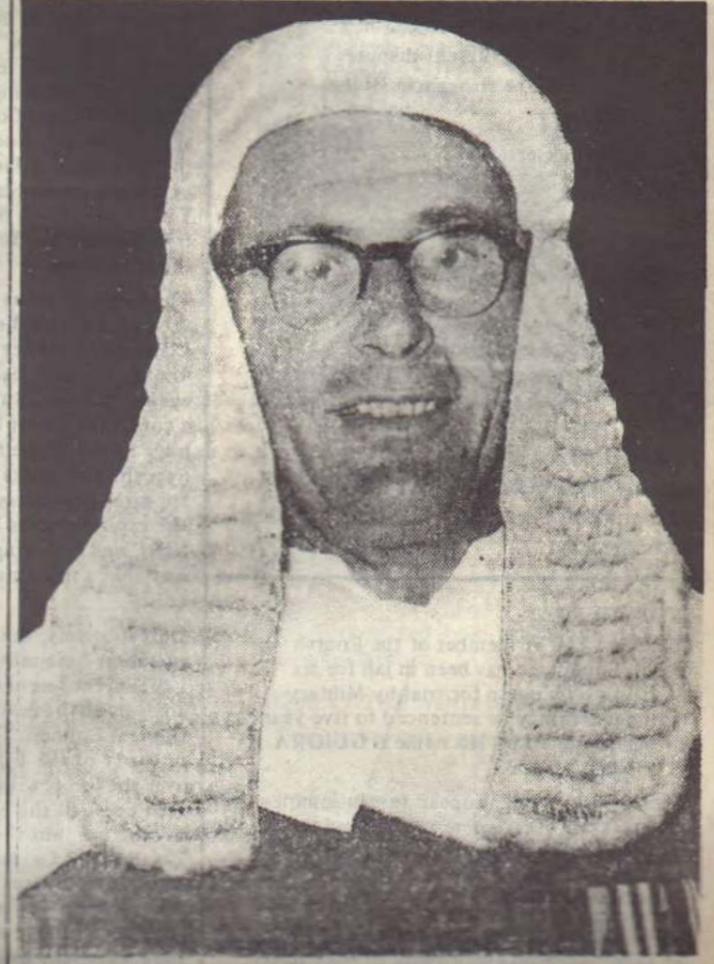


The Red Mole

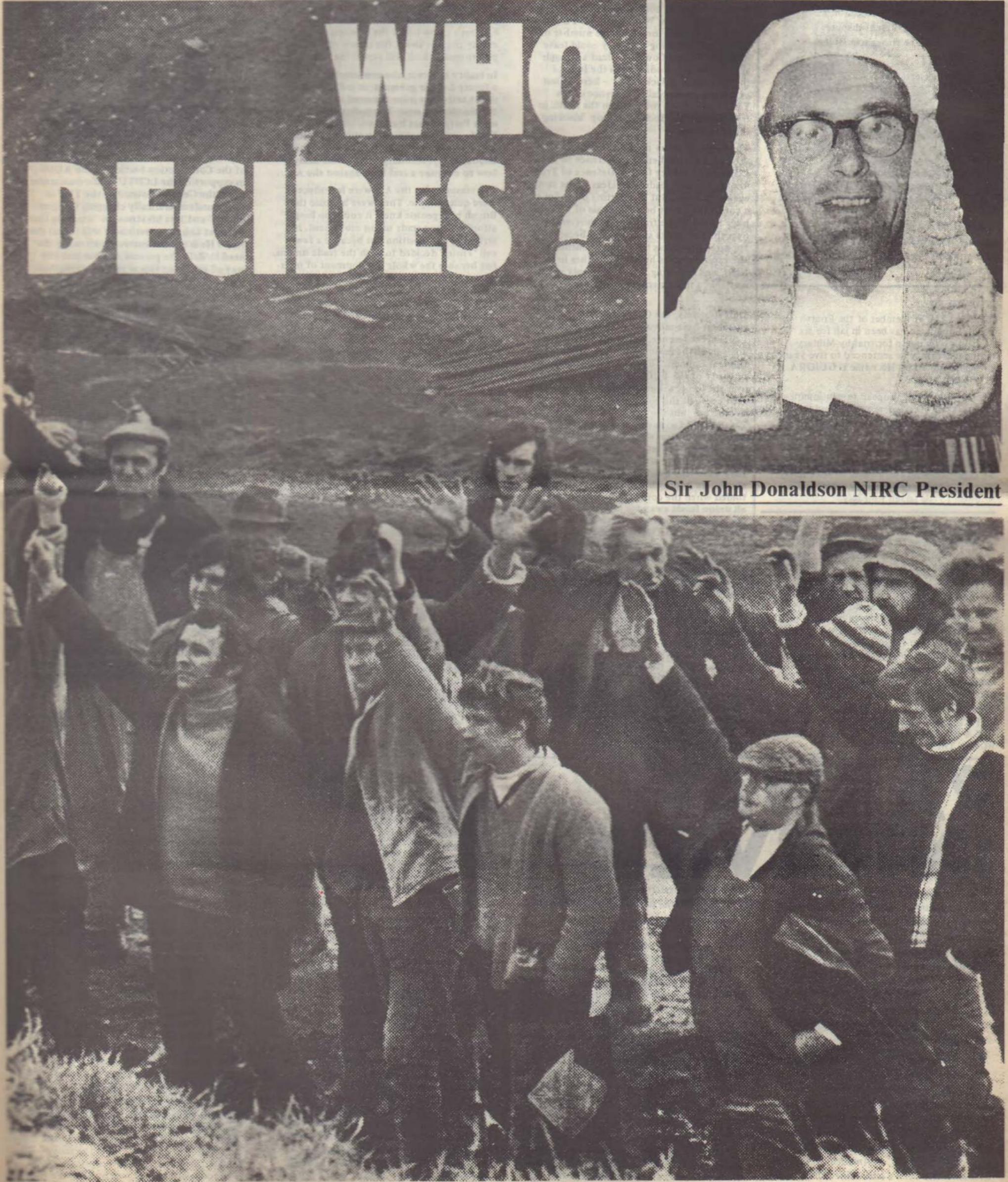
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WHO DECIDES?



Sir John Donaldson NIRC President



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STOP PRESS

JERUSALEM: A member of the Fourth International who has been in jail for six months is coming up for trial by Military Tribunal and may be sentenced to five years for insubordination. His name is GUIORA NOYMAN.

It is essential that European revolutionaries and socialists everywhere understand the isolation and extremely difficult working conditions for revolutionaries in Israel. Such a trial by the Israeli State must not pass unnoticed.

We urge comrades everywhere to send telegrams and letters of solidarity with Guiora Noyman to the Israeli Embassy.

CORRECTION

In the programme of Basingstoke LCDTU printed on page 5 of this issue, the following alterations should be made:

1. End of section 1, summing up points: **FOR THE REPEAL OF THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT;** then instead of **NO LAWS AGAINST THE TRADE UNIONS** it should read **NO FURTHER LAWS AGAINST THE TRADE UNIONS.** The rest follows on.
2. Section 2, top of column 3, delete everything after albeit in a more "moderate" form, including slogans, and replace simply with **NO TO ANY FORM OF INCOMES POLICY.**
3. Section 4, the second slogan should read **OFFICIALS SHOULD NOT BE PAID MORE THAN THE AVERAGE WAGE OF THE MEN AND WOMEN THEY REPRESENT.**

Red Mole

FROM 'NO CO-OPERATION' TO A FIGHT AGAINST THE ACT

Four years of sound and fury by the TUC against industrial relations legislation has been shown to be completely hollow over the last few weeks. Worse still, the TUC's talk undoubtedly fooled a large number of people into thinking that they could leave it to the General Council to lead a struggle against the Act. Today, even the lefts of the TUC such as Jack Jones — hero of last year's Croydon recall conference of the TUC — are taking orders from the NIRC in trying to get the dockers to stop blacking the containers.

The hopes of many militants have now focused on next weekend's conference of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions for new leadership ideas in the struggle against the Act. But the starting point for such a conference must be an analysis of why the huge forces of the trade union movement have, over the last weeks since the Bill became law, appeared powerless before a few members of the capitalist class huddled together in the NIRC and Downing Street. It is only in this way that a movement on a firm basis can be built.

Unfortunately, the Communist Party, whose members have taken the lead in calling the LCDTU conference, has produced a phoney analysis of the reasons for the collapse of the General Council. They say it is because the majority of the TUC changed its position over the last few weeks and sold out. But the root cause of the collapse has not been an about turn, but the wrong position that Feather and Co. have taken from the start. Their old position was 'No recognition', 'No co-operation' etc., a policy of passivity in relation to the actions of the NIRC. But they were very quickly shown that it is absolutely impossible to remain with arms folded when the court is threatening to take all union funds away for 'disobedience'. Non-co-operation has been shown to be a non-starter. The TUC leadership naturally ridiculed the warnings from the revolutionary left that the only choice was to support the Act against the working class, or to lead the working class in a direct attack on the Act and all those agents of the capitalist class who were backing the Act. However, when Donaldson and Heath gave the TUC exactly the same analysis, Feather took no more than 48 hours to accept it and jump off the fence onto the side of the NIRC. Those members of the General Council who still declare themselves in favour of non-co-operation — the 'left-wingers' as the *Morning Star* mis-calls them — are simply arguing for a few more weeks of fence sitting, either as a preparation for capitulation, or in the hope that the rank and file will ignore them

and produce a new leadership for the fight against the Act. In the event of no such spontaneous response from the rank and file these 'lefts' will beat a retreat into Feather's camp under the smokescreen of empty phrases about the return of a Labour government which will repeal the Act.

In reality however, the continual talk about a future Labour government is designed to divert attention from the need to struggle against the Act now. The policy of the Communist Party in fact has a two fold confusion. Firstly, it does not analyse either why the Act was introduced nor the nature of the Labour Party; secondly, it does not analyse how to organise a real fight against the Act.

The reasons why the Act were introduced were quite simple. They were because the British bourgeoisie knew it could no longer afford a strong trade union movement. It arrived at this position not because a few evil 'Tories' decided to bash the trade unions, but because the whole development of international and British capitalism made the cutting of the living standards of the working class an urgent necessity for improving the competitiveness of British capitalism. It is because Britain is a capitalist state that the Industrial Relations Bill was introduced and not because it was a Tory government. All the economic pressures which led to the Act being passed will continue to operate quite regardless of what government exists as long as the state remains a capitalist one. If Labour were in power tomorrow then, if it still operated within the framework of capitalism, it would be forced to use the Act or to pass some similar bill which had the same aims as the Industrial Relations Act. Unless the Communist Party and the TUC actually expect the Labour Party to destroy capitalism, then their talk of a future Labour government to repeal the Act is just so much pie in the sky. Just as importantly however, the C.P. does not show how the present struggle of the working class can be built on to defeat the Act. By counterposing a future electoral 'struggle' to the present fight it in fact tries to ensure that there will be no struggle at all.

The only really effective way to wage a struggle against the act is to link this struggle to the struggle of the entire working class on all issues such as rents, racism, discrimination against women, etc. But this struggle is completely ineffective if it is done on the basis of respect for the law and the right of the government to rule. For the TUC to have mobilised the working class against the Act it needed to

explain through a great campaign of agitation why it is necessary and right for trade unionists to fight against Parliament, the courts and the laws of the capitalist state. Without this preparation there can be no struggle. As long as the 'rule of law' is accepted then the government can always turn round and say 'we are elected to make the law so now carry it out', and any struggle collapses.

Unfortunately, the way in which the LCDTU has begun to state its position indicates that it is likely to make almost exactly the same mistakes. For example in an article in the *Morning Star* of 5th June, Eddie Marsden of the Construction Section of the AUEW, in supporting the LCDTU conference, states that "the General Council of the TUC is today undemocratically changing Congress policy" and lays his stress on "ensuring that the next Labour government will repeal the Act". He is at least correct in stressing the need to defy the present Act but sees the way of achieving this as mainly strengthening the 'left' wing of the TUC at the expense of the right wing. But this left wing has already shown what it means when Jones accepted the NIRC fine on his union.

The whole trouble is that the Communist Party does not see the task of the LCDTU as fighting for the leadership of the trade unions but instead sees itself as a ginger group acting to pressurise the trade union leaderships. This has a disastrous effect when it comes to any real struggle. For example at the time of the fight against the Industrial Relations Bill becoming law the LCDTU got off to a flying start. At its meeting to plan the December 8th, 1970, one day strike, nearly 2,000 delegates attended. In December and January of that winter two successful strikes were held against the Bill. Yet because the LCDTU saw its role not as leading a struggle but as applying pressure, once the AUEW leadership stepped in and called two one day strikes, the LCDTU campaign collapsed. Furthermore, when the lefts accepted the 'no-cooperation' line at the March 8th, 1971, TUC Conference then the LCDTU was left with no-one even to apply pressure to. Now a new stage of the struggle is starting. The LCDTU can still act as the focus for rank and file struggle in the trade unions. Its success however will depend entirely on how much it gives up the game of pressure politics and instead sets out to organise itself in every area as a united front of all those who want to defend the trade unions not simply in words but in actions.

RAILWAY INTERVIEW

This interview with Derrick Fullick, the ASLEF steward at Waterloo Station, took place before the results of the rail ballot were announced. The footplatemen are undoubtedly the best organised and most militant of the three rail unions, and this expressed itself in their 23:1 vote in favour of industrial action. Even the TSSA had a 2:1 majority which considering its membership includes management grades is quite welcome. The overall vote was 6:1.

The vote was really a vote of confidence in the leadership. As Fullick remarks, it wouldn't have mattered what was the question asked, when it is a question of a threat to the basic organisations of the working class from a section of the bourgeois state the working class is absolutely capable of remaining united on a clear class basis. In America itself, whenever there has been a ballot like this one — and the laws governing such industrial procedure

have been in existence since the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 — the workers have always rallied round their union.

Many people were surprised that the rail unions should have solidarised with the miners. What was the effect on the railmen of that action and is there any feeling that more permanent liaison between the two unions could be made?

We all know the history of how the rail unions let the miners down in '26. We were all determined there wouldn't be a repeat performance. Everything we could do, we did. And it did us the world of good. It flexed our muscles and prepared us for our own claim — because we knew we were the next major industry in the pipeline and we knew too we'd have to take action in some form or another.

And there is definitely a feeling that liaison between railmen and miners should be looked for — but it should be explored first of all on an official footing. We've both gone along the same path after all, with massive reductions in the labour force and jobs being tied to wages.

You know, they would say well if wages go up then a pit will have to close, with us it would be a line would have to shut. Now we conclude they'll shut the line anyway, wage rise or no wage rise.

What was the feeling in ASLEF about being represented in the Industrial Relations Court?

The feeling was virtually unanimous, in ASLEF anyway, that we should have nothing to do with the Act including the ballot etc. The union leaders decided they would have to defend the unions in the Court only because of the treachery if you like of the TUC. You get Feather this morning saying how pleased he is to see that the Tories are taking note of some of his policies. He's trying to dig himself out of a hole — the TUC has misled the various leaderships of the unions. Our union would have fought this if it had obtained financial backing from the TUC. Once that wasn't forthcoming it was decided we should be represented in court. There is still the feeling we shouldn't be, but when you consider a bit, if we had abstained only 1000 of the 180,000 railway workers entitled to vote would have needed to say 'No' to further industrial action for them to win. The press would say it was apathy on the part of all the rest instead of militant abstentionism. The men reckoned that to ignore it would be to be defeated.

If you had had a straight strike do you think (a) you could have carried the NUR and TSSA with you, and (b) would it have been the best tactic anyway?

The correct tactic is definitely the work to rule. If you don't work in the rail you can't know what this does. The freight-yards are still full up even now (May 25) as a result of the two short spells of work to rule earlier. There's tremendous chaos and disorganisation. But as far as we are concerned, if it wasn't for the Act, we could work to rule for ever and a day. It must be seen as the first turn on the screw, with the strike as the ultimate weapon.

You can say it's virtually a strike as far as the effect it has. For example, they cancel all freight trains for a start to provide more passenger trains, because they want to pretend to the public that it's not having the effect it is. And here in the Thames Valley for instance, there's no trains at all because they are run purely on overtime.

Now us drivers, we don't do overtime anyway, except on Sunday. One major factor in this work to rule has been the NUR Signalmen. When those boxes are open, it's ASLEF and other grades like guards, shunters etc. who carry forward the work to rule. But it's the signalmen who have stuck strictly to the 8-hour day that's ensured the action is a success.

Just one thing else. The government and the papers all said that the railwaymen wouldn't find it as easy as the miners, because the miners all live in communities, while the railmen are isolated at home. In fact this just isn't true. The footplatemen are nearly all related — for instance I've got eight brothers-in-law at

SOLIDARITY WITH THE STOKE NEWINGTON EIGHT

REASONS FOR SOLIDARITY

On May 30 the bourgeoisie brought to trial eight brothers and sisters from Stoke Newington on the charge of being members of the Angry Brigade and conspiring in various bombings. As revolutionaries it is vitally necessary to be both in solidarity with these comrades and to show our solidarity in an unequivocal way. This is for these simple reasons.

1. It is our basic responsibility to defend fellow revolutionaries—whatever our internal political disagreements—when they are being attacked by the bourgeois state. This is not a moral question—unless we are able to defend those under attack by the bourgeoisie we have no hope of overthrowing it. Moreover the defence of the Eight is in the immediate interests of the working class as a whole—for a victory to the capitalists in any one of their offensives strengthens them in their confidence generally (and in this case specifically strengthens them in the use of the courts to apply the Industrial Relations Act). Similarly for instance, a defeat for the IRA in Ireland will immediately strengthen the ruling class in its attack on workers here in Britain as well.

2. The recent raids on groups such as the I.M.G. and I.S. show that the bourgeoisie is not confining its offensive to only one part of the revolutionary movement but to all of us. Moreover, this repression will inevitably increase with the increasing tempo of political struggle as a whole. If we are not going to be picked off one by one we have to aim very quickly for some united way of defending ourselves. However, this will never be achieved if we cannot even unite now even on the basic question of solidarity.

3. If we are serious in our revolutionary proclamations then we have to break from the economism which is still prevalent on sections of the revolutionary left—i.e., break from that political philosophy which considers that the only people oppressed under capitalism are white and male and workers and that the only place they are oppressed is on the factory floor. To do this means explaining, amongst other things, that the State is not neutral but instead is a totally oppressive bourgeois weapon and also explaining that therefore "law" and the "courts" are likewise not neutral. In the specific case of the Stoke Newington Eight this means coming out against the bourgeois courts in favour of our comrades on trial—just as we support the railwaymen against the courts. We have to take sides. This is not just because for us to remain neutral when the bourgeoisie is using its legal weapons is to reinforce bourgeois propaganda that the courts are themselves neutral. It is also because for us to pretend to remain neutral when the bourgeoisie is attacking is in practice to be on the side of the bourgeoisie against the victims of oppression. There are only two sides. Moreover, this is the case whe-

ther or not the Eight did or did not do the bombings alleged. All that matters for us is that the State is attacking them for being revolutionaries.

THE SECTARIANS

It goes without saying that the left as a whole (including the I.M.G. to some extent) has fallen down on its duty to solidarize with the Eight—just as it fell down in the case of Ian Purdie and Jake Prescott and just as it fell down in the case of the Scottish Maoists recently sent to jail for 25 years. However, if this were not bad enough it is even worse to hear the sectarian arguments used by some people (definitely not in the IMG) to justify this failure. Thus justification is the unfortunately usual one of putting political differences (in this case over the use of terrorism) before the basic need to resist all bourgeois attacks. Is it to be denied (as the sectarians deny) that this is a political trial? Is it to be denied (as the sectarians deny) that the comrades on trial are revolutionaries? Or do we only define those people as 'revolutionaries' with whom we are in complete programmatic agreement and defend these alone against bourgeois repression? If this latter really is the case then given the small size of the left and its relative fragmentation, our solidarity action really will be limited. Anyhow whether or not the Eight are 'revolutionaries' should not be the point—and is in fact a diversion used by the sectarians. As explained above we are in solidarity with anyone who is struggling against the State and its ruling class—whether on an economic 'terrorist' or revolutionary basis—because any victory by the bourgeoisie in this struggle strengthens it in its overall dominance over the working class and all other oppressed sectors.



Jake Prescott, sentenced to 15 years inside: the Eight are accused of conspiring with him.

Waterloo alone. The footplate man's job used to be handed down from father to son. In Feltham it's virtually a railwaymen's community and that includes signalmen and other NUR men as well. As usual, the government didn't know the score at all.

What is the general view of the Act amongst the rank and file members, now they see how it works?

What they're doing is stopping the Union using the work to rule as a tactic short of strike action. Maybe they were hoping we would get fed up and accept. But by bringing in the courts they've hardened the resolve of the men. People who wouldn't lose a bob contributed to the unanimous vote at Waterloo ASLEF to continue the action.

The men are certain that the reason there were only four hours of talks during the 14 day cooling off period was because the government wanted to use another section of the Act to build up case history, and use us as guinea pigs.

If you look at the wording on the ballot it's really a loaded question. But in fact it doesn't really matter what question they put. The men realise it's a challenge to the official union. It's an affront to the organisation they belong to.

What's the next step assuming all the unions win in the ballot?

It doesn't matter if they win or lose, there's nothing to stop them taking any action they want. I'm convinced there will be an over-

whelming majority, certainly in ASLEF. The executives are probably even now exploring what further action to take. The Board faces capitulation. Once the cooling off period expires there's nothing further they can do under the law as it stands at the moment. This may however be a very political move to appeal that they need further measures in order to smash the organisations of the working class.

What about the attitude of the Board?

Of course, British Rail is just a puppet on the string for whichever government happens to be in power. Even Donaldson poked his nose in and told BR to backdate the offer to June 1st instead of June 5th because otherwise the second offer would have been smaller than the first one and they wouldn't have been able to try out their compulsory ballot under the terms of the act.

Why exactly are the unions holding out for backdating to May 1st after all the increases involved is very small?

What you have to know and haven't been told by the press is that when the last pay deal was made the board forced the three unions to sign an agreement that the new wage award would last until the last day of April, and any new wage award would start from May '72. In fact ASLEF on submitting its claim in June last year insisted on the date being brought forward. But they were called to order by the Board and the other two unions that May 1 was in the agreement and they had to concede

THE POLITICS OF 'TERRORISM'

Another way we must distinguish ourselves from the sectarians is not only by solidarizing with the Eight, it is also by anyhow getting quite clear that, as Leninists, we are not by any manner of means opposed to terrorism as a political tactic in every situation and for all time. To be opposed to terrorism on principle, is to accept the politics of pacifism. Thus, firstly, we are not opposed to personal violence as such—indeed given the inevitable resistance of the bourgeoisie, we see violence as a necessary tool for the making of the revolution. As Trotsky said (*Terrorism and Communism*) "there is no other way of breaking the class will of the enemy except the systematic and energetic use of violence". Secondly our attitude towards acts of terrorism against individuals is not dictated by any matter of principle but only by tactics. Thus we certainly disagree politically with acts of isolated violence which take place without popular support and without the masses being aware of the political issues involved. This, of course, is why we have profound disagreements with the Angry Brigade who, totally divorced from any section of the working class, act out of complete weakness and in fact only serve to repel the class even further from revolutionary ideas. However, there are also contemporary examples where individual violence is popularly supported by the working class and is politically educative for the class. Rural guerrilla war in Cuba is one example. Urban guerrilla warfare in Ireland is another (or don't the pacifists consider killing British soldiers in either Ireland or Aldershot to be both necessary and educative for the Irish working class?). For those interested only in the 'holy' texts this is what Lenin had to say on the matter: "In principle we have never renounced and can never renounce, terrorism" (*Iskra*, No.4, May 1901).

THE 'UNDERGROUND'

Moreover, it is no use the organised left criticising the politics of the Angry Brigade, unless we also recognise why a lot of potentially very good comrades reject the various Leninist organisations, and indeed resort to bomb-throwing. One reason, of course, is that bomb-throwing—until you are caught—is just by itself an easy option in that it does not involve having to deal with the problem of helping change the political understanding of millions of people. Secondly, however, it has to be recognised that there is an 'underground' of young people who view the self-proclaimed Leninist left as economic and find it unable to articulate and explain their own oppressions. For instance, a paper like *FRIENDZ* for all its petit-bourgeois ambiguities, does at least recognise, e.g. the existence of racism, the oppression of women, of children and of gays—police and prison brutality, etc. in a way not really recognised by most political organisations. Un-

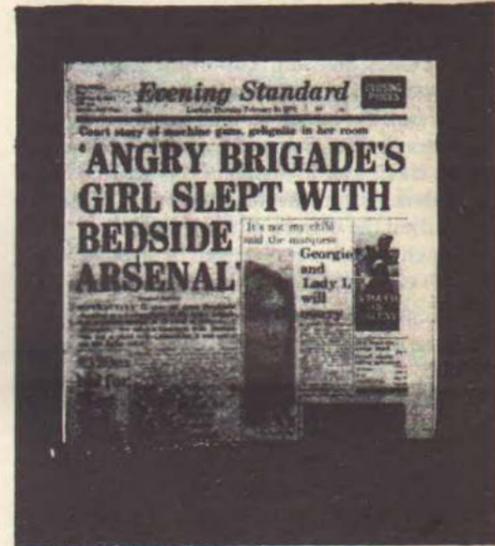
the point. As you know the NUR men working in London Transport have the same pay increase as that negotiated between the NUR and the Railways Board. But the management of London Transport just took it as read that the pay claim would start from May 1st.

The Board seems to have managed with some success to forge an alliance with the commuter especially via the mass media. Have ways and means of breaking that alliance and winning over the commuters to your side been discussed at all.

Well you see it's a fallacy to say the management have been able to win over the commuters. For one thing they were already before this action very alienated from British Rail because of decisions to cut a lot of rush-hour trains as from May 1. Many of us in the rail had worked with Commuter Associations—for instance the Shepperton Line Joint Committee which I worked with was successful in preventing 19 trains from being axed.

But the main thing anyway is just who is this "public" we hear so much about? Most of the people living in Britain are in fact workers who have at some time or another been engaged in action in their own industry or workplace. There's a massive brain-washing coming from a central point to try to make out that "the Public" is against this or that section of workers.

We have found that almost to a man the public, that is, the travelling public have a great



An application for bail by Anna Mendelson, one of the Eight, was used as an excuse to give extensive and one-sided pre-trial publicity to the prosecution accusations.

less the left faces up to these aspects of capitalism and links them up to the main political struggle, then we will only have ourselves to blame if more and more people substitute terrorism for politics.

THE WAY THE WIND IS BLOWING

Already in the last few months there have been several major political trials, e.g., The Mangrove Nine (with Roddy Kentish now in prison), Ian and Jake, the Scottish Maoists; and of course the implementation by the courts of the Industrial Relations Act. Again, at this moment the trial of the Metro youth is still proceeding. On May 30 the Eight went on trial. Moreover, other cases are already in the pipe-line. Thus, on June 6, five comrades on the leadership of the Anti-Internment League come up on the conspiracy charge arising out of the Whitehall demo following the Derry massacre (other comrades have of course already been found 'guilty' on lesser charges arising out of the demo). Shortly, there will also be beginning the trial of those comrades alleged to have undertaken the Aldershot bombings. Tony Soares—a leading black militant—is in custody awaiting trial, etc. etc.

If we consider ourselves revolutionary in more than name it is intolerable that we do not begin to work out joint activity in solidarity with these political prisoners here in Britain today.

One way to begin is to mobilise for the demonstration outside the Old Bailey on June 6, at 12.30 a.m., called by the Stoke Newington Eight Defence Committee. For all information, speakers, etc. contact Defence Committee, Box 359, 240 Camden High Street, London, N.W.1.

S.C.

respect for the footplate man and a feeling of understanding for their present dispute. In the whole of Waterloo Station which services the entire S.W. Division of the Southern Region, there was only one case of one of our blokes being hit; it was by a woman who was simply very frustrated by the delays and she apologised. But the other passengers didn't half give her a rough time. One thing's true; when the workers stand firm, other people rally round. That's what happened in the miner's strike. And on the Southern Region, we are known to be militant and firm, that's one reason why we have had so little trouble from the commuters.

How do you see the way forward for defeating this Act?

The way I see it you've got to recognise that the Industrial Relations Act is the law of the land. It's not the law of the Tories but of the State machine as such. We've got to change this law, because if we don't various governments will gradually tighten it up. At the moment we can scoff because it's not very effective but it won't be long before amendments are brought in.

It's not good enough for workers just to move resolutions. They've got to defeat this Act. We have got to make ourselves politically aware and organise ourselves to smash it.

FAKENHAM OCCUPATION

The following interview is with Edna Roach and Nancy McGrath, two of the workers involved in the Fakenham factory occupation. The factory, initially a branch of shoe-producers Sexton, Son and Everard of Norwich, was taken over in March of this year by Taubman after threatened closure. The deal involved the closure of the Fakenham branch, which was occupied in response to this on Friday, 17 March.

Two months later, the most likely outcome of the occupation is some form of co-operative. This is only possible because of the small number of workers involved (initially 20, now nine), the inexpensive machinery used, and its probable stabilisation as a 'cottage industry' producing craft leather goods. The venture may well be economically successful for some time, because of recent publicity, sentimentality, and the interest of the experts. However, this cannot constitute a method of struggle for shoe workers (or indeed any workers) as a whole.

Fakenham, because of the specific factors just mentioned, may well be cushioned for some time against feeling the full effects of the workings of the capitalist market. However, in any large-scale enterprise in a more competitive industry than craft leather goods, the organisation of production would still be dominated by the fact that it would have to buy and sell on the capitalist market in competition with ordinary capitalist firms, no matter how much ownership and control was enjoyed by the workers there. The situation and conditions of work in the factory would still be dominated by all the fluctuations of the capitalist market; for example, a depression of the market would still mean reduced sales and therefore fewer jobs, and increased exploitation of workers in other plants would still have to mean increased exploitation in that factory too or it would go out of business by failing to compete effectively with its rivals.

It would thus be absurd to suppose that the experience of the Fakenham occupation can have any general significance in the struggle for workers control. As Nancy McGrath herself points out in the interview, the key issue at stake is "international control of the economy by workers". It would be absolutely disastrous if the experience of the Fakenham occupation led to delusions that the way forward in the struggle for workers' control is to

build workers' co-operatives. On the contrary, what is necessary is to explain that it is *not* the individual ownership or management of a factory which oppresses the workers, but rather the workings of the capitalist system as a whole. From this it can then also be understood that the basic task of revolutionaries is to fight against ideas that the working class can find any solution to its problems under capitalism, and instead to stress that they should take absolutely *no* responsibility for the running of firms under capitalism.

(Edna Roach is a member of the National Union of Footwear, Leather and Allied Trades. Nancy McGrath is a member of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs.)

—What happened at the time of the threatened closure and Taubman's offer?

Nancy McGrath. We at Fakenham were consistently ignored throughout the negotiations and heard nothing but rumours all that week. We crashed in on their meetings on occasion and were assured of consideration, but this never came about. I rang Clive Jenkins' office on the Thursday for information, and Roger Spiller came out to see us on the Friday to tell us that the workers had unanimously accepted Taubman's offer—"unanimously", although we were not represented. We then decided to occupy the Fakenham factory on our own, with the twenty other people (out of forty six who worked there) of a like mind.

Edna Roach. When we decided to occupy the factory, NUFLAT said that we were "silly girls" and that we should take our cards and "go home to your kitchen sinks". Our action embarrassed them.

—What did you hope to achieve initially by occupying the factory?

E.R. We just wanted to save our jobs, we knew that we had lost our jobs with Sextons and that in Fakenham we would not be able to find suitable (if any) employment, so we decided to keep working, making leather goods, clothes and so on, with what material we could come by.

N.McG. Exactly, there are many skilled people in this factory, being a satellite factory we know how to organise things ourselves, although with the occupation, the responsibility for what we were doing and making devolved upon ourselves, and this is something we all take part in.

—How have things developed since then?

N. McG. There are developments taking place to create a co-operative, we have people with the managerial, marketing, and financial ex-



Eileen English (left), another of the Fakenham workers, at a recent meeting in London organised by Socialist Woman.

pertise who are interested in this. Taubman wants £11,000 for the premises and machinery, and at the moment we are trying to raise this money. We hope to continue working as we are now, but we will take contracts for shoes if necessary. At the moment we are able to use a person's skills as they themselves feel they should be, and we hope to keep that as it is.

—What about the present Tory government?

N. McG. Government is a dirty word for us now. Our local Tory M.P. came to see us after a visit to Macmillan's employment department, and when I told him what we wanted in terms of work, he replied, "Nobody has the right to work, Mrs. McGrath". I think there must be something seriously wrong with a system which operates on that basis. Not that a Labour government would be any better, as Barbara Castle's 'In Place of Strife' shows, they merely masquerade as a working class organisation.

—How do you see the shoe industry in East Anglia being affected by Common Market entry?

E.R. Not much hope at all. Already cheaper French, Swiss and Italian shoes are coming into Britain, and the Spanish shoe producers are gearing up their production in readiness for Britain's entry. This must mean a drastic decline of employment in the shoe industry, which will hit this region especially hard.

N. McG. I cannot see what can be done about

it, though. An embargo on foreign shoes would only affect the working people in another country. What is needed I think is some international control of the economy by workers, otherwise the gains of one group of workers are another's losses.

—What has the attitude of people in Fakenham been towards you?

N.McG. At first they were looking for red witches under the table, but now they are beginning to understand what we are trying to do, and beginning to agree with us. People said at first that we should get out of Taubman's factory, it's his and he can do what he wants with it, but now I think they are not so sure. The national press coverage has been very flippant and patronising, though, talking of the "petticoat revolution" and being frivolous about something we take very seriously.

E.R. The men tend to think very badly of us — due to ignorance of what we are doing, really—but the women in Fakenham have been quite good all along. As people learn more about us, so they come across to our way of thinking to a greater extent. Nancy is right about the media—I think they leave a lot out of their reports, and that way give a very distorted picture.

Interview by Norwich Spartacus League

ENGINEERING DISPUTE RUNS INTO TROUBLE

Since the last issue of *The Red Mole* there have been a number of important developments affecting either directly or indirectly the course of events in the engineering dispute in Manchester.

The AUEW were of course defeated by 16 votes to 10 on the National Executive of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions on Thursday, 11 May, when a deal was endorsed giving money and holidays only in a 2-year agreement for the shipbuilding workers. This settlement was a stab in the back for the engineers, who are fighting for more money, including a move towards equal pay, and more holidays than the shipbuilders' agreement and, more importantly, for a shorter working week and only 12-month agreements. (The shipbuilding agreement, affecting about 90,000 workers, amounts to a total of £5.50 extra over the two years for skilled workers, and substantially less for the semi-skilled and labourers. The deal also includes a total of three days extra holidays.)

It must also be remembered that in the first place the Manchester division of the CSEU angered Scanlon and the other national leaders by putting in 'carbon copy' claims instead of bargaining at plant-level, as was recommended by the AUEW National Committee on 10 January, 1972. John Tocher

(the divisional organiser of the CSEU and executive committee member of the Communist Party, which dominates the district committees in the area) put his career very much out on a limb by recommending this more militant course of action. The dispute didn't spread as quickly as the C.P. hoped, and so Tocher came up against national pressure from the AUEW, and local right wing pressure, to back down and come back into line. Tocher had an awkward choice; he had to recommend either that the dispute should be run on the same lines as before, or that it should be better organised and more militant including the locking-out of management, or that it should be brought more into line with the national dispute. He decided not to put himself further out on a limb and so backed down with as little fuss as possible.

The line taken by the executive committee of the Manchester CSEU on Friday, 12 May, was an agreement to pursue the three points of the claim, but in cases where satisfactory agreements were reached with employers on the first two points it was agreed that there could be a return to normal working, except that only 40 hours should be worked until the employers concede a shorter working week. This was passed by the executive committee only three days after the larger

district committee of the AUEW had decided to continue as before. The only major events between the two dates were Scanlon's defeat at the national CSEU meeting and a subsequent circular to all branch secretaries of the AUEW engineering section reiterating the three points but pointing out that the decision of the National Committee of 10 January was to proceed with plant bargaining. John Tocher put the executive committee's recommendations to a meeting of about 350 stewards on Monday, 15 May, reading out Scanlon's circular as if there had been a change in national policy (which there hadn't) and giving the need to maintain unity as an excuse for moving the resolution.

About one-third of the stewards did however vote for a defeated amendment put from the floor which would have deleted the part of the resolution specifying a return to normal (40-hour) working if only the first two points of the claim had been achieved. The resolution was then overwhelmingly passed.

One of the factors in the defeat of the amendment was the presence of about 60 stewards from GEC/AEI, Trafford Park, who had already settled on a poor money and holidays offer, and had gone back to work banning overtime. This delegation was headed by 68-year old Burt Brennan, O.B.E., who is remembered for having sat idly by while the work-force of GEC/AEI, Trafford Park, dropped from 28,000 to 3,500; as well as for having got Scanlon the sack twenty years ago. The C.P. also opposed the amendment.

The passing of the resolution has resulted in a number of settlements at previously occupied factories of between £2 and £3.50 new money and a couple of days extra holidays. These plants are, of course, going back to work on 40 hours only, but on the other hand, these settlements are probably about £1.50 new money and one or two days holiday less than the stewards would have previously accepted. The overall effect of the resolution has been to bring the dispute nearer to plant bargaining and to reduce substantially the bargaining power on money and holidays as well as hours.

One consoling factor has been that all six of the Ferranti plants in the area are now idle, involving about 7,000 workers, including a large percentage of women workers. These plants have put in a joint claim for hours, holidays, money, and a move towards equal pay; and are liaising together quite effectively. Of the six plants, Hollinwood, Cairo and Gem Mill are occupying. There is a token occupation at Barry Street and the remaining plants, Wythenshawe and Moston, are locked out.

Our intervention on the Social Security front has been very successful, with functioning Social Security committees having been set up on our initiative in the majority of occupying plants, and claims and appeals are being successfully won on a systematic basis. A fuller report of our intervention will appear in a later edition of *The Red Mole*.

The dispute is therefore being continued much as before, but unfortunately in a lower key.

Manchester IMG

LCDTU

Basingstoke adopts a fighting programme



On 15 April there was a meeting in Southampton called by the local Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, which set out to re-establish local LCDTU's in all the major towns in Hampshire.

That meeting adopted an 8-point policy which was purely defensive and amounted to just a more militant sounding version of the TUC's ill-starred "passive resistance" policy on non-cooperation.

The eight points were:

1. Total non-cooperation with the Industrial Relations Act.
2. That the TUC discipline weaker unions that collaborate with the Act.
3. That trade unions defend and expand the closed shop, and oppose agency shops and legally binding agreements.
4. That trade unions maintain and officially support blacking and sympathetic strike action.
5. That no trade union accepts the 60-day cooling off period when strike action is proposed.
6. That no trade union organises secret ballots except where required by existing rules to do so.
7. That no trade union participates in any industrial courts set up under the Act, that no trade union pays any fines or penalties, and officially supports any refusal to do so.
8. That all strikes be made official and that the national trade union officials take official responsibility for these disputes.

By the time the Basingstoke LCDTU held its first meeting on April 26th, it was clear to everyone that this programme was not only inadequate to meet the new situation as the

Act began to be applied, but it was also *out of date* in view of the fairly rapid capitulations to aspects of the Act on the part of leaders of even very powerful trade unions—notably the T&GWU and the three rail unions—not to mention the TUC itself!

So while the 8 points were accepted, it was agreed that what was needed was a campaign of *active opposition* to the Act.

A brief document presented by IMG comrades on the Committee was accepted as a basis for such a programme, and the comrades were asked to prepare a fuller document for the following meeting. This they did, and after a further week (to give the Committee a chance to study the proposals carefully) the document was finally accepted (with minor amendments) on 12 May as the policy statement of the Basingstoke LCDTU.

The policy—entitled "A Socialist Policy for the Defence of Trade Unions"—consists of two parts.

The first is an analysis of the political background to the passing of the Industrial Relations Act. This shows how it is not an isolated law, nor simply the product of "Tory dogma", but an integral part of the strategy of the British ruling class to try to deal with its economic problems in the current crisis at the expense of the working class.

The second part, reproduced here in full, is the programme which the Basingstoke LCDTU adopted to resist this attack. We see this as leading on naturally to the LCDTU not only holding public meetings, but also intervening in local and national struggles, more as a left fraction within the trade union movement than as merely a "ginger group" to "get things moving".

Lawrie White

PROGRAMME

PREAMBLE

THIS PROGRAMME has been drawn up with the following basic points in mind:—

1. We live under Capitalism. This means that we recognise that our society is dominated by that class of people who live on the return from investing their wealth (in the form of capital) in the labour of others (the working class)—a society in which production, being carried on for the purpose of making profit and not to supply the wants and needs of our society, is determined by the vagaries of the world capitalist market.

2. The self-activity of the working class. The working class has no need of anyone to make administrative "calls to action"—strike on such and such a day, take this or that action, or, adopt this or that form of struggle. On the contrary it is *daily* in a struggle against the employers, and is constantly inventing new forms of struggle suited to obtaining its ends—the NUM's flying pickets, the sit-ins in Manchester, etc.

3. The need for a political struggle. But the spontaneous struggle of the working class is fundamentally an *economic* struggle—to achieve better terms for the sale of labour. It takes place *within* the framework of the social order of Capitalism. However, this level of struggle is now proving inadequate *even for the defence of past gains*, both as regards wage levels and as regards trade union organisation. What is needed, therefore, is a *different level* of struggle—to achieve the annihilation of the social order which forces the have-nots to sell themselves to the rich.

4. The need for Socialism. We believe that all the problems faced by the working class (unemployment, low wages, bad housing, etc., etc.) derive from the continued existence of capitalism, and that therefore they can only be resolved through this struggle for an end to Capitalism and the establishment of Socialism.

5. The need for a Programme for this struggle. If the idea of an end to Capitalism and the establishment of Socialism is not to appear to be just "pie in the sky", however, what is needed is a programme for struggle which will drive back, undermine and break up the power of the capitalist class in our society; a programme which is both realistic and yet challenges the right of the capitalist class to rule our lives; a programme that sets about solving the problems faced by the working class at the expense of the capitalist class. A programme in short which prepares the ground for the overthrow of Capitalism.

1. FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF TRADE UNIONS

The most fundamental principle of *any workers' organisation* is that it is completely *independent of the Capitalist State*. The trade unions are organisations of workers for workers, or they are not trade unions.

The aim of the Industrial Relations Act is not to smash the trade unions, but to use the threat of smashing them to force their full-time officials to *police* the working class.

We can see this clearly in relation to recent events inside the T&GWU, where the National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC) is demanding that the T&GWU "purge its contempt" by "dis-associating itself" from its own members, the shop stewards leading the black-

ing campaign in defence of dockers' jobs.

In other words, instead of the executive committees and officials of the trade unions representing the rank and file to the bosses, they are to represent the bosses to their members. Instead of union rule books being framed to suit the needs and wishes of their members, they are to be framed to suit the needs and wishes of a representative of the capitalist state—the "Registrar of Trade Unions."

But as Mike Cooley (President of TASS) put it so well, "It is better to be held in contempt of the court than to be held in contempt by the men". Therefore we must raise in the trade union movement the following sorts of slogans to explain this fundamental idea of the need to maintain the independence of the trade unions from the capitalist state:

NO LAWS AGAINST THE TRADE UNIONS

NO REGISTRATION

NO RECOGNITION OF THE N.I.R.C.

TOTAL OPPOSITION TO THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT

NO TO STATE INTERFERENCE IN THE TRADE UNIONS

NO CO-OPERATION WITH THE CAPITALIST STATE.

2. NO TO ANY FORM OF INCOMES POLICY

The Tories say they have abandoned any idea of imposing an incomes policy on the trade unions, but in reality they do try to fix a "ceiling" for wage increases. Until the Miners' Strike, the "norm" was 7 per cent. At the moment they are trying to hold the railway men to around 11 per cent on the basic.

And we should note that the Labour Party is still trying to negotiate some kind of a deal with the TUC leaders over what *kind* of incomes policy they would accept under a Labour Government. For the Labour Party is trying to prove to the capitalist class that it can deliver the goods—by more moderate less risky policies than those of the Tories. This is what Roy Jenkins means when he talks about the need for Labour to have both policies that are *realistic* and policies that are *idealistic*. They are two sorts of policies: the latter (the "pie in the sky" variety of "socialist policies" to which the Labour leadership are always "committing" themselves) designed to give them a "left-wing" look for an election, and the former to be the actual policies they will pursue in the service of capitalism.

Therefore we must oppose the very idea of any kind of Incomes Policy imposed on the working class—whether it is suggested by Tory or Labour.

For it not only represents another case of *state interference*—this time in collective bargaining—but it also implies that the working class is in some way "to blame" for the prices-wages spiral of inflation. In fact, inflation is the result of the situation of world trade, which in turn results from the unplanned nature of world capitalist production.

This fact also shows the total inadequacy of the slogan "Tories out—Labour in!", when the Labour

Party, working within the framework of capitalism, will obviously be obliged to pursue essentially the same policies as the present Tory Government—albeit in a more "moderate" form.

Finally, if we ask what sort of demands we *should* be raising with regard to wages, it is clear that if we reject all responsibility for inflation, then we must protect our wages against it.

ALL WAGE AGREEMENTS TO HAVE BUILT-IN COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES THE COST-OF-LIVING INDEX TO BE DECIDED BY THE TRADE UNIONS

3. THE RIGHT OF VETO

At first sight the right of veto on management decisions may not seem to have much relevance to the question of defence of trade unions.

But it is in the workplace that the unions are tried and tested. Without a clear programme of how we think they should fight *there*, the rest of our programme would be reduced to mere abstract theorising.

The fundamental question as before is to undermine the power and authority of the capitalist vis a vis the worker. It means setting new restrictions on the employer's "rights" that will make it easier for workers to defend *their* rights. (The Industrial Relations Act, we should note, tries to do the same thing in reverse—to set new restrictions on workers' rights so as to make it easier to defend profits.)

The right to *veto* management decisions affecting workers' jobs has two main functions:

- (1) It rejects any responsibility for the running of the firm under capitalism;
- (2) It asserts an alternative social regulator (workers' mass meetings) over against the vagaries of the capitalist market.

Thus the *right to veto job loss* would mean that workers could not be made unemployed just because of a "down-turn" in the market for the products of the firm he works for.

The right of veto would take the form of imposing a comprehensive series of "status quo" clauses in all agreements, such as the following:

THE RIGHT OF VETO ON MOVEMENT OF WORKERS WITHIN THE PLANT

THE RIGHT OF VETO ON SHIFT WORKING AND OVERTIME

THE RIGHT OF VETO ON PAYMENT SYSTEMS

THE RIGHT OF VETO ON DANGEROUS WORKING

THE RIGHT TO VETO SPEED-UP

THE RIGHT TO VETO THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW PLANT.

THE RIGHT TO VETO JOB LOSS

4. FOR THE EXTENSION OF TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY

For a really effective campaign in defence of trade

unions, the largest number of workers possible must be involved in the struggle. But through undemocratic practices, and failing to pursue their members' interests on the part of many union leaders and officials, many workers have ceased to be involved in the affairs of the trade unions. This is most dramatically illustrated in the miserably low numbers attending branch meetings.

Most people who end up as full-time trade union officials began as good militants. But there is an in-built tendency for the emergence of bureaucratic interests in the workers' movement—interests, that is, which are in contradiction to those of the rank-and-file membership.

Continuous contact with employers (who often turn out to be quite pleasant personally) accompanied by a relatively higher standard of living and style of life than their members, and psychological pressures such as praise from the employers (the "captains of industry") and the Government (not to mention the press!) for persuading members to "exercise restraint"—all these make a powerful impact on full-time trade union officials.

And in addition, unofficial rank-and-file action serves to disrupt the routinism of a trade union office—and with it, the possibility of a smooth quiet life!

This is why so many trade union officials become ready and willing to stop or moderate any rank-and-file struggle. Indeed, they are almost obliged to attack any rank-and-file moves outside their control since their social position depends on them being able to "deliver the goods"—to the employers as well as to the workers.

As long as they feel they cannot influence decisions, the mass of workers will tend to be indifferent to their trade unions.

Therefore, in order to involve the mass of workers, there must be a massive extension of trade union democracy.

There must be an end to executives over which the rank-and-file have no control, and an end to officials who are *selected* from above instead of *elected* from below.

ALL OFFICIALS TO BE ELECTED AND SUBJECT TO INSTANT RECALL

NO OFFICIAL TO BE PAID MORE THAN THE AVERAGE OF THE MEN HE REPRESENTS (should donate extra to workers' organisations)

NO BANS OR PROSCRIPTIONS

NO SECRET NEGOTIATIONS

ALL DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN BY MASS MEETINGS, OR BY MEETINGS OF DIRECTLY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEN.

CONCLUDING NOTE

The concept of the programme elaborated above presupposes that the Liaison Committees for the Defence of Trade Unions should see themselves *not* as a "ginger" group to "get things moving" (and then disband), but as the nucleus for a series of left fractions in the trade unions which will fight for the adoption by the unions of this sort of *socialist* programme of struggle—against capitalism itself.

LABOUR AND DEVLIN

By 1964 the British economy was clearly feeling the effects of competition from reviving capitalist rivals. It began to feel this at the end of a boom which had transformed working class activity, decisively reviving the trade unions. Any incoming government intent on the salvation of British Capitalism had to formulate a policy to deal with the situation in the interests of profits and investments.

The Labour Government of '64-'70 consistently attempted to reduce the effectiveness of the economic organizations of the working class. This end was not pursued in the manner of the present Heath government, which has a policy of direct attacks on the whole union structure. Instead the Labour government attempted to integrate the trade unions into the state. The main feature of this policy, which had been tentatively tried by the previous administration, involved the creation of a whole range of ancillary organs of the state. In these the TUC leaders were encouraged to participate. The middle 60's saw a whole range of these organizations. The National Economic Development Council, the Prices and Incomes Board, and regional planning boards all had their tame trades unionists.

On its own this policy was inadequate for Labour's purpose. The first world war had seen the formation of a layer of lay officials relatively unresponsive to the trade union leaderships. The economic conditions of the 20 years before Labour was elected had seen this layer strengthened. Consequently even with the TUC's uncle toms in his pocket Wilson still faced the problem of unofficial strikes and wage inflation. At first, the limitation of rank-and-file activity was left to the more adept managements to accomplish through the government-encouraged productivity deals. Only later as the Labour government desperately adapted to a worsening economic situation and the concomitant demand of the employers for a firmer stand against the unions did Wilson and Co. begin to countenance legislation to restrict the rank and file.

level. A lay leadership with prestige, skill and much too much freedom had grown to fill the vacuum conducting the local negotiations.

THE DOCKS

If in 1968 key sectors of British industry could be described as chaotic the Docks of three years before must have appeared as out and out anarchy. The Royal group had for instance just operated an overtime ban for twelve months and encouraged the other major docks to join in. The general trends in British industrial relations had been magnified by inter-union hostility, competition, and the solidarity which flowed from the insecurity of casual labour. Here then we might expect to see Wilson presage later policy.

The restructuring of relationships between employer-employee and union bureaucracy-member at the instigation of an organ of the state (the Devlin enquiry into the ports) is a salient point on the path towards *In Place of Strife* to which the Report bears many similarities. Unofficial activity and the strength of rank and file leadership is seen as the central problem (Devlin para 10). To allow modernization the militancy (always euphemistically called "dissension") had to be destroyed. In addition to the statement of the problem, there was a real similarity in solution. This can be seen if we consider the following more or less explicit proposals made in the report.

1. **Proposals Regarding the Structure of the Trade Unions.** The report suggested that an official shop stewards system should be established in place of the pre-existing unsanctioned leadership (the Docks Liaison Committee). Another suggestion was for a greater number of full-time officials of "ambition and talent" (presumably of the type suggested by *In Place of Strife*). Again this was to increase discipline. Proposals were also made for the modification of the constitution of the NASD (blue union). It was so democratic members could actually demand to know how negotiations were proceeding and -obviously enough- campaign against anything they didn't like. Also "the three officers (of the Blues) can speak at the (Executive) council but cannot vote. It appears in practice the officers are given little or no authority. Mr Barret, the general secretary, is the voice of the union rather than its leader." (para 105). An agent of the state can be expected to recoil in horror from such a state of affairs.

The most amusing suggestion is one aimed at the T&GWU. The report points out that that union had called no official docks strike in 20 years of unparalleled docks militancy (para 116) and says "If a trade union leader inclines too far to the employers, he may make agreements excellent in themselves perhaps, but which his rank and file dislike and dishonour" (see last issue of *The Red Mole* for more details on the T&GWU and its arse-licking National Docks Secretary Tim O'Leary).

2. **Proposals Regarding Decasualisation.** Devlin suggested that decasualisation was important for ending dissension. If the pool system of casual labour was replaced by permanent jobs with specific employers it was hoped that the independent docker would become "normal" and loyal and come to regard his employer with the dog-like devotion so sadly lacking. The liaison committee was demanding nationalisation under workers control. The docker was responsive to this demand because it was seen as an extension of the existing system of joint control which was enshrined in the Docks Labour scheme. Devlin and the employers who gave evidence were ill-disposed to consider nationalisation and were forced to suggest concessions on job-security to sell decasualisation to the dockers. It is the removal of these and other concessions which is causing the present crisis.

3. **Proposals Regarding the Piecework System.** The destruction of the piecework system has become a stock task for the shrewd manager. Rank and file militancy has been fostered by the local bargaining necessitated by any system which takes the specific situation into account. In addition piece rates had to go to enable modernization to take place. There is no point in financing modern handling techniques if the wages bill stays proportional to the work done. This is illustrated by the 1970 attempt made by the militants to price Devlin Phase II out by gaining an increase on the basic which would then be reflected in the piece rates.

4. There were also ranges of suggestions regarding "restrictive" practices. These practices had emerged as a defence against the casual system, and for the most part died with it. The proposals were often unfavourably received,

DOCK

With a national docks strike impending on the key question of pay, we deal with the approach of the Labour Government to the Devlin Report; examine the general significance of the demands being put forward; and look in more detail

ved, and the government had to both coerce and offer concessions in addition to those in offered in the report itself. For instance, they ordered the Hull employers to add 25 per cent to the assessment of labour needed by Phase II (*The Port*) in an attempt to make the reduction of the work force palatable. The proposals were thus implemented without the resistance which would otherwise have resulted. The extra men in Hull are now finding their jobs threatened. Another pledge which baited the trap for the reluctant docker was the promise of nationalization of the ports industry. Though this was in the 1966 election manifesto and was promised by both Jones and Mikado of the Labour Party NEC, it was not accomplished. Public ownership would have been enthusiastically

adopted by Labour only if the cost of necessary modernization had been too great or the expected profits too small for the existing owners.

The policies pursued on the docks were no accidental product of some High Court Judge, but a forerunner of a policy intended to be universally applied. Labour intentions for the working class can be seen in this policy. Since 1964 the problems of British capitalism have increased. There is no chance of a capitalist government leaving the trade unions alone. A Labour Government would, at this stage, have more openly anti-working class policies than the last. E. Waring

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT DISPUTE

Competition between rival capitalisms makes impossible any guaranteed retention of reforms. Any reform granted now is a temporary expedient to stop or "buy off" a struggle. The real value of reforms is often reduced even in a situation where direct withdrawal is inopportune. With the British ruling class in a particularly weak position economically the withdrawal of concessions and reduction of existing reforms is currently more typical than their granting. The recent developments in the docks are an ample illustration of the current fate of concessions or reforms. Both the Dock Labour Scheme and the security promised after phase II are threatened. Similarly, to return to an example already employed (Labour and Devlin), the 25 per cent overmanning accepted to sell the reorganization in Hull is now rejected by the employers.

To be consistently successful in a struggle for reforms whether wage reforms, concessions on conditions, the preservation of traditional work practices, or resistance to redundancy, can only lead to the use of the State to redress the balance. The State can do this in a series of ways and has a number of covert solutions as well as the more or less open offensive the Tories are currently waging against public employees. Again the docks provide us with examples: the use of royal commissions as courts of inquiry is one type; the threat of unilateral modification of the Docks Labour Act to bring it into line with the Devlin proposals the other. The State was used against the dock workers in the middle and late sixties precisely because of the success the dockers had had in resisting the reduction of manning scales, and pushing up piece rates, etc. Finally, the State can use its heavy mob, break pickets like the police did at Longannet power station during the miners strike, or send the army into the docks as the Labour government did in 1947. How do these points influence our attitude to the pending Docks strike?

So far the options open to the British bourgeoisie have been looked at in general terms. What can they accomplish on the docks? Firstly, as they are in no position to legislate in a whole range of reforms in the manner of the post war Labour government a wholesale reform for one industry or new Docks Labour Scheme is unlikely. (It would require a Labour Government and a trade boom to be possible.) The Scheme gave a limited degree of

job security to large numbers of casual workers by setting up a Joint Control Board to limit the size of the labour force. The Devlin reorganization meant a massive reduction in the register, and subsequently there has been a growth of new container ports outside the scheme. (It cost little during the period of boom and was a way of keeping hold of experienced labour during a period of scarcity.) The remaining options are for limited concessions or a government-provoked confrontation.

The balance of payments is in disarray at a time when the government is attempting to reflate the economy. Additionally the army is heavily committed in the North of Ireland and to invoke the hostility of the working class towards it during the Irish crisis may be thought unwise. For these reasons a major confrontation may be avoided and the government may encourage some sort of deal which slows the rate of containerization and abandoned dock closure. The point to remember is that these demands are unlikely to be any more permanent than the ones offered previously to defuse the resistance to Devlin. A more opportune moment would be found to withdraw the concessions. If the struggle for reforms offers no prospect of ending but only the prospect of eventual exhaustion then the choice is obvious-raise the stakes or give up.

There is one typical solution offered in the attempt to go beyond just a few concessions. That is to pose the demand for nationalisation. This demand in unqualified form, in the Communist Party's latest pamphlet on the docks,



In Place of Strife marks the acceptance of the need for legislation. The diagnosis is quite clear-unofficial activity or "chaotic and inflationary shop floor pressure" is the main enemy (paras. 15 and 24). This was to be fought in a whole number of ways. Firstly, general measures such as compulsory cooling off periods or straight legal sanctions against organizations and individuals were designed to make all strikes less successful. These would operate unevenly and be more detrimental to the unofficial striker. More significantly the document suggested measures to make the official structures more inclusive or more rigid. Two examples specifically chosen to echo the thinking of the Devlin report will serve to illustrate this. The first is the proposal to give grants to finance the training and payment of officials in cases where this is recommended by the proposed Industrial Relations Commission. The theory behind this is quite clear. Any extension of the paid, and hence easily disciplined, fulltimers will reduce the importance of the lay officials against whom disciplinary measures are more difficult. Another proposal was the restructuring of the procedures (in line with the Commission's recommendations/instructions). The purpose of this was to make lay officials subject to regulation. This is clearly spelt out (in para 16) where the document criticizes the continuing failure to reform the York agreements (engineering industry procedure).

National engineering negotiations are so rigid and divorced from the shop floor that they have retained little importance for the average engineer. The great bulk of increases have been gained through negotiations conducted at plant



KS

of job loss and fall back to the docks, and in particular present dispute and the kind the struggle in Hull.

Nationalisation as practised by the Labour Party solves nothing. The interest is paid on the loans needed to renew any plant, etc; compensation is paid to the previous owners; interest is paid on the money raised for the purchase; and the price of the goods or services provided is subject to the market (in the case of the docks the handling charges would be paid to keep the export prices competitive). As the industry still runs for profit—the fixed interest on the loans—workers' conditions of employment are still determined by the market. In the case of the mining industry this has meant widespread redundancies due to rationalisation and unfavourable productivity deals. The only conclusion to any examination of nationalisation is that it would not solve the problems of the workers even if it was granted.

The Communist leadership of the shop stewards movement put a better position than the party itself. They put forward the demand for "nationalisation under workers control". This demand attempts to deal with the problems which Labourite nationalisation won't come to grips with. Full workers control means workers determining their own conditions in place of the market. There is another problem. Who is the demand put to? In the case of the CP pamphlet this is quite clear. The demand is one for the Labour Party to implement. Yet Labour's type of nationalisation offers no solution to the problem. If by nationalisation the CP means nationalisation under workers' control, then Labour would not be prepared to carry it out anyway.

The CP's position hides the inevitability of the anti-working class nature of Labour policy and creates illusions in the possibility of reforming the party. It does this by suggesting that "It is a disgrace that the Labour Government did not nationalise the docks". We want a government which will guarantee workers' control, and must argue for one consistently, even if there is no immediate prospect of one emerging. The central demand must be for the trade unions and shop stewards committees to advance the struggle, by organising to control the allocation of work, redundancies, etc. rather than placing demands which tend to suggest the diversion from the existing activities of the working class back into the now deserted constituency Labour parties for a fight for socialist policies.

The first of the slogans—that for straight nationalisation—is pointless. The second is a confusing amalgam. Nationalisation merely hides the current tasks. It can even suggest nationalisation as a pre-requisite for the establishment of control. Now while control over conditions can only be established fully when generalised through the economy and guaranteed by a workers state, steps can be taken now.

The existing joint control system which controls the size of the register of docks workers is a very partial defence against the threat of redundancies. The existence of the "pool" or unattached register makes it possible for the employers to escape the effects of a really effective veto. The men on the unattached get only £20 a week fall back money. This is not paid by the last employer but by the employers collectively. In addition the divorce between the right wing bureaucrats who make up half the board, and the men, has traditionally been large in the docks. It would not have resulted in a rupture between them during the boom, when the scheme operated in the interests of the employers. Now, however, there will be increasing opportunities for a breach between social democratic trade union

leaders, and the men wishing to preserve their jobs.

The demands for an effective veto on all future redundancies and average dockers' income for those on the register have to be established jointly to stop the fluctuations in trade and search for profits from affecting the style of life of the existing dock worker.

The suggestion for the enforcing of a national work-sharing scheme was advanced by Brian Nicolson and Walt Greendale (Docks III—IWC Pamphlet). This scheme offers a strategy to fight the divide and rule game played by the employers, and establishes a veto over work movement. Due to the movement of traditional work the ports have been affected by redundancies unevenly. Only the enforcement of traditional proportions can stop this from effecting solidarity between the ports. A veto over work movement would be established. The existing shop stewards committees are the only institutions capable of leading this step. That is not to say that much extended organisations wouldn't be required to operate the tactic and preserve mass support.

One problem connected with this is that, as a first response to the threatened redundancies, dockers have been calling for the work removed to inland container depots. The response at Heatons, Stratford terminal and the other inland depots was, as

might have been expected, violently anti-docker. Stratford have threatened to occupy or work-in against any attempt to remove this work. Any splits of this sort in the working class (and in this case, one union—the T&GWU) can be all too easily exploited by the press who like to show that militants are acting against "the nation", and against other sections of the working class. The demands for full money on the unattached, and for an end to redundancies should have been sufficient. Rather than attempt to remove the jobs of men who have in some cases worked at them for the last two years the dockers would be better advised to establish links at rank-and-file level and start a joint fight to get them earning dockers' money. This would half destroy the financial advantage in the expansion of these units outside the traditional dock areas. A similar policy could be pursued in the case of the unregistered ports. Additional demands, of course, are for a substantial pay increase and greater pensions.

Due to the export situation, the dockers are in a strong position. They may well follow the miners in defeating the Government and giving the decisive sections of the bourgeoisie more doubts about the effectiveness of their current policy.

E. Waring

THE STRUGGLE IN HULL

In the 1950s bourgeois economists thought up a new name for the class struggle. They called it cost-push inflation. Instead of saying that capitalists were out to increase profits at the expense of real wages, they spoke of a "wage-price spiral". For a time it worked. By the 1960s even some self-styled and "eminent" Marxists were taken in. But however obscure the euphemism, and mystifying the analysis, sooner or later reality had to stand out. The drastic increases in unemployment shook to the core a complacent and ill-prepared working class. No other single factor has been more significant to the increased radicalisation among workers, than this fear of a return to the Thirties.

Nor is the response merely local. The media has carried the danger signals into every home, and productivity bargaining has taken it into every industry. All workers feel affected. Instinctively they identify this or that "sit-in" as part of a more general struggle, and thereby extend the limits of their hitherto fragmented consciousness well beyond the hopes of Old and New Left alike. Politics have entered the arena not as a result of the conscious will of revolutionaries, but because international competition has forced the British bourgeoisie to attempt to reduce wages, and rely once more on the discipline of a reserve army of unemployed. All the time that hard-fought wage demands were met out of high priced exports, inflation at home was no real problem to Capital. But once Europe's post-war economic miracles induced a squeeze on profits, carefully planned manoeuvres were designed to cut back earnings. Each one, a test of resistance. First, a wage-freeze; then speed-up and measured day work, and with them, the disguised and systematic attack on shop stewards; then unemployment and legislation systematic attack on shop stewards; then unemployment and legislation against militants; and finally, a small number of isolated, but strategic defeats of the unions, culminating, in due course, in a major confrontation with key sections of the working class.

Humber-side has a long tradition of class solidarity. When Ben Tillet visited Hull in the January of 1891 he was able to declare that, "no town stands higher in the ranks of trade unionism". Addressing a mass meeting of striking dockers he went on to say that not a "single blackleg (discovered during the strike) had come from the Hull area", so that the port employers "... had to scour the scrap heaps and bring them from a distance". The port was undoubtedly the best organised in the country. Moreover, nowhere was a greater proportion of the unskilled unionised. These two facts were intimately related. Hull's trade union movement came to be dominated by dockers, who immune from the influence of middle-class intellectuals, led most of the political struggles as well.

Until recently this situation had changed dramatically. First, there was the break in the organisational hold of the Labour Party. Like everywhere else, the sharp recognition that Labour Governments were fundamentally no different from the Tories, resulted in a mass exodus from the Constituency Parties. For so long these had been an important integrating factor in the city's Labour movement, because they imposed fewer restrictions on the number

of delegates that could be represented at any one time, than for example, did the Trades Council. In addition, there was an immediate organisational link-up of struggles other than those at work, so that Tenants' Associations and local Labour Wards, usually contained militants who were also busy organising on the docks and in the factories.



Of course, the Social Democratic distinction between trades unionism and politics was always institutionally defined, but there were times when it was at least momentarily transcended in the course of struggle. For the most part, however, the ideological hold of Labourism remained intact. The protracted post-war boom offered little hope of widespread political radicalisation, and the absence of a political force capable of combatting bourgeois ideology meant that economism could prevail in a movement so attuned to its acceptance. So it was then, that the reduction in rank and file involvement in the Labour Party—which left the constituencies firmly in the hands of right-wing Party careerists—coincided with increased militancy in the trade unions—which forced a "left" appearance on the part of trade union officials. This therefore entailed a radical switch in the perceived nature of the class struggle. Whereas in the "affluent" fifties the city's Labour Party gave many militants the impression of moving to the Left and the trade unions the appearance of going to the Right, in the sixties the position was reversed. This is not unique. It has occurred in every industrial area of the country. Its consequences are obvious. There are literally hundreds of isolated militants highly receptive to Marxist politics. Moreover, this same change has meant that many groups of workers have remained separated from the broad Labour movement.

A second feature exacerbating the isolation is the difference in rates of pay. Above all, this is true of dockers. As they will tell you, "Because we earn a few bob more than other workers, they are never prepared to support us". It has to be said that few dockers have, in return, been prepared to support them. Barely half-a-dozen, for example, turned up at an unemployment conference of 400 trade union

delegates called by the Trades Council and fewer still supported a steet demo involving 150 workers organised by Hull I.M.G. At that time dockers had not felt themselves to be involved. With a £2,000 "handshake" for "early retirement" announced at the beginning of the year, it was not surprising that they failed to readily perceive the dangerous and irreversible implications of their acquiescence. All this has now changed: With the more recent announcement that two of the central docks are to "close down", all those post-Devlin promises of security fade into thin air. Added to this the issue of containerisation, and the £55,000 fine on their union, and it is easy to understand why Hull's dockers are once again at the centre of industrial activity and eager to strike the initiative for the movement as a whole.

BACKGROUND TO THE STRUGGLE

British shipowners are now turning to container ships at a rate faster than any other country in Europe. Of the 700 or so cargo ships currently in operation—by far the world's largest liner fleet—over 500 could be scrapped by 1980. By then, it has been estimated that over 80 per cent of the world's cargo would have been containerised. Already it seems fairly certain that the 9 container ships working the U.K.-Europe-Australia trade will soon come to replace over 50 conventional vessels (for full details see the McKinsey Report).

Nor is it simply a matter of changing old ships for new. Container technology amounts to an enormous rationalisation and economy of transportation. Container facilities can, and are, being developed inland. There are depots at Coatbridge, Aintree, Urmstrom, Leeds, Birmingham, Stratford and Barking. Ships need no longer go where the cargo is, since the container has become an extension of the ship. This therefore means that only one or two ports need accommodate the larger vessels now being built specifically to deal with the massive containers. Hull dockers have good reason to be anxious about these developments because the inflated cash value of the cargo they handle, in fact serves to disguise a substantial drop in the volume of trade. This is clear from a comparison of the two columns in the following table.

Value of Foreign Trade and Tonnage of Traffic Hull Docks 1964-1970

| Year | Value of foreign trade (H.M. Customs & Excise Statements) £ million | Total imports & exports Tons '000 |
|------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1964 | 540 | 10,198 |
| 1965 | 550 | 9,908 |
| 1966 | 600 | 9,507 |
| 1967 | 650 | 9,129 |
| 1968 | 769 | 7,998 |
| 1969 | 803 | 7,585 |
| 1970 | 871 | 7,526 |

Last year's figures do little to lighten the gloom. Cargoes passing through Hull docks in 1971 slumped by a further 1,279,628 tons.

With the substantial development of a container depot at nearby Leeds, and with port facilities being extended along the East Coast, miles south of the Humber, the writing is clearly on the wall.

In terms of the percentage manpower loss, Hull has already suffered more than any other port as the following table shows.

Registered Dock Labour

| | 1969 | 1970 | % loss |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| London | 18,259 | 16,573 | 9.2 |
| Liverpool | 11,430 | 10,789 | 7.0 |
| Hull | 3,544 | 3,126 | 12.0 |
| Manchester | 1,959 | 1,861 | 5.0 |
| South Coast | 1,851 | 1,728 | 7.0 |
| Nationally (all ports) | 48,785 | 44,588 | 9.0 |

Since 1970 the labour force in the Hull docks has been further reduced to some 2,500 men. It has to be emphasised that this enormous reduction has been made possible only through the sacrifice of dockers themselves. Many are coming to realize that they have been digging their own graves. They argue that traditional areas like Hull are being systematically run down so that employers can operate elsewhere with cheap labour from outside the National Dock Labour Scheme in unregistered ports such as Felixtowe, Shoreham and Newhaven. Also, as inflation whittles away the sugar coating on the pill, they are coming to taste the bitter core of increased exploitation. The initial profits to be made out of containerisation are absolutely fantastic, and bring home the full implication of Devlin. The McKinsey Report estimates that whereas under conventional methods one man could normally unload 30 freight tons a week, with containerisation it would come to 600 freight tons—an amount 20 times greater.

N.O'Neill

From the standpoint of the workers' movement, the May 7 elections had two decisively negative results. First, the Christian Democrats, who have made a clear shift to the right, essentially maintained their positions and are thus more susceptible than ever to right-wing pressures. Secondly, the MSI [Movimento Sociale Italiano - Italian Social Movement, the neo-fascists] had a notable success in consolidating its base and will be better able to serve as an instrument of pressure in the parliamentary and governmental spheres, as well as to promote acts of intimidation in the classic fascist style. If we underestimated these developments, our analysis would be distorted, with all the political and tactical errors this would involve.

In parliamentary terms, the class enemy can take comfort in the fact that although its credibility has been deeply eroded and it is bankrupt in practice, the centre-left has retained a majority. At the same time, the possibility still exists for a centre government, although with less room to manoeuvre. The climate for a centre coalition, of course, is more favourable now in several respects than it was in the previous legislature. As has already been disclosed, this result was facilitated by an electoral law which placed serious restrictions on proportional representation and in practice deprived more than a million left-wing voters of a voice in parliament.

In making a general assessment of the election results, however, we cannot overlook the factors that have different if not directly opposite implications. In the first place, we must not forget for an instant that while electoral laws can give a distorted impression of political relationships, they cannot eliminate forces existing in reality from the political struggle. This goes for the million "second-class citizens" already mentioned. But it goes even more for the youth between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one who did not vote but who will continue to exercise a weight in social struggles just as they have often decisively done in the last four years. Nor should the fact be underestimated that certain strata of workers who continue to support the bourgeois parties in the electoral field support antimanagerial positions in factory and union conflicts, fighting alongside the politically more mature workers.

But even if we just look at the election results themselves, the working-class block as a whole remained essentially intact. Moreover, the PCI [Partito Comunista Italiano - Italian Communist Party], which in the eyes of the broad masses still seemed the strongest weapon for defending their interests, even scored a modest gain. This, in fact, shows the basic limitation of the success achieved by the conservative forces. The elections definitively confirmed the failure of the decade-old operation of the centre-left, one of whose main objectives was to erode the base of the Communist Party.

It seems, moreover, that the most responsible leading groups of the bourgeoisie, whose favourite political vehicle is the Christian Democratic Party, were aiming to push the PCI back, block the advance of the MSI, and strengthen the centre. It seems clear that they have few reasons for rejoicing, especially since it was the potential allies of the Christian Democrats, the Liberal Party, that suffered the greatest losses, while the PSI [Partito Socialista Italiano - Italian Socialist Party] stood the test better. The fact is that the political equilibrium remains uncertain and precarious just as it was before the elections, and restabilization is not in sight. (It was not unimportant that the two biggest organs of the industrial bourgeoisie, *Corriere della Sera* and *La Stampa*, entitled their editorials on May 10 "Time is Running Out" and "The Last Adjournment".) For the time being the bourgeoisie's crisis of leadership has in no way been resolved.

This means that the period ahead of us will remain one of acute social and political conflicts. The bargaining that takes place when the contracts of the major categories of workers come up for renewal can and must be the occasion of important struggles.

The poor results achieved by the *Manifesto* list are undoubtedly the most negative aspect of the elections from the standpoint of the revolutionary left. It is logical that this has had the most serious impact on those who harbored illusions, expecting results that could never have been achieved or exaggerating the facts about the mobilizations carried out during the electoral campaign.

One of the reasons for the modest results achieved by *Manifesto* must certainly be seen in the atmosphere created by the propaganda campaigns orchestrated around the notable episodes of recent months (i.e., fascist provocations as well as repressive moves by the regime). In the last analysis, this provoked a reaction among sectors of the working class and the radicalized petty bourgeoisie which were open to



Poster attacking Almirante, Leader of the Neo-Fascist MSI.

ITALY AFTER THE ELECTIONS

The situation in Italy after the recent elections remains much as it was before. The bourgeoisie's crisis of leadership has in no way been resolved: it has failed to erode the base of the Communist Party and is now subject to increasing right-wing pressure from the neo-fascist MSI. However, the poor results achieved by the revolutionary 'Manifesto' list show that the left is still a long way from posing any real alternative in the present situation.

the arguments and the initiatives of the far left. They reacted in a defensive way, rallying around the workers' party which seemed to offer the best guarantees of holding the line. This factor was to weigh all the more heavily in the balance insofar as *Manifesto* lacked the time to carry out all the preparatory work that such an ambitious project would require.

But over and above these objective conditions, genuine political errors played a role. Most of all, *Manifesto* is paying the price for the way it went about launching its project, without making any serious attempt to find common ground with at least some of the most substantial forces of the revolutionary left. Instead, it chose to centre attention on its own specific organi-

sation (and what is worse, this is an organisation that is still in the process of formation and that lacks any clearly defined theoretical or political basis).

During the campaign there was no lack of sectarian manifestations, especially at the local level, and these contradicted *Manifesto's* attempt to project itself as an alternative for the whole anticapitalist and antireformist spectrum. All sorts of petty obstacles were put in the way of collaborating with other forces. Even the Vietnam demonstrations were accompanied by incipient attempts to try to exclude some forces. Finally, the inexperience of *Manifesto's* speakers made dialogue with broader strata difficult if not impossible. The excessive use of the "in" language of the far left alone would have prevented reaching out to broader layers.

It would be wrong, however, to draw the conclusion that the attempt failed completely and that it would have been better not to try it. The results themselves, as modest as they were, show that not insignificant forces look to the far left for leadership, even in the electoral field and at a particularly difficult time. Nothing of the sort has been seen before in Italy or in other West European countries, except for the Krivine candidacy in France in 1969. And there better results were achieved because the Ligue Communiste has a stronger organization than *Manifesto* and because the project had a greater political coherence. The fact remains, and it is not an unimportant one, that an electoral campaign was conducted, and achieved some unquestionable successes in mobilizing people, on the basis of a platform that broke with reformist practices and reestablished a link with communist traditions of taking advantage of the opportunities offered by bourgeois democracy without encouraging electoralist or parliamentary illusions.

It would also be wrong to interpret the vote for the Communist Party as meaning that this organisation has maintained or reconfirmed the support of broad sectors of the masses because they place their full trust in the party or really support the options and methods of the leading groups. I think it is safe to say that just because they voted for the PCI does not mean that these people did not feel perplexity, uncertainty, or critical reservations. Moreover, rallying around the party out of a defensive reaction does not automatically imply that you have any faith in it. The objective contradiction between the strength the PCI holds and the basic sterility of its political line, the contradiction between the interests of the party bureaucracy and the interests and the aspirations of the masses was not eliminated by the PCI's winning 9,000,000 votes. In a context of persistent social and political tensions, these contradictions will inevitably tend to be reflected in frictions, conflicts, and open clashes at the most diverse levels. This process will be facilitated, however, only insofar as the revolutionary left succeeds in avoiding sterile schematism in its analyses and blind sectarianism in practice, as well as firmly rejecting all adventurist temptations.

Over and above all this, the May 7 elections showed that we still face a long, hard job in building the revolutionary party, and people who hope to find any easy shortcuts are seriously deluding themselves. Progress in this work demands on a number of factors. We must have constant theoretical and political debate. No position can be arbitrarily excluded from discussion and real views must be discussed and not caricatures. In particular, there must be a repudiation of the method of resorting to slanderous misrepresentations and falsification—not infrequently mixed with petty gossip—which is the price not a few groups are paying for their inability to break from Stalinism. Success in this work, it need hardly be added, depends on how effectively the revolutionary left, within the limits of its forces, can exercise a real influence in the struggles and political campaigns of the phase that is now opening.

So, we repeat the proposal that we made immediately after the elections in a communique from our national secretariat, which was also published in *Manifesto*.

"The Fourth International thinks that the entire revolutionary left should devote a period of time to reflecting critically on the meaning of the May 7 elections. As soon as possible and setting aside all sectarian barriers, we must discuss the possibilities for common actions on the following themes: *The fight for new contracts in industry, the campaign against the Fascist threat, the campaign for the release of Valpreda and all the political prisoners, mobilization against the crimes of imperialism in Vietnam.*"

This article first appeared in *Bandiera Rossa*, newspaper of the Italian Section of the Fourth International.



Smoke rises from U.S. bombs dropped on Haiphong

VIETNAM

Vietnamese fighters call for worldwide solidarity.

"All the people of the world must stop the criminal hand . . ." — Le Duc Tho

While Nixon was being feted in Moscow by Messrs Kossygin and Brezhnev, the PRG and the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam were appealing for worldwide solidarity. At the very moment that Nixon was laying a wreath on the tomb of the "unknown soldier" in Moscow, bombers of the U.S. Air Force were dropping bombs on North Vietnamese cities, including a new form of anti-personnel bomb only recently perfected in the laboratories of imperialism with the aid of scientists who claim that they do not wish "to be involved in politics". Nixon's visit to Moscow has been implicitly condemned by Hanoi and for good reason. Like his visit to China it represented an attempt to do a deal with the Big Powers and thus try and isolate Vietnam.

The behaviour of the Soviet bureaucracy is true to form: its own interests and the preservation of the status quo before everything else. The fact that Russian seamen have been killed and wounded in Hanoi and a Russian ship sunk in Haiphong harbour is an untimely irritation. The fact that the bombing of the DRV exceeds that carried out in LBJ's reign—bombers armed with yet more sophisticated, computer-guided and laser beamed bombs, 6 aircraft carriers, over 60 other ships pounding the coastal areas of Northern Vietnam and the liberated areas in the South to smithereens every day—is of no real concern to the bureaucrats in Moscow. From Peking the reaction has been equally muted and no doubt some questions are being raised within the Chinese leadership in regard to their bankrupt and opportunist analysis regarding the Asian revolution.

Undaunted by the fact that its two major allies are more concerned with their narrow bureaucratic interests than with proletarian internationalism, the Vietnamese continue to fight. But of course we have to understand that the escalation by U.S. imperialism has had its effects. In the North the offensive has been temporarily slowed down, but in the Mekong Delta region the puppet troops have been forced to admit several defeats in the face of a massive armed uprising led and coordinated by the NLF. The fact that there has been little mention of this in the bourgeois press should not surprise us too much. Inside Northern Vietnam itself morale is as high as before and recent visitors to Hanoi have reported on how effectively the evacuation of two-thirds of the population was organised. But the very fact that Nixon can effect a large-scale escalation of this nature reveals (apart from the obvious fact of Peking/Moscow's desire to preserve a *detente* with imperialism) the decline in the solidarity movement in Western Europe and the antiwar movement in the United States itself.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOLIDARITY ACTIONS ON A CONSISTENT BASIS

While the Vietnamese have up till now relied on their own forces and even sought to make a virtue of the fact, the main reason for this has been the lack of a Communist International based in the working class and capable of hastening the victory of the Vietnamese by solidarity actions which cripple imperialism in its heartlands. But nevertheless the Vietnamese militants have said on many occasions that they also depend on international support for their struggle and include it as part of their political and diplomatic calculations (this makes Soviet peaceful co-existence even more nauseous and treacherous than before at the present moment.) Hence the great emphasis they place on the role of the antiwar movement in the United States, but also elsewhere in the world. The Vietnamese unlike certain groups on the left do not regard these actions as "petty bourgeois protest demonstrations", but appreciate their real significance. After all the importance of the antiwar movement in the United States made it difficult for the American President to travel in his own country in 1968 and finally forced him to quit politics for good.

The bourgeoisie also appreciates this fact. Leader writers have exhibited a smug complacency while noting the fact that the recent anti-war demonstrations in the United States have not been as large and as effective as in 1968 or even after the invasion of Cambodia in 1970. As a result Nixon's margin of manoeuvre is much greater and he uses his trips to Moscow and Peking to both escalate the war further and win the '72 elections.

In Britain there has been a sharp decline in the solidarity movement. While Ireland and the upsurge in the working class have played a partial role in this process, one has also to blame the impressionism of the groups of the extreme left for this situation. In France, after all, there was and is a bigger upsurge in the workers movement. Nevertheless the Communist League has built an Indochina Solidarity Front and mobilised thousands of people in the streets over the last two years. In the same period there has been nothing of note in Britain (even *The Red Mole* seems to have re-discovered Indochina only after the Vietnamese offensive!). This shows, more than anything else, the strength of bourgeois ideology and how it can even penetrate the revolutionary movement. The only exception in Britain has been the small group of comrades who have continued to produce the excellent bi-monthly journal *Indochina*.

The important thing is to try to learn from the lessons of the past and to try to remedy previous weaknesses. The demonstration on June 4th is a welcome beginning and must be seen as that. While the war continues in Indochina and regardless of misleading bourgeois propaganda, we have to try to co-ordinate regular solidarity actions with the Vietnamese. More demonstrations and meetings have to be planned. Tory ministers and Labour frontbenchers must be effectively dealt with when they visit universities and schools, American firms

such as Honeywell's must be made to feel that the war in Vietnam is international. Union branches, trades councils, local LCDTU groups must be involved in the struggle to aid Vietnam.

The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign in collaboration with other groups is planning to centralise all initiatives on Vietnam throughout the country. We appeal to all militants and especially the comrades of the I.S. to assist in building solidarity actions in Britain, for the success of the Vietnamese revolution is a victory for the working class

movement throughout the world.

**VICTORY TO THE NLF!
DEFEAT NIXON'S BLOCKADE!
WITHDRAW ALL U.S. TROOPS NOW!
UNITED FRONT TO HELP THE VIETNAMESE REVOLUTION!**

Bob Braxton
Clarissa Howard

Note: The address of *Indochina* and the VSC is 182 Pentonville Road, London, N.1.

QUEBEC STRIKE WAVE

The presidents of Quebec's three labour federations were finally released from jail on 23rd May, two weeks after their imprisonment touched off a massive strike wave throughout the province.

The dispute originated in the spring when the contracts of 210,000 provincial public employees came up for renewal. This included teachers, maintenance workers, liquor board employees, hydro (electricity) workers, civil servants, hospital workers and nurses. To strengthen their bargaining power against their common employer, the Quebec government, they formed a Common Front of Quebec's three main union federations: the CSN, the FTQ, and the CEQ (teachers union).

After weeks of obstructive actions by the Liberal government, the Common Front called for a general strike in the public sector (the 210,000 workers). The strike was in support of a \$100 a week minimum salary for all public employees, the reduction of salary disparities between men and women and between regions, and an improvement in working conditions and job security.

The government responded to the six day strike with injunctions to end the walkouts. Fourteen union local leaders were jailed for up to six months and their unions fined up to \$50,000 each. The strike went on. The government then passed Bill 19 to end the strike under the threat of heavy penalties (up to \$250 per day per worker and \$50,000 per day per union) and to impose a settlement by June 30th. It also took away the right to strike in the public sector for two years. The unions refused to negotiate under these conditions and the public employees voted 60% in favour of continued strike action, in defiance of Bill 19. The three leaders of Quebec's major unions; Louis Laberge (FTQ), Marcel Pepin (CSN), and Yvon Charbonneau (CEQ) were arrested for recommending defiance of government injunctions. They were charged with contempt of court and given the maximum one year jail sentence. They refused to appeal and were taken off to prison.

The reaction to the repression was swift, and unexpected by the government, as is shown by the following (selected) summary of events taken from a bulletin put out by *Solidaire*.

May 9th: Longshoremen, teachers, maintenance workers and hospital workers walk out in various parts of Quebec as the three union leaders turn themselves in.

May 10th: 50,000 (80 per cent) Quebec construction workers and hospital workers walk off paralysing construction throughout the province. Sept-Iles, a mining town, is taken over by the workers. Mines and the port are closed and highways are barricaded, non-essential businesses and all bars are closed. Food stores are warned not to raise prices. In St. Jerome the radio station is seized to broadcast workers' news and music. Further walk-outs take place all over the province.

May 11th: Hospitals and schools continue to close down across Quebec. Two provincial Ministers announce that they will resign at the end of the crisis. At Thetford Mines workers from both private and public sector occupy the town and the local radio station. At Laurentides, 1300 workers at Hydro-Quebec (the province-owned electric power company) walk off, and the hospital and radio station are occupied. Workers control Labrador City. In St. Jerome, an estimated 25,000 workers close down 23 factories, schools, hospitals, construction sites and public services. Three main bridges into Montreal are blocked for several hours by workers.

Mine workers strike all over the province. **May 12th:** St. Jerome, St. Hyacinthe, Joliette, Murdochville, Sept-Iles, Hauterive, Thetford Mines, Levis and Baie Comsau are all occupied by workers. In Sainte Therese, 2200 workers close down their General Motors assembly plant. In Montreal all the newspapers are forced to close, workers in both public and private sectors continue to walk out, at the Albert Prevost Hospital workers expel administrators and continue hospital operations themselves.

May 13th: Eighteen radio and TV stations have now been occupied or 'visited'. In Quebec City, 80 per cent of all teachers are out. In Montreal, the Palais de Justice (provincial courts) is closed down by civil employees and 2000 friends.

May 14th: 95 per cent of all construction workers are now out. The only people reportedly working on the North Shore (of Montreal) are the police.

May 15th: In Montreal, as blue collar workers vote to remain on strike indefinitely and private contractors are prevented from picking up garbage, a Common Front of local committees, citizens' and women's groups, tenants unions, food co-ops and medical clinics is organised to protest Bill 19 and government repression.

May 16th: 5500 hospital workers at 11 hospitals remain on-strike. Thirty four local hospital union leaders out on bail turn themselves in. In Levis, 13 people are arrested while occupying a radio station. On the North Shore, 550 hydro workers walk out in defiance of a union decision not to strike. In Quebec City, the port is paralysed as 2000 dockers and 650 elevator operators walk out. In Montreal, 1300 Canadair employees walk out though bus and metro drivers vote against strike action. Striking workers at A & P bakery department throw products into the street before police arrive.

On May 17th, the Common Front called for a 'truce' period and temporary end to the strike after the government promised to release the union leaders and to negotiate a new contract with the public employees rather than impose terms under the strike-breaking law passed in April. This virtually marked the end of the strike wave in the province. One reason for the 'truce' was undoubtedly the need to fight a move to split the CSN — three of the five members on the confederation's executive board have announced plans for a rival 'non-political' union.

While the Quebec strike wave was undoubtedly a major step forward for workers' struggles in Quebec, nevertheless it also showed up very clearly the major weaknesses from which the movement still suffers. The most obvious feature of the strikes was their complete spontaneity and the complete failure of the unions to provide any coherent leadership. That so many workers in the private sector struck in solidarity with the public sector is extremely encouraging, yet the fact remains that there was no organisation of the myriad spontaneous actions which occurred, and no attempt to develop a strategy for going beyond the immediate goals (repeal of Bill 19, release of Union leaders, just negotiations). After walking out the workers were left totally unclear about where to direct their anger and frustration at the government and the economic situation. But, as the threatened CSN split shows, the strike wave has at least opened up an extremely important debate on the relation of trade unionism and politics, a debate in which the contradictions and limitations of the present unions and union bureaucracy will become more and more evident.

IMG/SL FUSION CONFERENCE

The fusion conference of the IMG and the Spartacus League was attended by over 500 people on 27-29 May. The discussions at the conference were centred around five central debates; the present political situation, work in the trade unions, Ireland, work amongst women and on the issue of women's oppression, and work amongst students. In addition there were discussions on the international work of the IMG in building the Fourth International, the newspaper, and on work amongst black people. The conference received fraternal greetings from speakers representing sections or sympathising groups of the Fourth International in France, Ireland, Germany, Peru, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Holland. A message of solidarity was also received from the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, which was prevented from attending the conference by the urgent necessity of work against the American blockade of North Vietnam. A speaker was also heard from the Provisional Republican Movement asking for solidarity actions in support of the 20 day

hunger strike of Billy McKee, former O/C of the Belfast Brigade of the Provisional IRA now in Crumlin Road Jail, who is demanding status as a political prisoner. One minute's silence was observed for those republicans killed in action in Ireland and for our comrades Peter Graham and Mairin Keegan who had died in the last year. A message of solidarity was sent from the conference to the National Liberation Front of Vietnam and on the Saturday evening a rally was held in solidarity with the Vietnamese struggle at which Robin Blackburn, Tariq Ali, Alain Krivine and Stephanie Coombs of the National Peace Action Coalition of the United States spoke. The conference was started by a one hour report from comrade Ernest Mandel on behalf of the United Secretariat which analysed the development of the Fourth International in the last year and the present stage of the European class struggle.

During the conference four clear political positions developed. One minority stated that the main task of the IMG should be to build a

movement on the issue of Ireland around the three slogans of "Self Determination for Ireland", "Withdraw the troops Now", "Release all political prisoners". The central slogan should be for self determination. In addition movements should be built on the issue of Vietnam and abortion. As a central focus for our work we should urge workers to enter the constituency Labour Parties to campaign on the demand of "Labour to Power on a Socialist Programme". This position received 4 delegate votes for, 113 against and 9 abstentions.

The second minority position held that there should be four main axes of the IMG's work. These were round the issues of Ireland, Abortion, Vietnam and the building of a class struggle wing in the trade unions. In the building of these campaigns they held that the main aim should be mass mobilisations independently of the trade union and other reformist apparatuses. In our work on Ireland

IMG/SL Vietnam rally on Saturday night, 27 May.

our main emphasis should be on the slogan of the withdrawal of troops. The main reporter of this minority stated that the incorrect position of the majority was demonstrated most clearly by their inability to respond rapidly to the upsurge of fighting in Vietnam. This minority received 7 delegate votes for, 115 votes against and 4 abstentions (a summary of this minority's position was printed in *The Red Mole* no. 40).

A third minority position which emerged in the course of the conference, was that to accept the majority document would be disastrous for the organisation. This minority therefore urged that the majority position be not voted on. Some delegates declared they would vote for this resolution on the grounds of the need for a continuing discussion. This position received 27 votes for, 100 votes against and one abstention. Another position was put forward in the form of a resolution that while it rejected the view of this third minority and supported the general line of the majority, nevertheless some of the criticisms were valid and should be incorporated. This was defeated by a substantial majority.

The delegates then passed the general line of the majority perspectives document by 86 delegate votes for, 19 delegate votes against, 23 delegate abstentions. A summary of this perspectives document appeared in *The Red Mole* no. 39 and a resolution embodying its main points is printed below.

Following the voting on the main perspectives document position were then voted on concerning Ireland, students, Women, the question of United Front work and on work in the trade unions. The most important of these decisions involved:

1. The Conference was in favour in principle, now that the Anti-Internment League had changed its political positions, of the IMG urging the Irish Solidarity Campaign to enter a process of merger with the AIL and would propose this to the ISC.
2. The new organisation would continue to support the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Student Unions.
3. Amongst women we should continue to work through the Socialist Woman groups and our main work should be on the issue of equal pay/equal work.
4. We supported the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions conference on June 10th.
5. Our main theoretical task was an analysis of the Labour Party and the struggle against economism.
6. Our main organisational task was a strengthening and improvement of our publications.

It was noted in the main report that in the last year the forces of the Fourth International in Britain had approximately doubled, that the working class membership of the organisation had increased materially and that we had succeeded in establishing the beginnings of fractions in some industries and trade unions and had the potentiality to do so in some others. The conference finished by electing a National Committee of 21 full members and 14 alternate members.



Photo: Mike Newton

RESOLUTION

1. The main political effort of the organisation in the next year shall be popularisation of the ideas contained in part 6 of the perspectives document and in the document on the united front and trade union work. This resolves itself into three main organisational and political tasks which are conditioned by the political situation.

(a) To organise, using primarily the method of the united front, the struggles not only of the working-class but of all sections of the oppressed. In the present period this involves two fundamental axes. Firstly work in solidarity with the struggle of the Irish people against the forces of British imperialism. Secondly to organise united fronts and rank and file organisations in the trade unions. The political tasks corresponding to these are the struggle within the vanguard for a clear cut line on the subject of self-determination which involves a clear-cut defeatist position with regard to the armed struggle in Ireland, and the question of programmatic clarity on the subject of workers' control and the Labour Party.

(b) The task of the building of the organisation through individual recruitment and in particular of incorporating into the group those advanced workers with whom we have the closest contact. The most important instrument in this is our work on the subject of Ireland and its organisational prerequisite is a strengthening of the central apparatus and the paper of the organisation.

(c) The task of bringing about a re-alignment of forces within the revolutionary vanguard itself. This concretely boils down to the question of Leninism v Economism. The newspaper, publications, allocation of leadership etc. in the organisation shall

reflect these tasks.

These three tasks must be situated within the framework of breaking the most decisive sections of the working-class from social democracy. This will of necessity involve changes in style and content of the newspaper. Secondly the popularisation of our positions must be situated within a struggle to develop a transitional programme. In beginning to formulate such a programme the new leadership shall be guided by the theoretical principles that:

(a) There exists not transitional programmes for sectors but only one transitional programme for the whole of society.
 (b) The content of any transitional programme is the smashing of the capitalist state, lynch-pin of capitalist social relations, which in virtually all conditions is carried out through the propagation and victory of institutions of dual power. Such institutions must be the revolutionary political expression of the working-class, uniting the anti-capitalist struggles of all sections of the exploited or the oppressed and thus be capable of establishing and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat. The creation of institutions of dual power which smash the capitalist state-machine and production relations is thus the strategic pivot and substance of the transitional programme.

2. All our political work must be combined with a ruthless ideological struggle for the Leninist conception of the party. This struggle in Britain revolves around combatting the administrative conceptions of the party, traditional within the British "Trotskyist" movement and expressed by the IS, SLL etc. In this fight we must take up the following points:

(a) The building of the party takes as its starting point that it is only on the basis of intervention not merely in all layers of national society but also in the totality of international society that sufficient knowledge for the development of a revolutionary programme can be gained.

(b) The raising of the level of activity of the masses by the revolutionary party is carried out through the organisation of propaganda and agitation (i.e. through the medium of the presentation of ideas - "calls to action" on specific issues either simply flow logically from the content of this propaganda and agitation or fulfil an executive function).

(c) The consciousness of the already active masses among whom the revolutionary party works is not reducible to the ideas which they acknowledge. The consciousness of the masses is a question of all their relationships to their circumstances, the most important circumstance to which they relate being of course the social dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. It is only on this basis that it is possible to understand the uneven development of consciousness within the working-class, including such complex phenomena as Social Democracy and syndicalism.

(d) The task of breaking the working-class from social democratic politics is not a question of exposing the nature of the leadership of the Labour Party but of revealing the bankruptcy of the entire social democratic method of struggle.

(e) In the practical intervention of revolutionaries in the class struggle the "fundamental idea" on which our activity must be based is a concept of the epoch as one in which in a historical sense the bourgeoisie has no progressive role to play and in which capitalism, again in a historical sense, cannot even solve the immediate problems of the working-class. Without such an understanding we are helpless to deal with the Keynesian theories of labourism, the popular frontism of the CP, the gradualism of Labourism etc.

3. The above points define the main political priorities of the organisation but are of course by no means exhaustive. Clearly there will be many conjunctural events during the coming year to which we must be able to turn the forces and attention of the vanguard. In the past the organisation has frequently found it difficult to make sharp turns, particularly in relation to rapid changes in the international conjuncture, such as Vietnam and Bangla Desh. This must be corrected.

4. Our work in the sector of women shall be mediated via the SWGs based on the development of our Marxist analysis of and challenge to the special oppression of women in bourgeois society through the combination of oppression in work, family and in personality expression. This challenge includes combatting bourgeois ideology within the working class and revolutionary movement. The SWGs shall continue to give leadership to the best elements of radicalised women drawing them towards workers in struggle, especially women workers, and linking them to the revolutionary movement as a whole, through their activities and their journal which shall continue to be *Socialist Woman*. The central political campaign, for the current period shall be the equal pay/equal work campaign, and the progress of that campaign shall be assessed after a period of six months.

5. Our work among the mass of students in the coming period will essentially revolve around the question of building united fronts and in particular in relation to the LCDSU and an attempt to build this at the local level on the issue of student union autonomy..

6. The leadership shall arrange a written discussion on the question of governmental slogans.

7. The NC shall organise an internal discussion, including the preparation of documents, on the international questions facing the F.I. and call a conference in time for the election of delegates to the 10th World Congress.

LCDSU CONFERENCE

Delegates and observers representing over ninety colleges attended the 3rd national conference of the LCDSU. Lasting for two full days, the delegates debated the very fundamentals of the LCDSU, its political basis and perspectives as well as discussion on the numerous actual or impending struggles in the colleges.

The debate which took up most of the conference, was over the political basis of the LCDSU. The differing ideas on this question reappeared again and again in all the issues on the agenda. The debate was essentially between the International Socialists and the IMG. The main question, was whether the LCDSU should remain and develop itself as a united front on the basis of a platform which restricted itself to the specifics of the tactical line on the fight for autonomy and the technocratic reforms, or whether a much more comprehensive programme should be adopted which would relegate these questions to a minor place and include positions on the Labour Party, the Industrial Relations Act and many other questions. In the event, the substantial majority of the conference accepted the argument of the IMG, for a platform. The whole question of the United Front and the centrality of the political autonomy issue were argued out in the last issue of *The Red Mole*. The essentials of the argument were encapsulated in the theses printed here.

Organisational Perspectives

All the documents presented to the conference will be produced shortly together with relevant decisions in pamphlet form by the LCDSU. Hopefully those who were unable to attend the conference will thereby get the flavour of the debate and the precise political positions of those involved. It was also agreed to produce a regular bi-monthly newspaper—the first edition to appear the beginning of next term. But most importantly of all, it was decided really to strengthen the organisation of the LCDSU at local level. There will be an all out campaign as of now to get local Soc-Socs to affiliate to the LCDSU and, where these do not exist, to set up local LCDSU action committees. It was agreed that all these local supporters groups must be non-exclusive the only condition of membership being that of the platform accepted by national conference. At the same time, local supporters groups will be urged to effect all manner of tactical alliances, as conditions permit, for waging a common struggle amongst students on all the vital issues in the colleges and in society generally which are of concern. It is clear that the revamped Thatcher proposals and the continuing harassment of the college authorities will now have to face an organised and more effective opposition in the coming months. At the very least, this last conference has provided a political and organisational basis for the possibility of a real fight against the State to be realised.

The platform below—basis for members of the LCDSU—was adopted by conference.

I.R. Clynes

Anyone wanting a copy of this pamphlet should contact the LCDSU c/o Students Union, Northern Poly, Holloway Road, London N.1.

THEORETICAL PRACTICE: No. 6

Hindess: Lenin and the Agrarian Question;
Cutler and Taylor: Theory of Transition;
Ranciere: Concept of Critique:iii
35p from bookshops or 13 Grosvenor Avenue, London N.5.

RED CIRCLES

Weekly meetings to discuss revolutionary politics.

North London meets every Tuesday at 8.30 p.m. in the General Picton Pub, Caledonian Road, (near Kings Cross Station), N.1
Tues. 13 June: 'The Stoke Newington 8'

Notting Hill meets every Monday at 7.45 p.m. in the Britannia Pub meeting room, Clarendon Road (near Ladbroke Grove Tube). Buses 52, 7, 15.

Glasgow meets on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m. in the Iona Community Centre, 214 Clyde Street.

THESES

1. The objective basis for an organisation of the type of the L.C.D.S.U. can only be the existence of a movement among students centred on an issue "internal" to higher education, but also of central importance to the plans of the Bourgeoisie.
2. The I.M.G. has made an analysis which points to a change in the relations between the students (and staff) in higher education and the bourgeoisie, a change which places the students objectively and spontaneously in opposition to the bourgeoisie's central aims in higher education. This change is coming about through the bourgeoisie's drive for a 'technocratic reform' and 'rationalisation' and against the SU's, and individual students in so far as they present political obstacles to such changes.
3. In so far as such deep going rationalisation of higher education and emasculation of SU's is taking place, the objective potentiality for a mass movement of students exists on an 'internal' issue which is at the same time political in the Marxist sense; i.e. it concerns the basic arrangements by which the bourgeoisie exercise its domination over other social classes and layers.
4. It was the absence of such an issue in the past which made any unitary organisations of the left based on

students to fall inevitably into the dichotomy of either student reformism (RSA) or ultra-left sectarianism (RSSF).

5. The objective basis for the L.C.D.S.U. is therefore the fight against the capitalist rationalisation and against the attacks on student unions by the state, which can be taken up spontaneously by great masses of students. The political axis of the organisation must be to combat efforts to fight the rationalisation from a reactionary standpoint—the defence of the old position of students in higher education and of the old students union arrangements. Instead the LCDSU must organise the fight on these questions from a revolutionary standpoint, for a fight in the direction of the dictatorship of the proletariat.
6. The validity of the LCDSU for the mass of students is that it presents the only realistic strategy for combatting the capitalist rationalisations. The validity for revolutionaries is that it presents the most effective way of pulling over and organising a great mass of students to the side of the struggle for working class power.
7. The NUS conference and the experiences of various college struggles—especially those of the Polys—indicates that the LCDSU can become a mass force on this basis. In so far as it is successful, the organisations of the revolutionary left will be numerically swamped by forces who by no means accept the full program of revolutionary Marxism.

8. The basis for membership of the LCDSU should be acceptance of the basic tactical line of the organisation on the fight for autonomy and against the 'technocratic reform', and acceptance of the need to strategically link these struggles with the struggles of the working class and the anti-imperialist movements. It should not be conditional on acceptance on any particular line on, for example Ireland, or the struggle against the Industrial Relations Act. Any attempt to make the basis for membership acceptance of a full revolutionary programme would involve turning our backs on the objective potentialities present within the LCDSU.

9. All forces within the organisation should, of course, be free to agitate within it for their particular policies on all questions of the class struggle in Britain and internationally, and they should be able to try to achieve support from the LCDSU for their analysis and actions (as for example presently exists in the Irish question) but on no account should they be allowed to make acceptance of these a pre-condition for membership. To do so would be to try to turn the LCDSU into an RSSF type organisation which would have very limited potential and would involve abandoning in practice the duty of revolutionaries in the student field to organise the student masses on the side of the working class movement.

PLATFORM

The LCDSU is a rank and file grouping of socialists within the NUS which sees its task as fighting to transform the NUS into an organisation which can challenge the technocratic re-orientation in higher education and effectively intervene in the class struggle. We believe the only other alternative for the NUS is to be integrated into the State.

Political Autonomy: the very possibility of the independent political actions of students is under attack from the State. This is forced on the bourgeoisie because of their need to remove any organised opposition in all colleges before they can go ahead forthrightly with their plans for higher education. This is not therefore to be understood simply as the actions of a backward looking Tory Government but springing from the most fundamental needs of capitalism and is consequently a task for the State as a whole. Consequently the question of the political autonomy of students is the most acute problem facing students now and for the foreseeable future. This question is also one which has the most general reference to students and transcends to a large extent the binary transformation. The LCDSU therefore:

- (a) opposes all forms of political victimisation of staff and students in the colleges;
- (b) rejects totally any attempts by the courts to interfere with the political independence of students;
- (c) will fight for the removal of all restrictions on the political autonomy of student unions or any further attempts to impose such restrictions. No state accountability; no control of constitutions, finances, of buildings by college authorities or LEA's. None of these positions are negotiable.

Technocratic Reforms: The needs of British capitalism have dictated and will continue to dictate an expansion and rationalisation of higher education and a more close adaptation to the needs of British industry. The transformations in higher education therefore at once bolster the power of capital and weaken the position of students. Because of this:

- (a) the LCDSU is opposed to all attempts to get education on the cheap. It is opposed to any dete-

rioration in staff/student ratios, to any increase in the number of terms per year, to any restriction of choice of college to be attended, to any enforcement of a particular course of study.

(b) the LCDSU demands provision of adequate accommodation and maintenance grants tied to the cost of living and opposes absolutely any attempt to introduce loans.

(c) the LCDSU is opposed to the financing of any part of higher education by capitalist enterprises, all finance to be provided by the State. It is opposed to the direct tying of college courses and departments to any public or private enterprises within the capitalist system. No to the business college.

(d) it is opposed to the binary system or any other scheme which creates a hierarchy of qualifications within the higher education system. For this reason, it is opposed to the James proposals which create yet another division in the introduction of a two-year diploma.

Democracy and Participation: the idea that higher education can be progressively democratised rests on the premise that colleges are above the needs of social classes and that the content of education is neutral and universal. Education under capitalism is not provided for the free all round development of the potentialities of the working class. On the contrary, it exists at once to ensure reproduction of the exploitative relations of capitalism and to provide skilled manpower in all forms for capitalist industry.

Participation is therefore not a way of ensuring a say in these transformations and will not in any way alter the fundamental course of the state. Representation and participation are simply a tactic of the state to ensure collaboration of students with the aims of the bourgeoisie and we are therefore opposed to this.

The free university or anti-institution can only be understood as a tactic of struggle. Students are not the carriers of an alternative mode of production and cannot effect the transformation to socialism. In particular, there cannot be socialism in one college.

The LCDSU will however, struggle for the power of veto over any attempt to transform higher education. This is not to be understood primarily, if at all, in

institutional forms. It is the description of the sort of struggle needed to effect even temporarily the transformations which colleges undergo. It is an indication of the line of mass struggle directly counterposed to, on the one hand, representation, negotiation and pressure, and on the other hand, the utopian 'free' institution. While we reject participation in representation as an overall strategy, opposing to it the student veto, nonetheless in specific circumstances we may choose to participate in 'so-called' representative structures on a tactical basis.

Democracy in the NUS: In order that these policies can be fought for in the most effective way possible and that policies when adopted are implemented, the LCDSU campaigns for the following changes in the NUS structure:

- (a) a yearly election of all executive committee members and the right of immediate recall;
- (b) executive meetings to be open to all members of the union;
- (c) all negotiated agreements to be ratified by whole membership with simple majority deciding;
- (d) complete overhaul of constitution and procedure to simplify debating and decision making;
- (e) election by constituent organisations' Union general meetings of all delegates and observers to conference.

And in the structure of local unions:

- (a) that all executive officers and members are directly elected from Union general meetings;
- (b) that all executive officers and members be recallable to Union general meetings by a simple majority.

Student Worker Solidarity: the LCDSU recognises that the battle to defeat the aims of the bourgeoisie in higher education will not be decided simply inside colleges themselves—what is possible in the colleges will depend on the overall balance of forces in the class struggle. Moreover, not being carriers of an alternative mode of production, students are dependent on the actions of the working class to smash those relations of production which oppress them. Therefore the LCDSU pledges itself to support for the workers in struggle.

Solidarity with all Anti-Imperialist struggles: the LCDSU adopts a parallel position in relation to the international class struggle. It pledges support for all anti-imperialist struggles.

Flat to let—London £4.50p.w. inc. For the month of August. IMG member/sympathiser preferred. Write to Daniel Rose c/o Red Mole.

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RANK & FILE TEACHERS GROUP
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Contributors include Michael Duane, Chris Searle.
R & F 28 Manor Road, N.16.



INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP

(British Section of the Fourth International)

182, Pentonville Road, London N.1.

Please put me in touch with IMG militants in my area.

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IRELAND Next Period Decisive

The situation in Ireland today is in flux; a new political situation is crystallising, and the course of the struggle for a whole period is being decided.

The changes in the situation can only be understood coherently when placed within the framework of the general analysis presented in this paper over the last two years. The failure to achieve a military victory has now pushed to the fore a faction of the Tory party who believe that a political victory is possible. Whitelaw has been attempting to split the catholic community and paralyse the support for the IRA, and in the long term he hopes to integrate a decisive section of the catholics back into the Northern state. The local elections in October, fought on the basis of Proportional Representation, are meant to mark the end of this process, and a new step in the elimination of the factors of conflict within the North. But despite the panache with which Whitelaw has tackled his task, its success, far from being assured, very much hangs in the balance.

UNIONISM NOW

The effect of the imposition of direct rule was to recreate the old antagonism within Unionism i.e. the contradiction between the British connection and the Orange ascendancy; despite the fact that for most of the history of British imperialism in Ireland the two have been combined, and have buttressed each other, they are not the same thing (see *The Red Mole* 42). For the moment, however, those like Brian Faulkner who think the above elements are not incompatible have succeeded in papering over the cracks in the Unionist monolith; and by keeping a common front with Craig and the Vanguard, to pressurise for the restoration of some sort of "regional parliament" (i.e. a revamped Stormont), and for more aggressive action against the catholic minority, in particular getting some concessions out of Whitelaw.

Thus the release of internees will go on, but "important" internees will not be released except on health grounds, and future releases will be determined by the level of violence in the province, and any return to "normality" in the no-go areas. And while stressing his opposition to any "purely military solution" to the problem of Free Derry, Whitelaw carefully does not exclude this altogether. Such concessions, while showing Whitelaw's anxiety not to antagonise unnecessarily the Unionists, nevertheless fall absolutely within the terms of reference of his strategy.

PEACE AND FREE DERRY

The developments within the catholic minority will encourage Whitelaw to hold fast, and stick to his policy. The 'peace' movement in Derry in particular is a sign that he is having increasing success; unlike the Women Together farce in Andersonstown, the Derry women are a real factor in the situation, and they reflect a growing mood of war-weariness which is the inevitable result of the present situation. Within any capitalist state "liberated areas" very soon come up against their own limitations; the influence of bourgeois ideology, the uneven political development of the masses, the privations of life behind the barricades, and the seeming solidity of the enemy, all combine to fragment the masses. The long term maintenance of Free Derry can only be envisaged on two conditions, that the alternatives to resistance appear worse to the masses than the strain of continued defiance, or that the liberated area is used as the base for an assault against the state, and that the masses understand and support the political perspectives involved in this. The lack of such a perspective, and the switch in strategy by British imperialism, militate against the long term maintenance of the free area.

As the choice before the minority becomes more clear those elements who had stayed behind the barricades only because their political existence depended on not being left too far behind by the masses, crawl out from under their stones. The middle class represented by assorted lumpen clergy, petty proprietors writ large, and the spineless career-boys of the SDLP, willing to sell out the long term tasks of history for transient promises, are scurrying to offer their services in the cause of reconciling the catholic minority to the bright new Whitelaw administration.

THE UNFREE STATE

In the 26 Counties the victory of the pro-EEC forces in the referendum has encouraged Jack Lynch to act more decisively against the Republicans. The setting up of kangaroo courts, and the opening of the Curragh prison camp, the arrests of Republican leaders, including Ruairi and Sean O Bradaigh and Joe Cahill, are all determined by the new confidence felt by Lynch after the failure of the upsurge following the Derry massacre to consolidate into an ongoing mass movement. There are hints also of more important developments; an historic political weakness of the 26 county bourgeoisie has been its inability to exorcise the ghosts of the Civil War and the Treaty. The joint campaign by Fianna Fail and Fine

Gael for a "yes" vote in the referendum has been followed by gestures across the divide of history, one such is the announcement by Lynch that for the first time under a Fianna Fail administration the Free State Army will participate in the annual commemoration for Michael Collins, former commander of the Army of the Irish Republic, and signatory of the 1922 treaty, killed during the Civil War. The two main parties of reaction in Ireland, who had relied on evoking the divisions of the past to keep their grip on the Irish people, now begin to abandon their mythology, and openly link arms to hold the line against the Irish revolution.

THE OFFICIALS

Already one section of the resistance forces, the Official Republican Army, has yielded to the pressure and announced a cease fire. While this has been influenced by the effects of the "peace" movement, it is related also to the politics of the Officials. Since an adequate assessment of this could only be made in a more extended analysis we will leave it aside for the present.

THE FORCES AGAINST WHITELAW

But the forces for giving up the struggle are by no means as powerful and unchallenged as the British press would present them. The struggles of the last three years have created a formidable spirit of struggle within the catholic community, and this can not be dispelled in a few months.

The statements by the British Army that the bomb in Anderson Street in the Short Strand was the responsibility of the IRA can only reduce the British Government's credibility amongst the catholics, for it is common knowledge that it was planted by masked men in two cars, who left one car with the bomb, and drove off in the other. Whitelaw wants to embargo publicity because of the very real danger of a protestant backlash, which is not posed so much by the mass para-military parades of the Vanguard (which are mainly for the purpose of political pressure), but more by the scattered groups of Orange fanatics who could spark off a more general confrontation. This danger strengthens support for the IRA in the ghettos, as was seen in the massive demonstration in Derry to challenge the SDLP "peace" rally.

The unanimity of the middle class forces for "peace" to a large extent stems from pressure from Whitelaw, anxious to show results for his policy, there is a strong possibility that by pushing ahead too fast they could isolate themselves from the ghettos.

Whitelaw has exerted this pressure because of the strict time limits on his policy. Before he can get to the elections in October he has to pass the marching season which opens up in July. He hopes to have got a sufficient grip on the situation, and sufficient impetus for his policies to get him through this period. But again this can only be logically posed if he succeeds in getting the barricades down in

Derry, and has pulled an important section of the minority back into the system.

THE PRISONERS

In facing this new situation the forces of the Irish revolution should avoid allowing the term of reference to be dictated by the murderers of Derry, who would like nothing better than to pin the label of war on the Republicans, while covering themselves with the flag of peace. Whitelaw has not won the war, and new fronts can be opened by the forces of resistance. The riot of the political prisoners in Mountjoy prison, Dublin, could have been the focus of a mass campaign on an all Ireland basis, it is not too late to turn the tide.

The silence of the British press on the case of Billy McKee shows how vulnerable they feel. McKee has been on hunger strike in Belfast Prison for over two weeks, and is approaching the point of death, yet his case has received barely any news coverage in Britain, and a restricted amount in Ireland. He has now been joined by other Provisional prisoners, demanding political status. Whitelaw could save the lives of these men with the stroke of a pen, but he is not willing to risk alienating the Vanguard extremists. The blanket on press coverage cannot hide the reality of sectarianism in the North under Whitelaw's glittering facade.

IN BRITAIN

Now more than ever the solidarity movements in Britain must be built. Our support for the struggle was never based on an emotional response to particular acts of brutality, and we oppose as bitterly an Ireland in which the wealth is divided amongst the gombeenmen of Dublin, the self-styled Captains and Majors of Belfast, and the monopolists of London and Brussels, as we oppose an Ireland divided by a false border and the sectarianism imposed by the oppressors of the past. The next two months will be decisive and it is necessary to resist the impression which will gain ground on the British left, that the Irish question is solved. Whitelaw can do no more than create the basis for an imperialist solution to the Irish question, new struggles and crises lie ahead. The Irish people still face the decisive battles, either they will defeat British imperialism, or they will suffer a catastrophic defeat themselves, which will enable British imperialism to decide the fate of Ireland—a fate which will mean emigration, exploitation and the elimination of the last trace of Irish nationhood.

In this work, greater unity amongst all forces fighting to support the Irish struggle is vital, and the fact that the Anti-Internment League has taken up a suggestion from the Irish Solidarity Campaign to have a campaign in defence of Free Derry over the summer months is an indication of the growing unity in action. A special effort must be put into the Slough AIL demo on June 24th which will open up this campaign.

Bob Purdie
Gery Lawless

KENT STUDENTS OCCUPY

Students at the University of Kent at Canterbury moved into occupation of the main teaching block on Tuesday, 30 May, after a motion calling for a sit-in had been overwhelmingly passed by an extraordinary general meeting of the students union.

The occupation marks the latest stage in a campaign which began six weeks ago when the University issued a report entailing a proposed 189 redundancies (partial and complete) and price increases of 10 per cent on residence and food charges. After the appearance of the report, which had been compiled by a working party consisting of the four College Masters and a number of bursars and administrators, little time was lost in organising a mass meeting of workers, academics and students at which an action committee to fight the report was established.

However, this action committee initially failed to give the required leadership to the struggle, mainly because of timid trade union leadership (the unions involved being NUPE and the GMWU) and the lack of an overall strategy. This changed as IMG militants and sympathisers fought inside the action committee for a clear strategy and a determined campaign based on the theme of a worker-student veto over the decisions of the university authorities and furthermore pointing out the nature and purpose of the State's attack (cutting down on unit costs in higher education etc.).

The sit-in is not seen as an end in itself but as

a tactic by which to revive the campaign against redundancies and to act as a focus for actions such as boycotts, walk-outs by staff, etc. It has won immediate support from the workers involved, as the following resolution passed by the NUPE and GMWU branch meetings on 1 June shows.

"The Kent University branches of the NUPE and GMWU express their appreciation of the action taken by the students against the catering report, support the occupation, and will provide food for students and staff while catering services are closed. The branches instruct their stewards in co-operation with the students to negotiate with the University authorities for the re-opening of catering services, to be preceded by a Union meeting for all members of college staff at 10 a.m. on the day of re-opening. The branches re-affirm that proposals for cuts in working hours and redundancies are totally unacceptable".

If the occupation is to be successful, however, it needs national support. There will be a national demonstration on the University campus on Monday, 12 June, at 4 p.m., and they are also appealing for messages of support and donations to finance and maintain the occupation. These should be sent to Dave Jones, c/o Students Union office, University of Kent, Canterbury.

NO REDUNDANCIES!
NO JOB LOSS!
NO PRICE INCREASES!
FOR A WORKER-STUDENT VETO!

VIETNAM DEMO

Some 5000 people demonstrated their solidarity with the Indochinese revolution in London last Sunday, 4th June. This was the first nationally organised response to the recent dramatic turn in the struggle in Vietnam and all the major organisations on the left supported the demonstration. However, the majority of speakers on the platform consisted

of a motley collection of bishops, left M.P.s and other riff raff all in one way or another calling for Peace. But as Pat Jordan, put it: "There are many kinds of peace. There is the peace of the graveyard, and the peace of surrender. But the only peace we can support is the peace through the victory of the N.L.F."

