

Red Weekly

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FRENCH POLICE EVICT WORKERS



Part of joint French-Swiss demonstration in solidarity with Lip workers in June

A massive working class upsurge in France seems certain after the seizure of the occupied Lip watch factory in the town of Besancon by 3,000 armed riot police on Tuesday.

Within hours of the dawn eviction, 5,000 people had gathered outside the factory in a spontaneous demonstration of solidarity. The town was almost paralysed, with railway, post office, local government and social security workers coming out on strike together with workers from the major factories of Kelton, Rhone-Poulenc and Rhodiacta.

Nationally, journalists at France's major news agency, Agence France Presse, blacked all news not concerning Lip for two hours in a gesture of solidarity. Railwaymen's leaders called

the enormous popular response to it, which most worried the French ruling class. As the Paris Chamber of Commerce solemnly put it: 'Lip is the most disturbing social conflict ... because the continued operation of the factory, after a robbery in essence of the shareholders, calls into question the principles of authority, of property, of responsibility, of respect for contracts ... which are at the very base of our economic system and of our commercial laws.'

By JOHN MARSTON

a one-hour token stoppage for Thursday. But no immediate plan of action had come from the two main trade union federations as we went to press, although a mass rally of support in Paris was planned for Thursday and widespread stoppages of work were expected then.

NO REDUNDANCIES!

The dispute at Lip began almost four months ago when management announced that redundancies were planned. Two months ago, secret documents were seized which revealed not only the large scale of the redundancies but also provided evidence of systematic spying by police and company security men on leading militants in the factory. It was in response to this and a subsequent police attack on the factory that the occupation began on 13 June.

Since then the 'Lip affair' has become a focus of political activity in France. Once in control of the factory, a mass meeting decided, to the bosses' dismay, to restart production and sell the watches in order to finance the struggle. Moreover, the workers did this while rejecting the illusion that they could find a long-term solution by running the company as a co-operative for the capitalist market.

Instead, they turned the factory into a centre for mass agitation and propaganda against capitalism and in defence of their jobs. Their manifesto stated: 'The Lip workers have shown that the bosses are not indispensable, and that the workers are capable of organising themselves, on their own, even in the economic sphere (production and exchange of goods). It is not only the management of Lip that has been challenged, but the whole employing class.'

'DISTURBING CONFLICT'

It was this aspect of the struggle, and

Moreover, other workers facing redundancies were beginning to learn the lessons of the struggle. In the last few weeks, work-ins have started in such diverse concerns as a shoe manufacturing firm in the town of Romans and a haymaking co-operative in Quimper, Brittany.

TEST OF STRENGTH

It was in this situation that the Government sent the police in. 'The Government wants to alter the relationship of forces in order to force us to the negotiating table,' the workers' leader Charles Piaget told a mass meeting. In the short term it has obviously failed. But the only guarantee that it will not succeed in the long term, by depriving the strikers of their organising base, is to spread the struggle now.

By sending the police in, the Government has made the issue a major test of strength between itself and the working class. Only by mobilising important sections of the working class can its challenge be rolled back. However previous indications are that the official trade union leaderships will be reluctant to go beyond verbal and token support: the Communist Party-led CGT union federation earlier refused to sign a Lip manifesto which called on workers to 'take the initiatives necessary to enlarge the breach made in the system that imprisons us.'

However, a major strike movement is on the cards whether or not the official leaderships take an active part in organising it. This would provoke a major political crisis, whose repercussions would be felt not only in France but throughout Europe, including Britain. We must prepare now to take support action as the situation develops.

LITTLEJOHN - TORY PLOT EXPOSED

The Littlejohn affair, or as it is beginning to be called, the Littlegate affair, refuses to die down.

This week we have had the admission that Kenneth Littlejohn worked for MI6; a statement from the Prisoners Aid Committee of Clann na h Eireann indicating a series of links between the Littlejohns and the Aldershot bombings; and the report that one of the guns used in the bank robbery for which the Littlejohns were convicted, was a British Ministry of Defence issue. The same gun is alleged to have been used to kill David Seaman, a deserter from the Special Air Service regiment, found shot dead on the Irish border in February 1972.

The employment of the Littlejohns by British Intelligence coincided with the high point of the offensive against British imperialism in Ireland — the combined thrust of the IRA military campaign and the mass civil resistance in late 1971 and early 1972. This presented a major obstacle to Britain's long term solution

to its 'Irish problem'. The British strategy for de-fusing this struggle required the cooperation of the 26 County government. In particular, its help was needed to clamp down on the political and organisational base of the Republicans in the South.

The concessions made under White-law to the Catholics in the North had some success in winning Southern sympathy away from the IRA. But this was not sufficient. Hostility to the Republicans had to be whipped up if the Lynch government was to introduce the necessary repressive legislation.

In September 1972, two police stations were petrol-bombed in the 26 Counties. Both wings of the IRA denied responsibility, but the Minister of Justice demanded tougher legislation against 'the trouble-makers'. The Littlejohns later admitted responsibility (*Hibernia*, 4 August). After their raid on a bank in Dublin the following month, the acceptance of repressive legislation was a foregone conclusion.

The speedy passage of the Offences Against the State (Amendment) Act through the Dail (Irish Parliament) on 1 December 1972 was finally assured when the parliamentary opposition to the Bill crumbled under the impact of two car bombs which exploded in Dublin killing two workers.

Under this Act anyone can be jailed on the word of a police officer that he or she is a member of the IRA. Even Lynch has admitted now that the timing of the car bombs was remarkably suspicious. Since then, the Republicans have been politically isolated in the South, and the repression has been stepped up accordingly.

In Britain, workers have remained passive or openly hostile to the Republicans. The latest revelations, however, are an opportunity to change this situation, and by exposing the real role of British imperialism in Ireland, step up the campaign for an end to the British presence.

Niall Nolan

I.M.G. PUBLIC MEETING

The Invasion of Czechoslovakia — Five years later

Speakers: Robin Blackburn
Ivan Hartelt
Steve Lynch (G&MWU, personal capacity)

FIRST SHOWING OF A FILM OF THE INVASION

Friday, 24 August, at 7.30 p.m. in the New Ambassadors Hotel, Upper Woburn Place (5 minutes from Euston Station).

FIGHTING FUND BEATS TARGET

An unexpected, last minute flood of contributions enabled the Red Weekly Fighting Fund to reach and pass its July quota—total contributions for the month were £310! We would like to congratulate all our readers and supporters for this great achievement. With this kind of backing, Red Weekly can feel secure and begin to look to the future and ways of improving and expanding its coverage of the crucial events in the class struggle around the world.

But this is not a time for self-congratulation. Our summer break has meant that Fighting Fund contributions have been slow in coming in. Half way through the month we still have only £40. A big drive will be necessary over the next two weeks to meet this month's target. Let's see if we can top the July figure.

BLACK WORKERS FIGHT BACK

1 British Celanese

The big firm of Courtauld's recently ran into a few problems over the treatment of its black workers in South Africa. But a dispute in one of its Nottingham factories would suggest that it does not treat its black workers here much better.

The dispute has arisen in the Plastics section of British Celanese, Spondon, where black workers are in a large majority. Working conditions here are very bad, mainly due to the fumes from the Bipel line. But under the 'leadership' of the senior steward, a white leading hand inspector, dirt money was stopped for process workers — although fitters, who work on the jobs concerned for a matter of minutes, still retain this money.

There is also a special bonus scheme in this department. Other departments have group bonus schemes that can bring up to 22p more an hour, but in the Plastics section, the bonus is worked out individually and carries a maximum of 12p an hour. Although it is called a productivity bonus, the key criterion is 'co-operation with the foreman'. This means that white workers are on a high bonus, black

workers a bit lower, and the black militants are right at the bottom.

Because of the bad conditions in this department, workers often apply for transfer to other sections. But black workers have found this almost impossible — even when they have picked up chest ailments from the fumes and have medical notes stating that they cannot continue to work under these conditions.

In this situation, the black workers decided to fight. A few weeks ago, four black shop stewards were elected, including Ajit Singh, a member of the Black Workers Action Committee. As a first step, Ajit Singh won the right for the men to wash before they clocked off. A factory inspector was also brought in, and Courtauld's were told to instal safety measures, including proper ventilation, at a cost of £9,000.

Pressure was also brought on the T&G convenor, Crowther, and the district official, Reg Harris, to get something done. Dissatisfaction reached such a pitch that leaflets attacking the role of Reg Harris were given out at the T&G conference, signed by two of the stewards, Ajit Singh and Larry Williams.

Shortly after this, three white workers began to circulate a petition after a meeting with the convenor and the district official. It called for the removal of Williams and Singh as 'members of a Black Power organisation' and 'racists', and was circulated during working hours while members of management looked on. Four workers were even taken to the management

Adams, was selected for training as a setter. When, last month, a vacancy for a further setter arose, the ETU members refused to train Adams any longer. ETU members are reported to have said that there were 'too many coloured machine setters in the machine shop' (there was one).

The management claim that they are innocent victims of an inter-union dispute. Yet they immediately sided with the setters, offering Adams a post as an unskilled operator. This was when the black night shift walked out. When they returned to work two weeks ago, management suspended Adams altogether, and this resulted in the night shift coming out on strike again, joined this time by the day shift.

Some Asian workers, living in fear of intimidation following the latest racist attacks by the Government, are crossing the picket line.

They do so in shame. On the other hand, the majority of the white workers in the factory are crossing the line without any regrets, urged on by white shop stewards. Some of these are in the AUEW, which has made the strike official. The racist alliance has borne its fruits. Even elementary union solidarity is violated by the white workers.

This reveals the bankruptcy of official union policy on racism in the unions. The AUEW, like most unions, is officially opposed to racism, but in practice turns a blind eye to it among its own ranks.

All members of the AUEW and the EPTU must now demand that their fellow members at STC support the present struggle, and that any steward who continues to cross the picket line should have his credentials

office and pressurised to sign. But of the 160 workers in the Plastics section only 14 did so.

Reg Harris then intervened to say that he had received complaints and was ordering new elections. But there is no doubt that Williams and Singh will be re-elected. As Ajit Singh told me: 'I stand for a principle I hold dear — the unity of the working class. But it is time to get up and say now in this country this unity is far from real, that as far as black workers are concerned they are at the bottom of the pile. I support black political organisations as a way of building genuine working class unity. When I won the demands for washing and ventilation, they were won for both black and white workers.'

Management has pulled every trick in the book. Attempts have been made to set Pakistanis against Indians, and West Indians against Asians. Black workers applying for jobs have been asked for their passports — 'we want to know if you're legal'. An overtime ban was called after management ratted on an agreement with Singh to give advance notice of overtime.

It is clearly only a matter of time before there is a head-on clash between the workers and management. As Beanie Bunsee, of the National Committee for Trade Unions Against Racism (set up from the Birmingham conference), points out: 'What we are seeing in British Celanese is a real challenge to racism in industry. We could see another victory as important as that at Mansfield Hosiery Mills.' A.Jenkins

2 Standard Telephones

Black machine operators at the Standard Telephone Company in Southgate, London, are still on strike in pursuit of a demand that the management force the skilled machine setters to train a black machine operator as a setter.

STC, which is owned by the giant American firm ITT, is a company where a section of white workers have formed an alliance with the management against their black fellow workers. Half of the 2,000 workers are black, yet only one is employed as a skilled setter. The black workers, employed as machine operators, have fought a long battle against this racist alliance.

When in 1969, for example, a black operator was elected as a shop steward, most of the white setters left the AUEW and joined the ETU in protest. In 1970, the management wished to train another setter. The operators recommended a black, and the ETU members a white worker. The management selected the white ETU member, who had only been at the factory for six months. After strikes and go-slows, a black setter was finally appointed in 1971. At this point the setters demanded a training bonus of £1.50 a week, even though they had been training white setters for years.

In late 1972 another black operator, Roderick



STC shop stewards Roy Stennett (left) and Abel Lewis at press conference last week.

removed. All workers should declare their opposition to racism by attending a mass picket of the plant or taking other solidarity actions, and workers in other STC plants should immediately set an example along these lines. The black workers of STC should not be left in the position where all they can do is to strike against a racist management in an effort to force it to discipline equally racist workers. Dave Bailey

Vicious law new threat

On 25 July Parliament passed one of the most viciously racist laws the Tory government has dared to cook up so far — the Pakistan Act.

This step came just three days after a mass demonstration in London against the House of Lords ruling that the deportation provisions of the 1971 Immigration Act could be enforced 'retrospectively'.

Once more we see the arrogance with which the Government treats the rights of black people in this country. They feel free to act in this way because of the failure of the labour movement to solidarise with blacks and immigrants in the past and oppose previous racist laws passed by both Labour and Tory Governments.

The Pakistan Act, using as a pretext Pakistan's withdrawal from the 'Commonwealth', will classify all Pakistanis who have not taken out

British citizenship (which they can only do after 5 years residence in Britain) as 'aliens', effective September 1st.

A number of the worst effects of this decision are suspended by the Act for 12 months, but in 1974 the Pakistani community will feel the full force of Britain's racist laws: they will lose the right to vote, the right to stand for election as MP's, and the right to work in the Civil Service.

Preparations are already being made for a purge of Pakistanis from the Civil Service on Sept. 1, 1974, if they have not already been eased out before then.

One nasty little law which applies to the Pakistani community immediately, is section 3 of the Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act which, among other things, states:

'If an alien promotes or attempts to promote

industrial unrest in any industry in which he has not been bona fide engaged for at least two years immediately preceding in the United Kingdom he shall be liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months.'

In other words, in less than two weeks time many Pakistani workers will find themselves without the right to strike, or even complain about their work conditions.

This is a challenge which the trade union movement must not let go by unanswered. The Civil Services unions must pledge themselves to resist tooth-and-nail any attempt to dismiss Pakistanis as 'aliens'. A campaign should be mounted immediately throughout the unions to make it clear to the Government that an attempt to use section 3 of the Aliens Act against any group of workers will be met with mass industrial action. The working class movement must commit itself to fighting for an end to all racist laws — the Pakistan Act, the Aliens Acts, and the Immigration Act.

Brian Slocock

CURRENT ACCOUNT

The Great Inflation

Every day the massive inflation, now universal throughout the capitalist world, gathers speed. A recent report of the OECD (the organisation of the 17 most important capitalist countries) holds out no hope whatever that the present rate of inflation can be reduced in the foreseeable future.

Over the last six months prices in the OECD countries have risen on average by 8 per cent; this is twice the rate of a year ago. In some countries the figure is already much higher (Japan 19 per cent and Italy 15 per cent); and in all of them it is still rising relentlessly.

Inflation has been endemic since 1950; but the present inflation has a different character. It has become completely unstoppable by the ordinary braking mechanisms of monetary and fiscal adjustments.

INTEREST RATES

Its most obvious effects, of course, are the relentless erosion of the wages and pensions of the working class. But there are hidden effects of equal importance connected with the rate of interest. Even though monetary rates of interest have also been soaring upwards, they are now in many places lower than the rate of inflation. The real value of monetary assets therefore is being constantly destroyed, and a massive redistribution of incomes and assets is taking place from creditors (those who own monetary assets like bonds and savings deposits) to debtors.

It becomes more and more rational to borrow money in order to finance the purchase of commodities, since the real value of debts is constantly falling. This is one of the forces behind the colossal speculation in commodities now going on, which is pushing up raw material prices so rapidly. At the same time firms have an incentive to borrow in order to finance investment in producing commodities. The ratio of debts to equity shares in their liabilities (their 'gearing ratio') consequently rises. In these ways inflation produces a tremendous centralisation of capital away from small scale savers (above all the petty bourgeoisie) to big capital, which in turn is encouraged to become increasingly speculative.

Once these reactions are established the ending of inflation becomes increasingly problematic. Growing sections of the capitalist class obtain a vested interest in the continuation of inflation; many of them would be ruined if the inflation ended, since the necessary fall in the real value of their debts would not take place. This places them in conflict with the small bourgeoisie, desperate to end inflation so as to protect its savings.

CONTROLLING WAGES

Increasingly, therefore, the large and small sections of the capitalist class can unite only on one basis — ending inflation through a decisive defeat of the working class by cutting its real wages. As long as the labour movement refuses voluntarily to disarm itself, and keeps up its struggle to protect living standards by fighting for higher wages, the capitalist class is driven to secure its objectives through a decisive political defeat of the workers.

This is why the major capitalist countries have abandoned the traditional means of controlling inflation and are driven increasingly to find methods of controlling wages directly. But wages policies are only a beginning of what will be needed for the capitalists to protect themselves against the sudden crash which is becoming the increasingly inevitable end to hurtling inflation. For this reason the faster the rise in prices, and the deeper the economic crisis which this reflects, the faster grows the danger of fascism and the need for revolution.

A lot lies behind the delusively bland words of the OECD report: 'high inflation rates (probably even when they are not accelerating) entail distortions of income and wealth patterns which are not only unfair, but produce continual social strains of a type that OECD countries are ill-equipped to counter'.

Michael Price

Internees' Wives Lead London Demo

'The British Army must go home; parlez vous. We've got an army of our own! Inky pinky, parlez vous.'

So sang a contingent of Belfast women, who brought the militancy of Andersonstown and

Bogside to the streets of London last Sunday. They had travelled to London to take part in a demonstration to mark the second anniversary of internment, and to hand in a highly disrespectful letter to 10 Downing Street on behalf of the Political Hostages Relatives Committee. The demonstration was the largest and most

militant since the Bloody Sunday Commemoration in January. 2,500 marchers poured through the streets of London challenging the illusion that the struggle in Ireland is over.

The largest contingents came from Sinn Fein (Provisional), Clann na hEireann, and the IMG, but there were other banners from the Anti-

Internment League, the Northern Minority Defence Association, the Belfast Ten Defence Committee, Peoples Democracy, IS and the London District Committee of the Communist Party. At a rally at the Temple, where the main speaker was Maire Drumm, the Vice-President of the Provisional Sinn Fein, £350 was collected for the internees and their dependants.

Over 20 different organisations affiliated to the Anti-Internment Ad Hoc Committee, and co-operated in organising and publicising the march. This helped in drawing into the demonstration a broader range of organisations than has been seen on an Irish demonstration in London for a long time. In particular, the fact that the CPGB supported the march, albeit with a small contingent, was a hopeful sign.

However, neither the response from the CP nor from IS can be allowed to pass without comment. These organisations are capable of turning out hundreds of their members on such 'fashionable' issues as Mozambique; to mobilise approximately thirty members each for a demonstration concerned with British repression in Ireland displays a very distorted set of political priorities. Once again we have evidence that these so-called 'revolutionary' organisations are so steeped in British insularity that they can be swayed by the propaganda of the British press into believing that the struggle in Ireland is no longer an issue of central importance.

Indeed another factor which led to the success of the demo proves the opposite. There has been a resurgence of the civil resistance struggle in the North of Ireland in the past month. It was the rioting in Belfast, sparked off by the Farrell and Canavan case, and the promise of bigger riots to come, that forced Whitelaw to release the two PD comrades and others besides. It was the impact of the militancy displayed in the Six Counties which brought out large numbers of Irish people in London last Sunday.

However, a large demonstration in London with an Irish face on it is not sufficient. Experience has shown that such demonstrations can only have a limited impact on the bigger battalions of the British labour movement. The success of the next major mobilisation can only be measured in the size of the participation from British organisations. The resurgence in the North is only a foretaste of what will happen when the Assembly displays its monumental futility. The opening of a new crisis of British policy will be accompanied by a new interest in the demand for the withdrawal of the troops. If the British left is to seize this opportunity to bring real weight to bear against British imperialism in Ireland, the time to take up the Irish issue is now.

Coventry . . .

Over 600 people turned out for a march through Coventry on Sunday, 12 August, organised by the Coventry Prisoners Defence Committee. The march, to mark the second anniversary of internment and to keep up the pressure of the campaign to free the Coventry 7, was the largest activity ever organised in Coventry on the Irish issue.

The march was followed by a rally at which the main speakers were Michael Gallagher (Sinn Fein) and Gery Lawless (IMG). Representatives of the Blackburn 3 Defence Committee, Coventry 7 Defence Committee, IS and WF also spoke. Gery Lawless finished by stressing the need to continue the struggle, and outlined the possibilities for developing a movement to get the troops out of Ireland. Over £100 was collected for the activities of the Defence Committee.

The next main priority for the Coventry Defence Committee will be to convene a national meeting of all the Defence Committees in the country to co-ordinate tactics for the opening of the trials of the various Irish militants.

Colchester . . .

Supporters of the Anti-Internment League leafleted the Colchester Tattoo from 1-4 August in an attempt to expose the reality behind the tattoo spectacle: a reality of army repression in Ireland, of troop demoralisation, and a growing feeling in this country that the troops should be withdrawn.

Colchester is one of the major garrison towns from which troops are sent to Ireland, and in the past few months Army wives have twice attempted to launch a national petition for the withdrawal of the troops. The leafletters met with a reasonably sympathetic response from army families, while that from the crowd was mixed.

As for the troops, reaction ranged from the aggressive to the defensive to the openly sympathetic. Particularly encouraging was the response of many of the bandsmen, some of whom took piles of leaflets and were distributing them amongst the crowds and other soldiers. It is amongst those dragged into the war in an attempt to boost the Army's strength and presence that the real disillusionment is setting in.



Above: Bandsmen discuss with leafletter at Colchester. Below left: Supporters picket Blackburn 3 hearing, 25 July.



Blackburn . . .

A big defence campaign is under way for three Irish militants arrested on 23 May. A picket was mounted outside the Blackburn magistrates' court on 25 July when Sean Colley, Patrick McCabe, and Michael Kneafsey were committed for trial at Preston Crown Court on charges that 'on days unknown between 1 January and 22 May they conspired with others unknown to damage and destroy buildings unknown contrary to common law'. Bail has been refused.

These proceedings come after the dropping of earlier charges against Irishmen in Manchester and Liverpool. It is clear that the police intend to make charges against the Blackburn 3 stick. Michael Kneafsey has also now been charged with being the Intelligence Officer of the Lancashire unit of the IRA, and it is clear that as in the Coventry case the men are to be presented to the jury as well-organised terrorists.

The Blackburn Defence Committee has already issued two bulletins and is attempting to gain support from local militants. Further details from: 22 Richmond Crescent, Intack, Blackburn, Lancs.

Forward to Working Class Action!

On Saturday, 4 August, a meeting was held outside the Dublin GPO in support of Michael Farrell and Tony Canavan, the People's Democracy militants then on hunger strike in Crumlin Road jail. Speakers included representatives from Sinn Fein (Provisional), People's Democracy, and the Revolutionary Marxist Group (Irish supporters of the Fourth International). We reprint the speech of the latter below.

I welcome this opportunity to express, on behalf of the Revolutionary Marxist Group, our wholehearted solidarity with Michael Farrell and Tony Canavan. These two comrades are socialist revolutionaries who have played an active role in the struggle against British imperialism and the Orange State.

As a result of their principled stand for political status, they are now engaged in the highest form of non-violent protest - the hunger strike. We add our voice unreservedly to the demand for political status of these two prisoners of an increasingly desperate imperialism. And at the same time we call once more for the release of all the political hostages being held in Concentration Camps in both North and South.

I say that British imperialism is increasingly desperate, and if we look at the political developments over the last few years we can see why. The O'Neill era was followed by the intervention of the British Army; the so-called reforms of Chichester-Clark were followed by internment, and then by the dissolution of Stormont. We've had a Green Paper, and we've had a White Paper. We've had the local elections and we've had the Assembly elections. And now the Assembly itself. The balance of forces in the Assembly makes it impossible for Whitelaw to outmanoeuvre the Loyalists. The Assembly is a laughing stock. It's a monkey house with no shortage of outs.

PREPARE DEFENCES

The only hope for the Whitelaw regime to stabilise the situation is if it can take on and smash the anti-Unionist working class. Though we can, in a sense,

celebrate the fact that the British strategy is in ruins; in another sense, we must be fearful. Fear can be useful: it makes us prepare our defences. And that is exactly what we must do.

This nation has experienced 800 years of imperialist aggression. So, you may say, we are hardened to resistance. But the coming period will see a kind of repression that will match anything that has gone before. The anti-Unionist working class - which has been bated, passed, shot at, tortured and oppressed by Parabrutality; which has been widged and diplocked, interned and harassed; which has seen its men, women and children lifted and beaten up - the anti-Unionist working class will be faced with a new campaign of vicious attacks designed specifically to drive them into submission.

Last week we saw just how keen the British Army are to get at the Falls. The People's Democracy meeting in support of Farrell and Canavan was barely over when troops moved out from behind their Saracens, and brought out the rubber bullets and the water cannon. This was a clear attempt to dominate the Lower Falls militarily. Perhaps they hoped to draw out the Provisional IRA. Anyway they did not succeed. But above all this was a rehearsal. The British Army is flexing its muscles. Perhaps they are jealous of their fellow imperialist murderers in the Portuguese Army in Mozambique.

ARMY DEMORALISATION

The political setbacks for British imperialism are beginning to be added to by a serious demoralisation in the British Army. We should not think that there's going to be a sudden rush of deserters; we should not overestimate this demoralisation. But it is certainly

there, and it will grow. Added to this, more and more of the British people are beginning to question the role of the Army in the North. In spite of the black propaganda machine, these doubts are growing.

Amongst the soldiers, morale has been hit by their failure to defeat the armed resistance of the IRA. Their officers every so often announce that the IRA is finished, but within a few days there are some very red faces around the barracks. More recently the soldiers have been told that they are going to cut the ground from under the feet of the IRA; that they are going to win over the Catholic population away from support for the freedom struggle. Some of the soldiers will realise that they've heard it all before, and they will be wondering whether this tactic will succeed.

Well, last week they got an idea of the answer - and that answer was the large and disciplined march which clearly demonstrated the defiance and the will to struggle of the anti-Unionist working class. It is in the face of mass action and mass mobilisation that imperialism falters. The politicians of the sell-out, the careerists, and the opportunists are swept aside by the tide of mass action.

COALITION GOVERNMENT

The anti-Unionist, anti-imperialist working class can no more rely on the SDLP than the working class of the 26 Counties can rely on the Coalition Government. Fine Gael and Labour are united in their policy of selling Ireland to international capitalism, and keeping it under the domination of British imperialism.

British strategy cannot be implemented without the help of the 26 County government. And so we have Cosgrave running over to his master in London every so often to get fresh instructions. He stands on the steps of No 10 Downing Street and speaks a few words about peace and the men of violence; and then ends up praising the uniformed murderers of the British Army.

The Westminster and Leinster House governments know that the struggle must be fought on all fronts,

and on a 32 County basis. Cosgrave knows that the defeat of Westminster will mean defeat also for the ruling class in the 26 Counties. What any bourgeois, gomben government in the South is afraid of is political opposition.

WORKING CLASS ACTION

Whitelaw and Heath need the support of Cosgrave and Corish if they are to have any hope of defeating the national struggle. And the other side of the coin is that the defeat of the ghettos in the North can only be prevented with the mobilisation of the working class here in the South. It is the duty of all socialists and republicans to work constantly and consistently towards the mobilisation of the working class in the South, in support of the ghettos in the North. The struggle in the North and the struggle in the South are not two different issues. They are one struggle against foreign domination. In the North, the domination is military, political and economic - it is direct imperialism. In the South, the imperialism is indirect.

Under imperialism the working class is the most exploited and oppressed class. For this reason it is in their interests to struggle against imperialism in all its forms. For this reason also, the working class are the only section of the nation which can be relied on to struggle to the bitter end against imperialism.

The way forward in the immediate future lies in building new organisations of working class action, reviving the street committees and People's Assemblies. A great start is being made in Andersonstown over the question of policing the area. Whatever tricks the SDLP may try, the RUC will never again be acceptable. The united fronts established in Derry, Armagh, and Belfast to protest against internment must be supported. In the coming period the working class can counter the Assembly, the SDLP opportunists, and the whole British strategy with their own police and courts, their own vigilantes and self-defence groups. The anti-Unionist working class must be armed in their own defence.

PRICES: A STRATEGY

by Alf Jennings

In the last issue of *Red Weekly*, we looked at the catastrophic rise in the prices of basic consumer goods. The Tories' 'counter-inflation' laws allow the capitalists to pass on rises in the cost of imported raw materials to the consumer, restricting only the grossest profiteering which could cause serious problems in the relations between the capitalists themselves. Capitalist profits are protected by allowing prices to soar.

In this article we propose to look at the ways in which the workers' movement can deal with rising prices. As we explained before, the most effective answer would be a policy of workers control over prices. Instead of a Price Commission based on the capitalist state bureaucracy, workers committees would be set up across the entire economy. These would have a right of access to all company records and information, the right to interview all company staff, and to carry out inquiries into such matters as costs, production, and pricing.

These bodies would impose a total freeze on the price of basic consumer goods, enforced by workers all along the line and checked by organisations of housewives and consumers. Bankruptcies resulting from such measures would be met with a vigorous policy of nationalisations. All these steps would require a workers government basing its authority on workers' organisations, rather than on Parliament and the capitalist state.

GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS

The sort of organisations needed for such a decisive policy can only come about as a result of a long period of struggle. The question is, how to launch these struggles. Today, the workers' movement is faced with a Government trying to draw the unions into the jaws of state regulation of wages by offering illusory 'concessions on the question of prices. Smashing any such deal must be the next step forward for the movement. But, at the same time, a

working class alternative to the Tories' proposals must be worked out.

The Government's proposal is that wage agreements with employers should contain a provision whereby an increase in the cost of living is compensated for by a rise in wages. However, the cost of living index must rise by several points before any compensating rise in wages is paid out.

Such a proposal allows the standard of living of workers to decline before any relief is granted. Even then, taxation will eat into the total amount of any rise. This proposal goes hand in hand with a formula, similar to that imposed during Phase II, whereby overall wage rises could not go above a fixed ceiling. This will prevent workers from doing anything about the decline in their living standards that has taken place since the Freeze and severely limits any future improvement of living standards.

The Government is offering *partial* relief of working class incomes from price increases as a means of trapping the unions into state regulation of wages. This must be rejected. The TUC-Government talks must be brought to an end.

WORKING CLASS SOLUTION

However, that does *not* mean that militants should throw out the whole idea of linking wages to the rise in the cost of living.

It is not enough for militants to smash the talks and then simply whack in a big wage claim. This idea, put about by papers such as *Socialist Worker* and *Worker's Fight*, is dangerous.

Winning big wage rises through hard-fought struggle, only to see them rapidly eaten up by the rising cost of living, is a very frustrating experience. In the short term it may give rise to a healthy militancy and desire to fight, but in the near future workers faced with this situation are going to get fed-up and start looking for some more permanent answer to their problems than just 'more militancy.' If the revolutionaries and militants do not put

forward proposals on how to deal with this situation, then the mass of workers will be drawn towards those who do: the Labour Party bureaucrats and even the Tory Government.

SLIDING SCALE OF WAGES

The most straightforward way of protecting wages from the effects of rising prices is through a sliding scale of wages. This is a simple enough idea: wages are increased to compensate for price rises over a particular period. Different versions of this idea have been put into practice in a variety of trade union agreements made after the Second World War, such as the one still in operation for the shoe industry. Most of these schemes, however, are against the interests of the working class because they are attempts to limit or stop regular *increases* in real wages by holding out the carrot of 'protection' of *present* living standards from inflation.

In order to serve the interest of the working class such a scale would have to be based on the principle that the working class is entitled to regular *increases* in its standard of living. Workers must therefore continue to fight for regular, big boosts in wages. But they should also demand that such increases are not subject to an immediate claw-back through spiralling prices.

What must be established is not primarily a set of figures or a table relating price rises and wage increases, but a *basic principle* — all price increases that occur in between two negotiated wage rises must be compensated for at the expense of the employer, and this compensation must ensure that no worker suffers the loss of a *single penny* in real terms as a result of inflation.

RANGE OF PROBLEMS

Of course, a table of figures could serve as a preliminary, rough guide to the compensation owing to workers under such an agreement. But a range of problems can occur which no simple table could adequately deal with. For example, the government price index is based

on the budget of an 'average' family. But this is worked out on the basis of all those who earn up to £4,000 a year, and thus includes many families who are well above the working class in income.

The index therefore underestimates the effect of increases in the necessities of life on the average *working class* family. A worker whose income depends on social security benefits might end up *worse off* after a wage rise, because these benefits will be scaled down, or even cut off, as his wage rises. Part of any wage rise will be eaten up in taxation: for workers on lower incomes, who presently pay little or no tax, this could greatly reduce the benefit of any increase under a sliding scale.

Some of these problems could be taken into account when working out a sliding scale

The law goes

Over 400 of the top 1,000 companies have failed to provide information about their profits to the Price Commission, as required under the 'counter-inflation' legislation.

The official response of the Commission is that many companies have no doubt been unable to find the time or the expertise to fill in all the forms as yet. In the meantime, however, these companies could well be raising their prices and increasing their income at the expense of the consumer. A cut in price made by the Commission at a later date would do nothing to make up for the loss to the consumer. Of course, Sir Arthur Cockfield, chairman of the Commission could take the companies to court tomorrow and extract unlimited fines for their failure to report their profits. These companies are breaking the law. But Cockfield is not likely to be so zealous about enforcing the law as his opposite

'You cannot make a strike effective without doing more than is lawful'. With these words one of the country's leading judges, Lord Justice Lindley, effectively took away the right of picketing from the working class movement in 1896.

Today the same right is again under attack. Lord Lindley's words could well be repeated from the bench in Shrewsbury later on this year, with just as much validity as they had almost 80 years ago.

1875 ACT

After the passing of the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act in 1875 (see *Red Weekly* 9 for a discussion of this) the trade union movement generally considered the right to picket to be secure. That Act specifically legalised 'attending at or near . . . a place . . . in order to obtain or communicate information . . .'

For the next few years the courts did indeed behave as if picketing was legal. But as soon as the class struggle began to get a little warmer, the courts quickly did an about face. In the crucial case over which Lord Justice Lindley presided, the courts decided that peaceful picketing was both a 'nuisance' under common law, and an offence against the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act. They claimed that picketing was not protected under this Act because, by definition, it went beyond just 'communicating information'.

PEACEFUL PERSUASION

After this ruling, successful prosecutions of picketers became common. In 1901 came a further blow against the trade unions — the historic Taff Vale judgement that trade unions could be sued for their industrial actions, and their funds seized to pay damages.

In reply the trade unions mounted a major national campaign which led to the passing of the Trades Dispute Act in 1906, after the Liberal's election victory. This not only wiped away the Taff Vale judgement, but also tried to neutralise the various rulings on picketing by extending the definition of legally protected activities to include 'peaceful persuasion' as well as 'communicating information'.

This remained the law as far as picketing was

concerned until the passing of the Industrial Relations Act in 1971. While this completely replaces the Trades Dispute Act, it seems to leave the picketing laws basically unchanged.

LAW AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

Robert Carr, the Tory Home Secretary, has said time and again that the existing laws are adequate to 'deal' with picketing — and for once he is telling the truth. Strict enforcement of the present laws would be enough to smash picketing as it is presently understood.

Laws do not exist apart from the class struggle, they are weapons used by the ruling class to influence the class struggle in their own favour. They reflect a certain relationship of forces between the classes, and will be interpreted and enforced in different ways according to changes in the relative strength of the warring classes.

The law must be interpreted in order to be applied, and this gives the representatives of the ruling class wide leeway in how they use it in

any particular situation. Very reactionary laws can be applied leniently, or put on the shelf (as in the case of the Industrial Relations Act), and supposedly 'progressive' laws can be rigorously interpreted and enforced, according to whatever suits the strategy of the ruling class at a particular time.

WORKING CLASS DEFENCE

Of course different representatives of the ruling class — for example, the judges and the government — may disagree at a particular point in time on what is the best strategy for dealing with the working class. Or a spate of harsh court sentences may touch off a mass movement which strengthens the hand of the working class. It is under these circumstances that new laws may be passed to try and compensate for the reactionary decisions of the courts (as, for example, the Trades Dispute Act in 1906).

The point is, the working class movement can never count on the written word of the law or the supposed 'neutrality' of the courts of the

government. The only defence against the capitalist legal machine is the ability to mobilise the working class, and thus weaken the position of the ruling class.

DANGEROUS PRECEDENTS

At the present time the courts have all the material they need — in the form of legal precedents — to crack down on picket lines. In 1960, in the case of *Fiddington vs. Bates*, the courts supported the conviction of a picketer for obstructing the police in the execution of their duty. His 'crime' was to have refused to obey a policeman who had told a group of strikers that they could only have two pickets on a factory gate. The court ruled that the police were entitled to do this if they had reasonable grounds to expect a breach of the peace.

In a more important case, *Tynan vs. Bolmer*, in 1967, the courts convicted another picket on the same charge. He had led 40 strikers who had picketed their factory gate, marching in a tight circle. The prosecution failed to prove that any actual blocking of the entrance had taken place, but the court ruled that the *purpose* of the pickets had been to force lorries to stop so that the pickets could talk to the drivers. This, they said, went beyond just 'communicating information' or 'peaceful persuasion', and therefore constituted an unlawful nuisance which the police were entitled to prevent.

HANDS TIED

These rulings interpret the rights of pickets in such a narrow way, and the rights of the police in such a broad way, that a determined offensive by the police and the courts would completely tie the hands of pickets. As trade union expert, Prof. Kenneth Wedderburn puts it:

'The only indisputably lawful pickets . . . are those who attend in small numbers near the chosen place and who keep out of everyone's way. Meanwhile, the workers who they have come to persuade to join them can sweep past in vehicles which the pickets have no right to stop.'

DEFEND PICKETS

In the coming struggles the working class movement will have to adopt the flying pickets

PICKETING LAWS: THE HIDDEN DANGER

by Brian Slocock

STRATEGY FOR STRUGGLE

and Chris Balfour

scheme. For example, workers' organisations, in alliance with housewives and consumer committees, should collect and assess the information necessary for the compiling of a price index that will take into account the effect of price rises on families of different sizes and with different incomes, local variations in prices, etc.

The method of compensation would have to provide workers on lower wages or with large families, with *extra* compensation to allow for the effects of taxation, loss of social security benefits, etc. The scale should apply to *take home pay*, not basic rates, and thus increase bonus and overtime earnings automatically.

VIGILANCE COMMITTEES

To cover all possible situations, any worker

would be able to claim extra compensation on the grounds that because of his own special situation, his income had not been fully protected from inflation. Claims such as these would be dealt with by workers' vigilance committees set up in every factory to enforce the sliding scale. Such committees would also organise regular and systematic checks to make sure that no wearing down of living standards was taking place unnoticed, and to ensure that the bosses were carrying out the terms of the sliding scale properly and following all the rulings of the vigilance committee.

Demands such as these could be fought for and won in an individual trade union struggle. But there is a danger that if only a few of the most powerfully organised sectors of the trade union movement won such a concession, the overall rate of inflation would be pushed up while the vast majority of the population remained unprotected. Any such victory must therefore be seen as simply the opening round of an all-out united struggle to win this protection for all the victims of capitalism — workers, unemployed, pensioners, students, etc. The sliding scale must be applied not only to all wages and salaries, but to all state benefits as well.

GENERAL STRIKE

In the struggles that lie ahead in the next year there is a real possibility of such a demand being fought for. Some of the biggest battalions of the working class — the miners and the engineers — will be in conflict with the Government. A militant struggle by either of these groups would spark off a wave of mass solidarity throughout the working class.

Such a movement could be rapidly turned into a real, united fight for working class interests — a general strike. The first aim of a general strike under these circumstances would be to bring the Tory Government down, but it would also be an important means of fighting for particular solutions to the most important problems facing the working class. Demands for a reduction in the work week, a big all-round increase in wages, etc. would

undoubtedly be put forward. The demand for a sliding scale to protect all sources of income from inflation would be an important part of such a set of demands.

PREPARATIONS

The sincerity of all those who claim to speak for the working class — the trade union leadership, the TUC, the Labour Party — can be tested by their willingness to take up the crucial task facing the working class movement: the need to prepare practically for a general strike against the Tory Government. But militants should not wait for these bodies to move before making such preparations.

Important steps can be made immediately: passing motions of full support for the engineers' and miners' struggle through all trade union bodies, setting up of local delegate bodies to organise solidarity with whichever group goes into struggle against the Government first. As part of such preparation, demands like those being put forward in the engineering claim, and the demand for a sliding scale to protect all sources of income from inflation, should be discussed and popularised throughout the working class movement.

As we have said, however, the most direct and effective way of dealing with inflation would be by workers' control of prices. It is quite possible for the trade union movement *today* to launch specific struggles which could lead the working class movement in this direction.

PRACTICAL MEASURES

The first practical thing which needs to be done is to draw up a plan of industrial action in selected companies and industries, particularly those associated with the production of essential consumer goods. Housewives' organisations, and price committees set up by Trades Councils, should supply the trade unions with information concerning the particular goods or brands of goods which are most essential and which are rising in price. Action should then be taken against the manufacturers, with the aim of forcing them to freeze their prices. A special fund should be set up by the trade

unions to provide full strike pay for workers engaged in these actions. Such a move would gain the overwhelming support of every worker, housewife and pensioner in the country.

Workers and housewives, organised at the point of distribution, would be able to check up on prices, ensuring that no company could get away with breaking an agreement, and that no chain store could keep up its prices while pocketing the difference for itself.

These measures are thoroughly practical. They expose the falseness of the claim that only the Government and the civil service can control prices. Such actions as these would have an immediate effect and would set in motion a process of struggle leading to more thorough and effective solutions to the problem of rising prices, such as workers' control of prices.

UNITY IN STRUGGLE

If the Labour Party is serious in its claim to stand for the interests of the working class then it should declare its intent to impose a sliding scale for all incomes *by law* when it comes into power. It should place all its facilities at the disposal of housewives and workers' organisations *today* in order that the fight to force prices down can be better co-ordinated.

Struggles on the question of prices, and the setting up of organisations to collect information and co-ordinate such struggles, can be an important way of bringing large numbers of people into the fight against the bosses and against the Tory Government. It can draw in both sections of workers who are not yet putting forward wage claims, and groups not usually directly involved in trade union struggles: housewives, pensioners, small traders, students. If a mass, well organised movement on the question of prices grows up at the same time as the engineers or the miners confront the Government on the wages front, then the Tories will find themselves completely isolated and the strength of the working class movement will be unbeatable.

by the Board

numbers, Sir Frank Figgures of the Pay Board, and Sir John Donaldson of the NIRC.

The latest breakdown in the supply of information shows clearly the degree to which the Government's prices policy depends on the voluntary co-operation of the capitalists. The capitalists could decide collectively to refuse to collaborate with the Commission and get away with it. They have successfully boycotted other state bodies in the past. But such action now would reduce to nil the chances of the Government getting a deal with the TUC. So a large proportion of the capitalists are simply 'going slow', or else ignoring the Commission altogether.

This is just one more illustration that the only people who can be relied on to take effective action against rising prices are those who stand to lose most by them, the working class.



Outside Pentonville Prison last year — mass mobilisation of the working class made a mockery of the law

pioneered by the miners, building workers and Chrysler workers, and the mass picket as it was used at Salfley. In preparation for this, any attempt to enforce the laws against picketing must be blocked now.

That can only be done by mobilising a mass movement throughout the trade unions in defence of picketing. Every picket who finds himself threatened by the police, the courts, or private goon squads, should be able to count on

the backing of such a movement. But the first task is to organise the broadest possible forces within the labour movement to smash the ruling class attack on the North Wales building workers coming up for trial in

Shrewsbury this October. A victory in Shrewsbury will be a major step towards making sure that no further attempts are made by the ruling class to use the courts against trade union picket lines.

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND CAPITALIST CRISIS /Part 1

Roots of the 'left' turn

For the past twenty years the Labour Party has moved, almost without interruption, to the right. The Wilson Government was clearly to the right of even the 1945 Labour Government. The traditional socialist touchstone — nationalisation — disappeared in practice from Labour's programme, even though Gaitskell's attempt to get it removed from the Party constitution (the famous 'clause 4' battle) was defeated.

This shift in Labour's policies was in line with a general rightward movement of all European Social Democratic Parties. But now an opposite trend is developing — throughout Europe Social Democracy is moving to the left, and once again the Labour Party is following the general pattern.

The new Labour Programme drawn up by the National Executive once more places nationalisation in the centre. As a result a struggle is shaping up between the Party executive and the Parliamentary leadership.

The source of these changes lies in two things: firstly, the turn of the capitalist class towards a policy of confrontation, which requires the move towards a 'strong state' (the strengthening of the power of the government at the expense of 'representative' bodies like Parliament, and the reinforcing of the repressive state apparatus: the police, law and the courts); second, the new rise of mass working class struggle.

The first real dents in the post war period of capitalist prosperity and class peace came in the early 1960s. In 1960-61 there was a general strike in Belgium. In Italy in the winter of '62-'63 there were important electrical and engineering workers strikes. In Germany a metal workers strike took place in spring 1963. In France a miners strike broke out in late '63.

Simultaneously, and in many cases causing the upsurge, some of the most important European economies (notably Britain, Belgium, France and Italy), experienced a decline in economic growth or recession. In every country the ruling class was faced with the problem of how to cope with these new economic and social problems. In every case the answer given by the ruling class was to move towards greater state involvement in the economy. This was

dictated by two fundamental considerations. First, only the state possessed the colossal economic resources needed to streamline and rationalise the economy in preparation for a period of great economic problems. Second, individual capitalist firms were not strong enough to resist the workers' struggles by themselves. The representative of the capitalist class as a whole — the capitalist state — had to come to the assistance of the individual employers. In Britain these developments could be seen most clearly in the formation of the National Economic Development Council in 1962-63 by the Tory Government and in the Industrial Re-organisation Corporation created by the 1964 Labour Government.

But greater state involvement did not by itself solve the basic problem of capitalist strategy. How was this state power to be used? Two basic options were open. The first was a turn to open repression of the type created in France following the coming to power of de Gaulle in 1958. This involved a massive build-up of the police force, physical intimidation of the working class, openly weakening capitalist democracy — all the characteristics of the 'strong state.' But such a step requires a decisive showdown with the working class. De Gaulle had come to office basically because of the threat of the army to take power. In Belgium the passing of repressive 'emergency' laws had led to a general strike. The turn to open repression by the ruling class was a very risky game.

The alternative to open repression of the working class was to attempt to get the trade union bureaucracy to do the ruling class's job for it and clamp down on the working class. From the early 1960s onwards the capitalist class began to move decisively towards creating some sort of agreement with the trade union bureaucracy as its main policy. The aim was to get the bureaucracy to accept a deal with the state whereby the trade unions' leaders clamped down on militancy. The years from 1963 to 1968 were the heyday of the 'negotiated incomes policy.' It was introduced in Britain by the attempts of the Tories to get such a policy in 1963, and then in the 1964 Labour Government's 'Declaration of Intent' and 'National Plan.'

In order to carry out this policy the European

ruling classes were forced to make important political turns. If it was a case of doing a deal with the trade union bureaucracies then the traditional parties of the ruling class, the Tories and their European counterparts, were not the most suitable parties for the job. On the contrary, their traditions of open hostility to the trade unions positively got in the way. The most suitable parties were those having the closest links with the trade union bureaucracies — that is to say the various social democratic parties of Western Europe. The political result of the new capitalist strategy was therefore growing support for coalition governments involving social democratic parties (Italy and Germany), or even for pure social democratic governments — as in Britain. In 1964 the representatives of the key industrial sections of British capitalism, the *Economist* magazine, Lord Kerton of Courtauld, Lord Stokes of British Leyland, called for the formation of a Labour Government.

COLLAPSE OF INTEGRATION

For reasons which will be gone into further in the second article in this series, the policy of integration failed completely. It collapsed in the 1968 General Strike in France, the mass strikes of autumn 1969 in Italy, the Belgian Limbourg miners' strike of 1970, and the mass British strike wave of 1968-72. Faced with the collapse of the policy of integration, but needing more than ever the intervention of the state in order to deal with mounting working class opposition the ruling class had no option but to turn to a policy of open repression. This meant a major change in political strategy.

At present the bourgeoisie is not strong enough in Europe to overthrow 'parliamentary democracy' — which in any case serves as an invaluable ideological camouflage for capitalist rule. This means that the bourgeoisie cannot rule *directly* through the repressive apparatus of the state — as for example in a military dictatorship. The state apparatus is guided on important questions by a government, and therefore securing the correct government is a key aspect of bourgeois strategy.

With the collapse of 'integration' what had previously been the social democratic parties' greatest attraction — their links with the working class and the trade union bureaucracy — now became, from the point of view of the ruling class, their greatest weakness. These links might at some crucial stage, particularly at election time, hold back a social democratic party from blatant attacks on the working class. The way in which the Labour Government was forced to drop its *In Place of Strife* proposals was a warning of this. The fact that in the last analysis social democratic parties will side with the ruling class was not sufficient in the new situation.

Despite valiant efforts at repression by, for example, the Brandt Government in Germany the ruling class turned back to its traditional parties in a massive way. These had no organised links with the working class. The centre-right coalition in Italy, the first for ten years, the growing ruling class hostility to the Social-Democrats in Germany, the taking up by the whole ruling class of the call for a Tory Government all indicated the way in which the wind was blowing. In every European country the tasks set for these new capitalist governments was the same. *Repress the working class and its organisations. Prepare the way for a*

strong state or the reinforcement of an existing one.

The turn to open repression by the European ruling classes can be seen at every level. In France a private police force shot dead a young militant, Pierre Overney, for distributing leaflets at the Renault factory, at Citroen fascist thugs are allowed to physically attack union delegates with impunity, and the Ligue Communiste has been banned for demonstrating against the fascists. In Switzerland the courts have ruled that even to write about the capitalists 'exploiting' the workers is illegal. In Italy the centre-right government of Andreotti introduced a law permitting the arrest 'of any person who, by his comportment, may be assumed to be engaged in illegal activities' i.e. for the arbitrary right of arrest on mere suspicion. In Belgium a proposed law will allow employers to use armed guards freely. In Britain examples of such moves are also mounting rapidly. We have seen in recent months the free use by employers of criminal thugs in the Chrysler dispute; the openly racist judgement of the House of Lords on illegal immigrants; the mobilisation of fascists to enforce the House of Lords' decision; the police raids on Irish and socialist militants; the illegal holding of the Belfast 10 without charges, trial or right to see lawyers; the prosecution of the Shrewsbury 24; the systematic training of the police to smash pickets.

Within this general situation the 'centre' leadership of the European social democratic parties are forced to reconsider their tactics. In the early '60s the 'centre' had supported the right wing — that section which hoped to come to power with the support of the capitalist class. With the collapse of the 'integration' policy this 'respectable' road to office is no longer open. On the other hand, the elemental upsurge of the masses threatens to undermine the working class base of the party if an openly right wing line is followed. When they could rely on support this did not worry the social democratic bureaucrats over much. Now lack of a working class base would mean loss of the one force which could compel the ruling class to permit the social democrats to come into government. Regaining working class support becomes a pressing need.

All these factors — fear of being swept aside by a new upsurge of the masses, an inability to come to office any more with the support of the ruling class, necessity to recapture working class votes in order to propel themselves into government — all inevitably push the social democracy to the left. A new period of demagogic 'leftism' is beginning to open for the mass European reformist parties.

It is only in this context that the new policies of the Labour Party can be understood. They are part of a pattern that started with the French Socialist Party signing the 'Common Programme' with the French Communist Party, and with the emergence of the German Social Democratic Youth ('Jugend'), in Germany. It will almost certainly be reinforced when the latest 'centre-left' coalition collapses in Italy. Renewed talk of an alliance or government of the Italian social democratic left with the Communist Party is already in the air. Thus the new Labour Party programme is just the beginning of a definite period of development, which has its origins in the changing situation throughout Europe.

Alan Jones

We have had several letters from readers asking for further information after the article.

'British Money, Ulster Gunmen'

on the history of the UVF in our last issue. Further background material can be found in the following books:

1. *Imperialist Crisis in Britain, 1912-14*: Colin Cross, *The Liberals in Power 1905-1914* (Barrie & Rockliff, 1963), especially p.171.
2. *Milner, Rothschild and the UVF*: A.M.Gallin, *Process in Politics* (1964); A.T.O.Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis* (Faber, 1967); W.Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1970).
3. *The UVF and the B-Specials*: D.Bolton, *The UVF 1966-1973* (Tarc, 1973); Sir A.Hexlet, *The 'B' Specials* (Tom Stacey, 1972); P.Buckland, *Ulster Unionism* (Gill & Macmillan, 1973); R.Benewick, *The Fascist Movement in Britain* (Allen Lane/Penguin Press, 1973).
4. *Lenin on the UVF*: *Lenin on Ireland* (pamphlet by New Books, Dublin), also in *V.I.Lenin on Britain* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1960).
5. *John Amery and the Legion of St. George*: R.Seib, *Jacks at the Reich* (New English Library, 1972).

Trade unionists march against the Industrial Relations Act — Tory Government was needed to push such legislation through



Photo: Chris Devlin (Report)

By decision of both Congress and the Supreme Court the United States bombing of Cambodia should have stopped on 15 August. It is not yet clear whether this decision will be actually implemented, or whether Nixon and his mob will attempt some manoeuvre to extend the bombing beyond this date.

Without the support of US bombers the military position of the puppet Lon Nol regime in Cambodia will be fatally weakened. The American Government is aware of this, and for that reason have stepped up the bombings to an all-time high in the last few weeks.

The puppet regime has been on the brink of collapse for some time. The national liberation forces — the United National Front of Cambodia (FUNK) — launched an offensive last February during which they reached the crucial Mekong River and blocked off all roads leading to the capital. Throughout July the battle zone steadily narrowed to within five miles of the capital city of Phnom Penh.

The puppet army is totally demoralised and riddled with corruption. Its real strength is only about a quarter of what it appears to be on paper — the inflated figures enabling the generals to draw vast additional sums of US aid.

Over the last few days even Western journalists have been forced to report the steady disintegration of the Lon Nol forces, despite the stepped up US air support. They have grasped at any small straw — a tactical retreat by the national liberation forces, for example — to produce evidence that the FUNK was 'running out of steam.' But the next day has always brought them back to reality as more villages fall to the FUNK and another city is isolated.

This military collapse of Lon Nol's forces is bound to have political consequences. *Le Monde* reports: 'The revolutionaries appear to be waiting for the regime to disintegrate.' And they will not have long to wait. *Le Monde* of 14 August carried the news that leading figures in the present Government favour the removal of Lon Nol and the return of Prince Sihanouk, former head of state and present head of the national liberation movement.

This attitude is increasingly shared in US political circles. Senator Symington, a member of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, has recently discovered that 'Prince Sihanouk has a greater ascendancy in the country than any other person,' adding bitterly 'Nothing could be worse than what is actually taking place.'

What are the options facing US imperialism in this situation? The first would be to abandon Lon Nol and then attempt to do a deal with Sihanouk. This is the option favoured by 'liberal' politicians in Washington, and is finding increasing favour with US financial interests who see South East Asia as a potential area of fruitful investment once the insecurity and instability of war is ended.

Recent statements of Prince Sihanouk, in

Turning point in Cambodia

which he has talked of a possible 'reconciliation' with Washington if US policy were to change, would seem to offer some scope for this strategy. The stumbling block is the national liberation forces.

The backbone of the armed struggle have been the Communist Red Khmers and Khmer Minh. After almost ten years of military and political struggle, it is unlikely they would settle for some tarted up compromise with US imperialism and turn-coats from the Lon Nol regime. It would thus be difficult for Sihanouk to be a party to any open compromise within the foreseeable future.

The other option for the US is to back a full scale invasion in support of the Lon Nol regime from either Thailand or South Vietnam. Recent revelations about secret US military activities in Cambodia in 1969 and 1970, systematically hidden from the American Congress, show that there are plenty of precedents for such an operation. But are the available instruments up to the test?

The Thai dictatorship is in deep economic dif-

ficulty, and is currently immersed in a major student upsurge. To throw military forces into the Cambodian struggle under present circumstances would appear to be a fool's wager.

The Thieu regime in South Vietnam is willing, but its ability to carry through such a venture is highly questionable. A South Vietnamese invasion would strengthen the unity of the Cambodian people around the liberation forces.

Sections of the South Vietnamese army are already having second thoughts about the Thieu Government, and the launching of a foreign adventure at this time could force those cracks wide open. Moreover the involvement of large numbers of Thieu's troops in Cambodia would be an open invitation to the National Liberation Front to give a final push which would put paid to the whole puppet regime in South Vietnam.

If the American Government proves able neither to come to an understanding with Sihanouk nor to provide Lon Nol with the support necessary to keep him in business, the future will be bleak for US Imperialism in

South-East Asia. The Cambodian liberation forces will take power under circumstances that are likely to touch off far-reaching social change throughout the country: they will have come to power on the basis of their own strength, in the face of determined opposition from Imperialism and the Cambodian reactionaries, and with no commitments other than to the Cambodian workers and peasants who have sustained their fight.

The presence of an established and sympathetic Government just across the border would immensely strengthen the hand of the NLF in Vietnam, both politically and materially, and could encourage a new offensive which would place the whole of South Vietnam in the hands of the anti-imperialist forces.

In short, the fate of all of South-East Asia hangs in the balance in the current struggle in Cambodia. The solidarity movement in this country must take this fact to heart. It must be prepared to take to the streets and furnish other kinds of political support when the decisive turning point is reached.

Prince Sihanouk (left) with Hon Youn (his Minister of the Interior) and Hu Nim (his Minister of Information)



The inclusion of the military in Allende's new government of 9 August marks the end of three years of government by a coalition of parties of the working class, and a major advance for the counter-revolution.

The army has participated in the government once before, after the lorry-owners' boycott of October 1972. But this time their inclusion comes after months in which open civil war has threatened to engulf the country, with a fascist invasion plot, rebellions by sections of the army, the Christian Democrats' successful intervention in the copper miners' strike, and massive defensive mobilisations of the working class.

Since the abortive military revolt at the end of June, the Christian Democrats, who hold the congressional majority, have been pressing for the inclusion of the military on the conditions to which Allende has now agreed. These include the removal of 'left' ministers from key

End of the Chilean road

posts; the enforcement of the constitution — that is, against the armed left-wing groups and attempts to distribute arms to the workers; and the fixing of limits to the nationalised sectors of the economy, with guarantees to private property.

Allende and his allies in the Communist Party have sacrificed all the recent gains of the working class — including the wave of factory occupations in response to the attempted coup in June — to collaboration with the military. The Popular Unity leaders have urged respect

for 'law and order' and avoided any mobilisation of the workers. Troops have been sent into the occupied factories under the law passed last year by the Christian Democrats, authorising the army to invade homes and work-places on the pretext of searching for arms. The revolutionaries who attempted to carry out a naval mutiny against reactionary officers connected with the fascist 'Patria y Libertad' movement, now face a court-martial after the discovery of their plans on 7 August. Allende threatened on Monday to suppress the extreme left by force.

Threatened by the reactionary transport 'strike' which brought the governmental crisis to a head, the Popular Unity leaders have again given the streets over, not to the working class, but to the army. They have therefore been forced to retreat on their positions of a month earlier, and accept the conditions of the opposition for the inclusion of the military.

The Popular Unity parties are deeply divided in their attitude to the new government. Allende's Socialist Party faces the threat of massive splits. Smaller parties including MA PU and the Christian Left may withdraw. The MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement) has withdrawn the critical support it originally gave Popular Unity.

Of the workers' parties only the Chilean CP gives unconditional support to the entry of the military.

Almost forty years after the betrayal of the Spanish revolution Stalinism is repeating its treachery against the Chilean workers and peasants. The crisis in the other Popular Unity parties is evidence of the strong opposition in the working class to the latest moves of their leaders. But without a revolutionary marxist leadership, the Chilean workers face bitter blows from the counter-revolution which is now firmly on the march.

For only the second time since the Colonels' coup in April, 1967, Greeks went to the polls on Sunday, 28 July. The purpose, as on the last occasion in September 1968, was to ratify changes to the Constitution — the main ones this time being the abolition of the monarchy and the institution of an 8-year presidential term.

According to the official returns, 78% of the votes cast were 'Yes' votes. This figure was achieved by a unique mechanism: each voter was supposed to be given an envelope containing two cards, one saying 'Yes' and the other 'No'. But in the countryside, where there was no supervision of the elections, voters found only a 'Yes' card in their envelopes. In Athens, however, where foreign journalists observed the voting, the 'No' votes accounted for as much

Greek farce

as 40% of the total. There is no reason to suppose that developments in the rest of the country lag far behind those in Athens.

The opposition represented by these votes reflects in part a growing split in the ranks of the Greek bourgeoisie over the direction of the country's economic development. The regime is committed to a perspective of increasing direct American investment; Ford and other American combines are already involved in building assembly plants in Greece under extremely favourable tax and investment terms.

As a result there are growing differences between those sections of the bourgeoisie who

are involved in industries which are subsidiary to and dependent on American investment, and those involved in the limited native industry, who want to develop the internal market and tie the Greek economy to the European Common Market. It is this latter section, represented by the old liberal and social democratic politicians, which has tried to use the repressive nature of the regime and the absence of democratic rights as a platform for gaining mass support to oust the Colonels.

But of course the logic of such a mass movement for the restoration of democratic rights would go far beyond putting a handful of the old politicians back into power. In this context, the re-awakening of working class and student struggles has an added significance and potential. In the face of a rise in the cost of living of 44%

in the last year, and a complete wage freeze for the last three years, a whole series of claims for a 35% increase have gone in. In one case, some of the workers at Olympic Airways held the first strike since the coup. Although this was defeated, and the leaders of the Action Committee set up to run it jailed, it was a signpost for future struggles.

In the same way, the recent occupations and strikes at the universities in Salonika and Athens are also symptomatic of the growing opposition to the regime. These struggles have given an impetus to the previously clandestine activities of the revolutionary organisations. Major social explosions now threaten to expose the contradictions of imperialism in Greece which have been forced underground by repressive rule for the last six years.

KRIVINE RELEASED BUT BAN REMAINS

Alain Krivine, a leading member of the former Communist League (French section of the Fourth International), was finally released from jail on 2 August. He had been held as one of those allegedly responsible for the mass anti-fascist demo in Paris on 21 June, which led to the ban on the Communist League imposed by the Government a week later.

This represents an undoubted defeat for the Government. Krivine's release was first ordered over three weeks earlier, but had been delayed while the Government lodged an appeal against the ruling, which it lost. The judgement is a clear indication of the effectiveness of the solidarity campaign which has been mounted both in France and internationally. It is also a monument to the divisions and uncertainties which exist inside sections of the ruling apparatus itself.

However, the struggle is far from over despite this setback for the Government. The ban on the Communist League has not been lifted; and Pierre Rousset, another leading militant, still remains in jail. The next step therefore, as Krivine stressed in a press conference after his release, is not to go underground but to step up the struggle by fully exploiting all the resources of legality. In this way a favourable

balance of forces can be established to defend the right of political expression and organisation.

Vital in this process will be the international support for the campaign. In Britain, the way forward has been shown by militants in Tyne-side, where a local defence committee including representatives from all the major working class organisations has been set up. Such activity must be extended to the rest of the country. In the Autumn it is planned to hold a major national conference open to all those who are opposed to the ban, and from this to establish a broad-based national committee in defence of the Communist League.

Meanwhile, several thousand people have so far signed the petition calling for the lifting of the ban, and a number of trade union bodies have passed resolutions condemning the French Government's action. But money for the Defence Fund is still only trickling in — a big push must be made in this direction if we are to offset the material effects of the ban on our French comrades.

All correspondence (donations to the Defence Fund, requests for copies of the petition, resolutions of support, etc.) should be sent to: Ad Hoc Committee to Defend the Communist League, c/o 182 Pentonville Rd., London, N.1.

The following are among those who have already signed the petition:

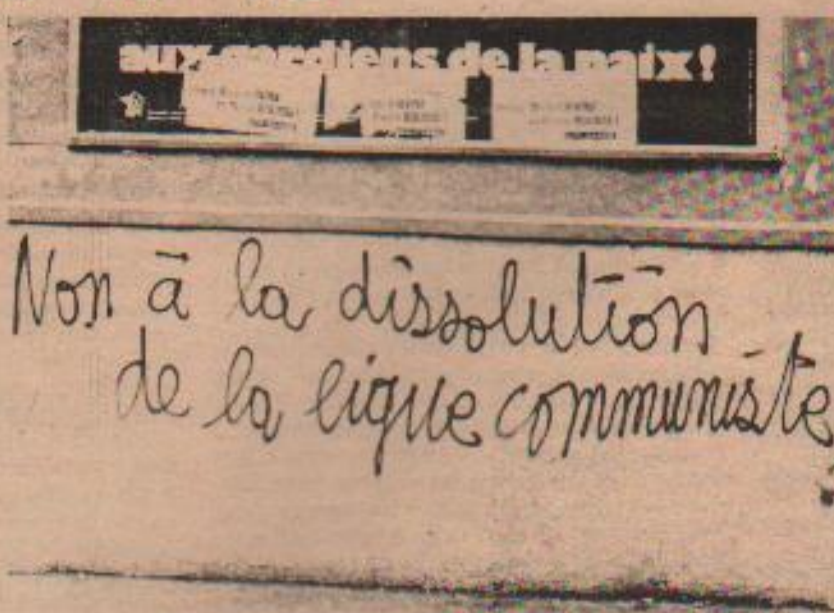
Frank Allison, MP
Norman Atkinson, MP
Michael Foot, MP
Eric Heffer, MP
Phillip Whitehead, MP
John Gollan, National Secretary, Communist Party of Great Britain
Monty Johnstone, CPGB
Ernie Roberts, Assistant General Secretary, AUEW
Peter Doyle, Chairman, Labour Party Young Socialists
John Forrester, Labour Party National Executive Committee
David Skinner, Clay Cross Councillor
Ken Coagas, Director, Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation
Ken Fleet, Director, Institute for Workers Control
Eddie Ankers, AUEW Convenor, Gardners
Joe Sharkey, APEX Convenor, Salford Electrical Instruments

Mike Cooley, Past President, AUEW (TASS)
Kevin Halpin, Chairman, LCOTU
Bernard Panter, Manchester District Secretary, AUEW
Colin Davis, Secretary, Manchester Trades Council
G. Luker, Secretary, Oxford Trades Council
W. MacLellan, Secretary, West Lothian Trades Council
Simon Fraser, Secretary, Liverpool Trades Council
Professor Joan Robinson, Cambridge
Professor Dorothy Hodgkin, Oxford
Professor J.A.C. Brown, Oxford
Professor E.P. Thompson, Warwick
Neil Middleton, Editor, Penguin Books
John Daniels, Director, Russell Press
Lord Gifford, Barrister
Kenneth Tynan, Literary Manager, National Theatre

The following are among the trade union organisations which have passed resolutions condemning the ban:

Nottingham & District Trades Council
Stirling & District Trades Council
Liverpool Trades Council
Norwich Trades Council
South Shields Trade Union Council

Central London Branch, AUEW (TASS)
T&GWU 5/55 Branch
T&GWU 3/57 Branch
Kinneil Branch, NUM
Norwich No. 6 Branch, UCATT



AUEW threatened by bailiffs

Property at the headquarters of the engineering union in South London may soon be seized by bailiffs if the union continues to refuse to pay compensation to a worker expelled for scabbing on a sympathy strike.

On Tuesday, the Lambeth County Court granted an order enforcing a ruling by the Southampton Industrial Tribunal that the man should receive £2,800 in compensation. The tribunal, a body set up under the Industrial Relations Act, had found the AUEW guilty of an 'unfair industrial practice.'

The AUEW has seven days in which to pay up. But, in line with their policy of 'non-cooperation' with the Industrial Relations Act, the union leadership has so far refused to appear in court or pay up.

NOT SUFFICIENT

This policy by itself will not be sufficient to prevent the bailiffs from rifling the headquarters of the union, just as it proved insufficient to prevent the National Industrial Relations Court from sequestering £60,000 from the union's funds during the Goad affair.

At a time when the AUEW should be making its plans for an offensive against the Government's pay policy, it cannot allow the ruling class to get away with this sort of physical attack on union resources. To show signs of weakness at this point will only

increase the confidence of the Government and the ruling class that they can defeat the AUEW over the current pay claim.

Instead of courting a tactical defeat with the policy of passive 'non-cooperation,' the AUEW leadership should use the present skirmish to harden up their membership for the coming confrontation. They should call a mass picket outside the union headquarters on the day the bailiffs are due, and maintain this picket as long as the threat of seizure exists. Mass industrial action should be called to force the Government to retreat.

LOCAL RESPONSE

Red Weekly has stressed the need for AUEW militants in the localities to hold special meetings and work out a plan of action for the coming pay fight. But it is important that they take up this issue as well. Any action by the courts to enforce the ruling should be met by mass stoppages and demonstrations across the country, regardless of what the AUEW bureaucracy chooses to do.

The Government may have put the Industrial Relations Act on the shelf recently, but this new attack shows that it is far from a dead letter. The Act is still a threat to the entire working class, and the engineers should receive the widest solidarity from the working class movement in this fight. Dave Bailey

RED NOTES

The equal pay strike at Salford Electrical Instruments ended last week with management making substantial concessions in this direction. The strike, of male and female members of the clerical workers' union APEX, had lasted 11 weeks. A couple of days earlier, a member of Manchester Women's Liberation arrested during one of the mass pickets outside SEI was found not guilty of assault by magistrates after defending herself and fighting the case on a political basis, dealing with the issues raised by the strike.

But another court case is still pending, where one of the strikers, George Dickinson, is charged that he, 'with a view to compel one Alan Speakman to abstain from visiting premises which he had a legal right to do in connection with his employment, wrongfully and without legal authority did follow the said Alan Speakman about from place to place, contrary to Section 7 of the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act of 1875'. The charge refers to activity on 11 July, when strikers were following a scab driver about to enable a black to be applied at each place he drove to—a normal procedure in an industrial dispute. But Dickinson was not charged until a fortnight later, APEX are providing a lawyer for a 'not guilty' plea against what is obviously an attempt to salvage at least a limitation on picketing rights from the dispute.

Printers and journalists at the Nottingham firm of T. Bailey Forman, publishers of the Evening Post and the now-defunct Guardian Journal, returned to work on 27 July without much to show for their six week strike.

The agreement reached between the company and the unions was very vague, the only concrete gain being a company promise to observe national agreements. On the crucial issue of redundancies, the terms were sufficiently loose to permit the company to lay off 150 workers shortly after the settlement. All of these were trade unionists, reducing the unionised proportion of the workforce to 25%.

Much of the responsibility for the failure of the strike lies with NATSOPA executive member Owen O'Brien who, at a crucial point in the strike, pressurised his members into accepting the settlement. This forced the other unions to go along, with only the NUJ demurring.

The 20th Anniversary of the

CIA Coup in IRAN

Public Meeting and Film, Friday 17 August, 7.30 p.m., Room 342, Mech. Eng. Dept., Imperial College, Exhibition Road, S.W.7.

DEMONSTRATION, Sunday 19

August, 2.30 p.m., Speakers Corner, march to Iranian Embassy, 16 Princes Gate, S.W.7.

Organised by The Iranian Students Society Confederation, Basement, 101-103 Gower Street, London W.C.1.

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International Marxist Group

(British Section of the Fourth International)

182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

I would like more information about the IMG and its activities.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

WHAT'S ON

DEFEND THE SHREWSBURY 24: Public meeting organised by London Joint Sites Committee, Conway Hall, 7.30 p.m., Friday 17 August.

TARIQ ALI: Would anyone who saw Tariq Ali being arrested outside Buckingham Palace during the protest against Dr Caetano's visit on Tuesday, 17 July, please phone Brian at 624 1628 (working hours only).

CENTRAL LONDON AIL FORUM: Gery Lawless on 'The Littlejohn Affair', Friday 24 August, 8.00 p.m. in the General Pigeon pub, Caledonian Road, London N.1.

IMG RED FORUM: Series of introductory discussions for those in the London area on the politics of the Fourth International. Every Tuesday at 8.00 p.m. in the General Pigeon pub, Caledonian Road, London N.1.

BIRMINGHAM IMG STUDY CLASSES: Introductory series of lectures on the politics of the IMG. Every Wednesday, 7.30 p.m. at the Wellington pub, Bristol Road.