lost, and the fact that they are not isolated to one area, has shaken the whole combine.

As far as Merseyside is concerned, where there is already a 3.8% unemployment level (50% above the national average), the threat of another 3,000 workers joining the dole-queues has met with the complete opposition of all the workers involved. Merseyside, as far as engineering goes, is a predominantly unskilled area; the main employers of skilled labour in the past have been English Electric itself and the ship-yards of Cammel Lairds. With the closure of the English Electric factory, and the threat of a further 3,000 being made redundant in Lairds in a run-down following the loss of the Polaris contract, the workers see this as not merely a struggle to maintain their jobs in English Electric, but as a fight to enable thousands in the Northwest to earn a living. With the pool of unemployed growing deeper month by month, the closure of a factory as large as Netherton means that no worker can look at his job as safe or secure.

'IF NECESSARY WE WILL TAKE OVER THE FACTORIES'

Opposition to the closures has been swift; the Merseyside Joint Shop-Stewards Action Committee, set up at the time of the merger, recommended a one-day token strike to meet and discuss the closures;—mass meetings at the factories fully endorsed the call. On Wednesday 13th, workers at all three factories came out on a strike that was almost 100%; at Netherton, the only ones working were a handful of accounts workers—even the managers were kept out by the pickets.

2-3000 marched through the streets of Liverpool to a meeting in the Stadium to hear the stewards recommendations. Overwhelmingly, the meeting gave its support to an all-out fight against redundancy. Resolutions were passed blacking all machine tools being moved elsewhere; banning overtime, calling for the Confederation of Engineering Union to call an all-out strike throughout the whole combine; demanding the nationalisation under democratic control of the G.E.C. empire; and empowering the shop-stewards committee to take whatever steps it deemed necessary—including sit-down strikes, and, if need be, the take over of the factory for a token period.

THE DEMANDS MUST BE SPREAD

Since then two sit down strikes have taken place at the East Lancs Rd. factory. This was in response to the managements attempt to use blackleg labour in order to defeat the overtime ban. As a result the manager retreated and has even conceded that the workers will get paid for some of the time they sat in! Moreover, it was revealed that in one section of

the factory there is an estimated shortage of 100 workers! This was only revealed through the overtime ban. There is another planned sit-in strike planned for September 19th which will affect all the Liverpool factories.

However, these demands, in and of themselves, can do little to prevent the closures. It is vital that the willingness to fight be given teeth. The one-day strike can only be looked on as the start of the struggle. The whole of the combine must be called on to come out on an all-out strike—and, if need be, the lead for this must be given by those sections ready to act. The ban on overtime must be spread throughout the whole combine, linked to the demand for no loss in wages through a sliding scale. Shorter hours at the same wage levels must be demanded as the only acceptable alternative to redundancy. In particular the demand must be pressed now for a 30 hour week and four weeks holiday for every worker. All this must be coupled with the workers' demands for the nationalisation of the industry under workers' control as the only solution to redundancy.

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ALL OUT TO FIGHT PIT CLOSURES

GEOFF CUTHBERT (Cardiff Labour Party)

The Government's refusal to take control over the whole of the fuel industry is causing untold distress to thousands upon thousands of miners and their families; whole villages, and valleys are falling into disuse, one after another.

Where miners are lucky enough to find alternative work the community life is broken up. Often families are even broken up. But today when the unemployment-rate nationally is the highest (for August) since the war, and when the rate for South Wales can be up to 8-9%, the situation is desperate. Since 1953 34 pits have closed in South Wales, and the labour force has been reduced from 110,000 to 43,000. This year, the coal-board is planning to reduce the labour-force nationally by a further 10% this year. 40 pits are to be closed down.

The latest pit for the axe is Avon, which will throw the villagers of Blaengwynfi and Abergwynfi on to the slag-heap.

Why? The Avon miners evidently "worked themselves out of a job". The colliery was first put on the "danger list" last summer. In an all-out effort to save it, the miners raised productivity to 45-54 cwt. per manshift; nearly double the national average (28cwt. per manshift). But the Board found that there was not a sufficient market for such amounts of coal of this grade. That shows how much thanks the employers give to the self-sacrifice of the workers in the struggle to push up productivity etc.

The National Coal Board has offered some of the 400 workers affected alternative employment, but as the Guardian commented (20/8/69) "This is not a magnificent gesture, because some of the men would be going to pits already in jeopardy."

Now that 67,000 jobs have been lost in the area over the last 16 years, the South Wales Executive of the N.U.M. threatened to bring out the 43,000 remaining miners on strike on September 26., the day on which the pit was

But it is something of an idle gesture to strike only when the pit has to close.

It looks more like a gesture of despair than the action of a militant active leadership. Besides, no effort was made to make the strike a national one, capable of forcing the authorities to think twice about their whole policy generally. The N.U.M. national executive wrote and explained that as they had not been consulted first the strike would be regarded as unofficial and there would be no strike pay.

Faced with the prospect of facing a hostile union leadership for the sake of an unpaid strike which could not put forward any practicable alternatives to continuing closures, the miners rejected the strike-call.

The situation facing the coal industry is one of national disaster, and national remedies must be found. Where pits have to be closed down, the miners must be given full pay indefinitely. It is not their fault that the bosses find other fuels more profitable. The whole of the fuel industry must be nationalised so that a plan can be put into operation, which can guarantee suitable alternative work at at least the same rates of pay without disrupting the whole life of whole valleys. If the union leaders were prepared to move into action on these demands there could easily be a national strike, which would win the miners the cooperation of the whole of the labour movement.

Militant Teacher,
197 Kings Cross Rd.,
London, W.C.1.

MILITANT TEACHER

The first issue will be out in September and will include articles on:

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- Teacher unemployment and the education cuts I. Fullerton
- The movement among school students Bob Labi
- The ILTA strike and the interim claim B. Beckingham
- News, letters and reports.

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