



TUC MUST ACT - GENERAL STRIKE

The TUC's special meeting of union Presidents and General Secretaries called for next Wednesday comes at a crucial point in the development of the struggle against the Tory Government.

Two of the trade unions in the forefront of the fight against the Tories - the miners and the railmen - are deadlocked in their negotiations and are discussing stepping up industrial action.

At the same time the Tories have imposed a national, two day a week lockout in their fight against the miners, and British rail have adopted tough measures against ASLEF members in order to break their resistance.

The recent decision to put Lord Carrington in charge of energy policy is the latest sign that the Tories are preparing for a hard fight.

These struggles are not being fought over some trivial question—they are concerned with which class will bear the burdens of the crisis into which capitalism has thrown the British economy. The ruling class will adopt the most brutal methods to ensure that the crisis is paid for out of the living standards of the working class. The vicious sentences handed out to building workers in the Shrewsbury case are just a foretaste of things to come. But what methods will the workers movement use to defend itself from these attacks?

No body of trade unionists is under a greater responsibility to answer this question than next Wednesday's meeting: for this will bring together the people who hold in their hands the power to launch a powerful and united response to the Tory Govern-

ment on behalf of the entire movement.

That Government—the most determined and ruthless representative the ruling class has had for many years—can only be defeated by a united working class movement prepared to use to the hilt its greatest strength—its industrial might. That is why the TUC meeting, if it is serious about combatting the Tory offensive, can only adopt one course of action: the calling of a general strike to bring down the Tory Government.

This body should act immediately. There is no time for further delay: it is the workers who have to pay for every day that these bureaucrats refuse to act, and it is the Tory Government that gains from inaction. By all means, let us have a recall of the TUC—but it should take place on the basis of a clear call from Wednesday's meeting for a general strike to bring down the Tories and for the establishment of Councils of Action in every area to prepare and organise for this struggle. Congress would then meet, not as a grandiose talk-shop, but as a working body concerned with finalising the details and co-ordinating on a national level the organisation of a general strike.



Delegates at the TUC Special Congress on Phase 2 last March. Such gatherings have done nothing to stop the Tory attacks. If the TUC is to be a fighting body, rather than a useless talking shop, next Wednesday's meeting of trade union leaders must issue a clear call for a general strike to kick out the Tories, and for the formation of Councils of Action in every area to organise the struggle.

The International Marxist Group is under no illusions that Wednesday's meeting will take any such steps—but we insist that this is the only way to defend the working class movement. If the TUC bureaucrats are not prepared to do the job, then others must take it on: individual unions, local trade union organisations, and unofficial, rank-and-file bodies.

After 16 January all those who are seriously committed to the fight against the Tory Government must

redouble their efforts. The central tasks will be:

1. Build national strike action against Tory wage policy: especially by the miners, engineers and railmen;
2. Build a fighting alliance of miners, engineers, and railmen at all levels;
3. Organise actions which will force the official trade union leadership either to end their collaboration with the Tory Government and take steps which aid the struggle, or to reveal their inability to combat the Tory

- offensive:
4. Establish Councils of Action representative of the whole labour movement in every area to co-ordinate the struggles against the Tory lockout and prepare a united counter offensive;
 5. Organise, out of all the current struggles in which workers are engaged, a general strike to bring down the Tory Government.

This is the only road to victory—and it is also the only road to socialism.

SHREWSBURY BIRMINGHAM CALL FOR ALL-OUT STRIKE

The first step towards all-out strike action to free the Shrewsbury 3, has been taken in Birmingham. Last Monday evening, the Birmingham UCATT Shop Stewards Committee voted unanimously for a resolution which declared:

'This meeting commits itself to an all-out national strike and pledges itself to begin this in the Birmingham area.'

It was further agreed to elect a committee to prepare for the strike, demand the recall of the regional council to endorse the resolution, work for pledges of support from other industries, and hold a mass meeting in 2 weeks time to discuss the

action. Workers at the Wimpey, York-wood site endorsed the resolution at a mass meeting the following day.

On Tuesday, the UCATT Executive gave official backing to action by the UCATT regional councils on Shrewsbury, following a lobby of UCATT Headquarters by delegations of building workers. This official support now makes it easier for militants in other areas to follow the example set by Birmingham. Building workers' shop stewards committees across the country must declare for a national strike, set a date for beginning the struggle in their own area, and seek to get the regional

councils to give it their backing.

Also on Tuesday, the T&GWU called for a national one-day stoppage in the building trade on 15 January in protest at the Shrewsbury jollings. This follows decisions by several districts to strike on that day, and a call from the London Trades Council for a lobby of Parliament. Several other districts are due to strike on 11 January, the day on which the Shrewsbury workers' bail hearing takes place. These one-day stoppages will not free the 3, but they can be used as days of 'agitation and explanation'.

Teams of strikers should be formed on these days to visit building sites which have not joined the stoppage and workers outside the building trade, bringing home the importance and urgency of defending the Shrewsbury 3. These days can be used as an opportunity to gain further commitments to take strike action.

This work will be all the more successful if there is a perspective of a national building strike. Other workers will not feel they are joining just a protest campaign or a lost enterprise. It is therefore absolutely vital that building workers lay plans for national strike action immediately.

T & G LOBBY CALL

The following resolution was passed by the T&GWU 5/55 Branch, Oxford, earlier this week.

The 5/55 Branch of the T&G resolves to lobby the special meeting of TUC Presidents and National Secretaries to demand that the TUC leaders organise resistance to all redundancies and closures; support all occupations and other actions in defence of jobs and call a General Strike to remove the Tory Government. We will fight for support of this lobby through the Auto Motors Committee of the T&G, the District Committee and the Joint Shop Stewards Committees.

See p. 3 for IMG statement

SHREWSBURY

CP forgets lessons of Pentonville Five

The three building workers jailed at Shrewsbury are the first victims of a new form of attack designed to cripple the working class movement. By applying the laws of criminal conspiracy to trade union activity, the Shrewsbury trials have made every organiser of a picket, meeting, or demonstration criminally liable for the actions of those he or she organises.

It has been pointed out by all those leading the campaign against the trials that this new tactic threatens the working class movement as seriously as the Industrial Relations Act. This is why Kevin Halpin of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, a top industrial spokesman for the Communist Party, said the day following the sentences: "We have got to work over the holiday to get the same response as got the dockers out of Pentonville".

BUILDING THE RESPONSE

The response of the movement to the jailing of the 3 dockers' leaders under the Industrial Relations Act was a spontaneous rank and file reaction. Unofficial, all-out stoppages spread across the country like wildfire. It was clear that a full scale general strike movement was under way, leaving the TUC no choice but to declare a 'one-day general strike' (for a later date) in an effort to regain control. Faced with this massive response, the Government quickly gave way.

Last week, the London Shrewsbury Defence Committee held a meeting in Shoreditch Town Hall, attended by several hundred people. A resolution was passed calling for the big one-day protest strike called by the London Trades Council on 13 January. The day Parliament opens, to become the start of strike action, including 'to general strike proportions' being the subject of the meeting, Lou Lewis, leading London building worker and spokesman for the Communist Party, said: "Many may say we must do what we did over the Pentonville 5... I think it would be wrong of us to say we can do this again overnight".

Lou Lewis is correct. Millions of workers will not come out on an unofficial strike over Shrewsbury 'overnight'. It will take time to build this response. The Industrial Relations Act was given all the publicity which accompanies the passage of Parliamentary legislation. The Shrewsbury 24 have hardly received a mention in the national press. The Act was passed by a Government recognised by millions of workers to be thoroughly anti-working class. The Shrewsbury 24 are being tried under the existing criminal law, which many workers still believe to be in some sense 'neutral'. Finally, the trade union leadership led a sustained, albeit inadequate, campaign against the Industrial Relations Act, whereas over Shrewsbury they have cursed the 24 rather than the Government or the Courts.

Nevertheless, what we must work out is how to overcome these unfavourable circumstances. We must ask, is the strategy of the Communist Party, which is playing the leading role in the campaign, based on the essential lessons of the Pentonville 5 experience?

LESSONS OF PENTONVILLE 5

One of the obvious lessons of the Pentonville 5 experience is that an immediate and decisive action by some section or sections of workers can provide the sort of determined lead which the rest of the class will follow. The first task in reply to the Shrewsbury verdicts, therefore, was (and is) to get massive, indefinite strike action under way in the building industry as soon as possible.

Several one-day stoppages have occurred in the building trade across the country over Shrewsbury in recent months. The rank-and-file paper *Building Workers Charter* has campaigned about the trials, and the *Morning Star*, along with the papers of the revolutionary left, has given the case extensive coverage. Resolutions of support have been passed up and down the country. Over 650 delegates, many of them building workers, attended the Liverpool Trades Council sponsored Shrewsbury Conference last September, where many delegates called for 'the sort of action that freed the Pentonville 5' if any workers were to be jailed. In other parts of the country, industrial action in support of the Shrewsbury 24 has already, especially within the building trade.

Immediately sentence was passed, the North Wales Defence Committee called on North Wales building workers to strike in the new year until the 3 were released (significantly, the *Morning Star* failed to print this.) Then, on 31 December, the *Star* reported a change of line, without any explanation: "The



L to r: Ken O'Shea (suspended sentence), Eric Tomlinson and Dennis Warren (both jailed) on demo last year

Committee recommended a return to work on 2 January of all building workers in North Wales pending calls for further action... Almost from the beginning, then, the Communist Party ignored the lessons of the Pentonville 5 and opposed indefinite, unofficial stoppages.

Instead they placed their major emphasis on the organisation of a lobby of the UCATT and T&G Executives on 8 January, a national one day stoppage on Friday the 11th (the day of the 3's bail hearings), and a stoppage and lobby of Parliament when it opens on the 15th. In this way the Communist Party counterposed the necessary fight to get official action to the development of strike action outside of official channels, again in complete contradiction to the experience of the Pentonville 5.

FLYING PICKETS

It cannot be claimed that unofficial action would not be national action. A stoppage by a number of major sites in key areas would have made it possible to form flying picket squads to travel up and down the country, pulling other building workers out on strike. Flying pickets would be the best 'education team' of all to carry the message of the importance of the Shrewsbury case to those workers who are not yet aware of it. The use of flying pickets in this way would be a public demonstration to the whole working class that the Government's attempts to intimidate the workers' movement had failed, and any attempt by the authorities to crack down on such activity would simply serve to guarantee a massive working class response.

The support of the T&G and UCATT Executives would be very valuable for the development of the campaign. But the Executives have done absolutely nothing for

a whole year, even in the face of several unofficial one-day stoppages. To imagine that they will respond readily now is to indulge in day-dreaming. Thus the need for official action only makes the urgency of big, unofficial initiatives even greater. A lobby would only have real power if it were backed up by massive unofficial action spreading across the country. That is another lesson of the Pentonville experience that the Communist Party chooses to ignore.

Moreover the CP and its spokesmen have not been clear on the objectives of the lobby. Nowhere—neither in the *Morning Star*, nor *Charter*, nor anywhere else—have they spelled out the sort of action the Executives should take. Before the lobby, the only body to make a clear call for a national building workers' strike was the Birmingham UCATT Shop Stewards Committee, and that call was not initiated by the CP (although local CP militants did support it).

OFFICIAL ACTION

This is not for want of influence. Hundreds of resolutions have been passed calling on the Executives to 'call for national industrial action', to 'lead a militant campaign', to 'organise a continuing campaign', and, to crown them all, to 'win TUC leadership of the national campaign'. Not a single one mentions a national building strike. The aim of the lobby was rather more modest: to force an official approach by the T&G and UCATT to the TUC, without which the TUC will not even discuss the matter.

Lou Lewis was right to point out that 'we must win the official trade union movement; we won it at the time of Pentonville, we can win it again'. What he forgot to mention, however, was that the TUC did

not act in 1972 because a letter from the dockers' section of the T&GWU arrived in the post. They acted because they had no choice but to act. Appeals to the TUC against the background of a national building strike are far more likely to be effective than nicely typed requests. What the Communist Party have done in the Shrewsbury campaign is to subordinate the response of the mass movement to the rhythm of the official trade union machine.

Of course, nobody claims that the TUC will take no action on Shrewsbury as a result of official requests and general badgering, or that the TUC should not be lobbied. The TUC will probably be forced to call a one-day protest strike over general Tory policies. But no Tory policy has ever been changed significantly by one-day protest stoppages. This is the only likely outcome to the CP's plan for the campaign, and it is plainly useless as far as freeing the 3 is concerned.

NO GUIDE

The Communist Party line offers no guide for what to do if the TUC doesn't deliver the goods. It is no use saying, as Lou Lewis did at the Shoreditch meeting, that 'the rank and file will have to find a way to do the job themselves' if they find that the campaign to get action from the bureaucracy is a failure. A series of one-day stoppages and demonstrations centred solely around getting the official machine to do something which it then fails to do will be a demoralising and energy-wasting process. By the time you get around to discussing the correct course, the movement will have already broken up on the rock of bureaucratic immovability.

By the time 15 January has come and gone, the trials of the remaining 18 will be opening in Shrewsbury and the prospect of reversing the verdicts imposed on the 3 will seem more and more distant. In the absence of any clear focus for struggle workers will begin to think 'Let's not do anything until the appeals are over' and the whole movement will evaporate, leaving the Shrewsbury 24 firmly in the hands of the state machine.

The CP knows full well what the Shrewsbury trials are designed to do. It knows that indefinite national stoppages and 'action of general strike proportions' is the only certain way of releasing the 3 and stopping the trials. They openly say that it was not the machinations of an 'independent' legal machine which got the 5 out of Pentonville, but the mass action of the working class. It knows that the Tories are engaged in an all-out attack on the working class, and that a fragmented response will not stop them. Yet they act in a way which contradicts all these facts of life.

COMMUNIST PARTY STRATEGY

The Communist Party has many genuine illusions in the trade union bureaucracy, but what is uppermost in their thinking is their relationship with the trade union and Labour Party 'lefts'. The road to socialism for the CP lies through a parliamentary coalition with the Labour left which will use the capitalist state machine to legislate socialism into existence. The mass struggle of the working class does have a part in this schema—but only a secondary one.

A general strike of the sort that shook the British ruling class in 1926 or France in 1968 would disrupt all these well laid plans. Under such circumstances the 'left' bureaucrats in both the trade unions and the Labour Party would rapidly shy away from the mass movement, leaving the CP all alone in the middle. Even the limited level of struggle we have seen so far has forced the CP into some very curious contortions as they step leftwards with one foot to keep up with the militants, and rightwards with the other to keep up with Scanlon and Jones—all in the interests of 'unity', you know.

The 'left' bureaucrats have a magic formula to which they have recourse in times of crisis—a general election. This allows them to pose as the boldest champions of the working class against the Tory 'beast', while at the same time refusing to do anything at all about the struggles in which workers are actually engaged. No one has asked this play more than the Communist Party and the *Morning Star* who consistently present the struggle against the Tory Government as if a general election was the only gate through which the road to victory lay. The CP's strategy, which prevents the Communist Party working for the most effective mobilisation of the working class in the face of the mass ill-effects of the Tory machine to act. Such ideas can do nothing to carry the Shrewsbury campaign forward; the road to victory in this struggle lies clearly and directly through the door of massive industrial action—whether it be in alliance with the bureaucrats or in the teeth of their treachery.



Alan Abrahams (glasses) of the Defence Committee with Ken O'Shea and fellow defendant John Liywarch at Tuesday's picket of the UCATT executive meeting. Photo: Peter Harrap (Report)

Dave Bailey

The decline and fall of the Unionist Party

or The sash my father wore out

The defeat of Brian Faulkner at the Ulster Unionist Council last Friday was the most predictable political event of 1974. The split which will inevitably emerge from this defeat will be the logical outcome of the process which was initiated by Direct Rule, and the final shattering of the Unionist monolith will rank with the smashing of the old Stormont Parliament as one of the historic milestones during this phase of the Irish struggle.

Traditionally, the Unionist Party was a cross-class party which integrated all sections of the protestant community, and this was reflected in its corporatist structure. Class and sectional conflicts were resolved within the twin doctrines of the Union with Britain and the protestant ascendancy. When the State was founded these were interdependent; the protestant owned industry in the north-east of Ireland, and the livelihood of the protestant aristocracy of labour depended on unrestricted access to the British market. The changing pattern of British economic policy, the greater importance of the South of Ireland for British capitalism, and the heavy investment of capital from the North of Ireland in British industry, implying an integration with British capital, created a conflict of interest within Unionism. The big protestant bourgeoisie was dragged willy-nilly behind the British re-orientation, while small protestant capital—consisting of large numbers of family businesses, the protestant petit-bourgeoisie, the protestant skilled working class, and the protestant lumpen proletariat

continued to demand a privileged position for the protestants.

The Unionist Party at one time represented an important element in the British strategy. For a whole period the long term aims of the British Government were frustrated by the need to work through the State institutions of Northern Ireland in order to keep the Unionist Party together. This meant that all of its initiatives had to go through the sectarian mill before implementation. They were thus unable to win a base of support in the catholic middle class, and were prevented from working more closely with the Free State bourgeoisie. After the Bloody Sunday massacre in 1971 and the mass response which this evoked, British imperialism decided that the Unionist Party must be sacrificed in order to pursue these other aims.

The British Press has been licking its lips at the prospect of a 'normal' Conservative Party in the North of Ireland, led by Faulkner. They work on the rule of thumb that the more closely a political system resembles that of Britain the better it is. But Faulkner understands that things are not that simple. He is reluctant to announce a new party just yet. Support for his policies rests with a thin upper crust of Unionist capital, and a scarcely more substantial layer of 'enlightened' middle class protestants. Meanwhile the traditional mass base of Unionism remains opposed to his policies.

Nevertheless a split is inevitable. The Unionist Party means nothing without protestant politics in a protestant parliament for a protestant people. The British Government, however, has gone too far along its present path to turn back in order to re-unite the Unionist Party around Brian Faulkner, particularly when an election can be put off for nearly five years.

EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY UNIONISM

Faulkner has sufficient forces in the Assembly to maintain the Executive, and to hold on to power until constitutionally forced into an election. But the perspectives of those who defeated him do not include parliamentary action—such action is quite outside their world-view. However if the extra-parliamentary protestant opposition were to put effective pressure on the British Government, the anti-Faulkner parliamentary Unionists would be the beneficiaries of the resulting shift by British imperialism, back to maintenance of the protestant ascendancy.

But there has been a serious weakening of the mass protestant organisations. The UDA marched up the hill to a confrontation with the British Army just over a year ago, and fell head over heels down again; its spine snapped before the British publication of the new deal to replace Direct Rule. The explanation is simple, although not simple enough for some on the British left who insisted that the UDA represented a threat so terrible as to make appeasement by the catholics necessary. Resistance to the British Government and the British Army, by *Loyalists* could only produce the most acute political schizophrenia. The mass of the protestant working class shrank back into passivity. The break up of the UDA as an effective mass movement was completed by the actions of judiciously infiltrated British agents.



Stormont well-protected behind barbed wire

Call for united lobby of TUC meeting

The following letter has been sent by the International Marxist Group to Labour Weekly, Tribune, the Labour Party Young Socialists, the Communist Party, and the organisations of the revolutionary left, including the International Socialists and the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Dear Cdes,

As you are aware the TUC has called a special conference of union general secretaries and presidents on January 16th. This meeting takes place at a time of unprecedented government attacks on the working class but at the same time in a situation of great potential for the working class movement. This special conference is therefore an important event in the life of the working class and it is necessary that the maximum forces are organised to express the need for this meeting to take decisive action. This means the need for the largest possible mass lobby of the conference. At present the aim of the government and the employers is to divide the working class and centralise the forces of the state against each group of workers individually. For this reason we believe that the policy which must be called for is the maximum possible unification of struggle. The highest form of such unification, and therefore the one with the greatest possible power, is a General Strike. We therefore believe that the main demand of the lobby of the special conference must be the demand that this TUC meeting call a general strike. Many militant sections of the working class will be present on such a lobby and clearly the maximum possible unity around this demand has the best chance of winning these sections of the working class to the demand for a General Strike. We therefore propose a joint campaign for such a lobby of all organisations which are prepared to call on the special conference to call for a General Strike. Such a joint campaign should consist both of national and local meetings, a joint platform for a meeting at the lobby on this theme, joint resolution for presenting in trade union branches, and so on. We would propose that a meeting be held as soon as possible of all organisations which agree to this proposal to plan this campaign. If your organisation or supporters of your newspaper agree to this proposal we would undertake, in collaboration with all organisations accepting this proposal, to set up as rapidly as possible a time for a joint meeting.

Continued resistance was left to the small underground military organisations the UVF, the UFF, the Red Hand Commandoes, and similar diseased animals. Their campaign consisted almost entirely of sectarian murders against catholics, although here again the operations of British agents, in particular the Military Reaction Force, played a role.

PARANOID UNIONISM

With the Sunningdale agreement, the British Army and the RUC take on a different political complexion. In the paranoid world of extreme Loyalism these forces are now seen as the direct agents of a united Ireland, and action against them becomes a consistent and logical defence of the protestant ascendancy. We have therefore seen some isolated actions against the British Army and the RUC, by protestants, in the last two weeks. If the UVF were to call off their cease-fire these would escalate.

But although these underground groups have broad sympathy among protestants, particularly in the lumpen proletariat, they do not have the same kind of relationship to the Shankill or Sandy Row as the IRA does to Anderstown or Ballymurphy. They consist of small isolated gangs whose politics have been formed by protestant sectarian traditions, and whose psychology is twisted by the sick society which has dominated the North East of Ireland, but who do not represent a potential mass movement.

ACROBATIC UNIONISM

The mass of the protestants are likely to transfer their allegiance to the party led by the unpledged Unionists. But they will find themselves clinging to a broken reed, and the fragmentation of Unionism will get worse before it gets eliminated. Such is the ideological vacuum created by the collapse of the traditional Unionist Party that all kinds of bits of ideas will be stuck together, by all kinds of groupings and individuals, in order to re-create a political base for a protestant party. The graceful arc described by Desmond Boal's leap from Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party to advocacy of an 'Amalgamated Ireland' is less startling than the acrobatics of his former collaborator, who has jumped from ice-floe to ice-floe as the Unionist monolith has broken up.

This should not be confused with an evolution to progressive or socialist policies by a section of the protestants. Their ideas do not develop logically, and so far no significant section of the protestants has broken from either of the two reactionary planks of Unionism. But the ideological crisis and class differentiation within Unionism does represent a step closer to working class unity, although this can only take place on the basis of an all Ireland struggle against British Imperialism and sectional privilege, as well as Unionist and Free State capitalism.

BOB FURD E

3-day week will slash workers' living standards

By rejecting any real offer on waiting time for the miners the government has made clear its determination to force things through to an all-out confrontation with the working class. It is worth spelling out just what implications this will have for the living standards of workers.

The government is now systematically preparing to ride out the miners' overtime ban. It has imported one million tons of coal from the United States and various European countries and has already saved 2 million tons of coal through the three-day week and the other restrictions. It believes that it can now keep coal supplies going until the end of March—when the onset of warmer weather will drastically reduce consumption. This 'achievement' will be paid for by still greater attacks on the working class.

Firstly, from the end of February there is going to be an acute shortage of steel. Production of steel has already been cut by 30%, with the threat of another 16% fall, and engineering will soon run out of this vital raw material. This will lead first to big closures, and redundancies in steel itself, where as the *Economist* magazine puts it 'it is already likely that some of BSC's older plants that are being shut will not reopen', and will then lead to general lay-offs in large sections of industry.

The next step will be further soaring inflation cutting into living standards. The two-day-a-week lock-out will raise industrial costs by anything up to 20-30% a year. Two months of this would be equivalent to an annual increase of 2-3% in costs. All of this will be passed on in higher prices.

This inflation will hit a working class whose income has been drastically hit by the lay-offs. Again the *Economist* magazine sets out the facts, as seen even from the point of view of the ruling class: 'The effect of the three-day week will be sharply regressive. The average executive will lose nothing... the average engineering worker will lose about 16%. The worker in industry with no guaranteed week, probably low paid, will lose nearly 50%... The best guesstimates seem that the three-day week may cut average pre-tax pay by around 18%, but that average income will fall by around 11% thanks to lower marginal tax and unemployment pay.' Again if this were spread out over two months this is equivalent to a loss of income in a year of 2%.

Finally, it is quite clear that Phase 4 of the

incomes policy will be even more vicious than Phase 3. As the expected rate of inflation next year is anything between 15 and 20%, and the rate of pay increases allowed under Phase 3 is only 7%, this means that Phase 4 will be aimed at forcing a sharp fall in the living standard of the working class.

If you add together these facts—the increasing inflation, the unemployment, the loss of pay due to the lock-out, and the more vicious Phase 4 of the incomes policy still to come—the conclusion is very clear: the government and the employers are now aiming not simply to hold back the living standard of the working class, but to sharply decrease it. This is what any section of the working class movement which fails to support smashing Phase 3 and ending the Tory government is inviting.

Spanish Trotskyists give total support to Carrero Blanco assassination

Interview with members of the LCR-ETA(VI), supporters of the Fourth International in Spain, who explain their position on the assassination, their differences with the group which carried it out, and their perspectives for the struggle ahead

First of all, what was the immediate reaction to the execution of Carrero Blanco? In the first few hours, there seems by all accounts to have been a mixture of incomprehension and panic inside the regime.

Yes, that's true. The first reactions clearly indicated a state of paralysis inside the regime, and this is important because it gives us a foretaste of what to expect with the death of Franco in the not-too-distant future.

One must say that on the technical level it was an extremely impressive operation, and it is easy to see how it would have stunned a regime which, unchallenged for thirty years, thought it could go on in the same way for ever. Hence the first official reaction was quite simply to reject the idea of a bomb; the statement declared that it was the result of a gas explosion!

Several theories were rife at this stage about the authors of the attack, and it is interesting to note that certain groups inside the regime suspected each other of being behind it. Such confidence is touching! The Spanish Communist Party also took up the version according to which it was a plot by the hardliners of the regime to take over control. But this theory would not stand up—there was nothing of the liberal about Carrero Blanco. On the contrary, he appeared to guarantee the continuation of Francoism after the death of Franco.

In any case, what is quite clear is that the whole apparatus of the dictatorship was seriously affected, and that no section of the regime had the ability or capacity to launch an immediate response to this attack.

The army, certainly, provided an element of stability in the situation, but even so there was a mood of alarmed expectancy in the ranks of the ruling class for hours and even days after the explosion.

Several amusing stories are going the rounds about this: there were the mothers in the bourgeois quarters who dashed out to collect their children from their expensive private schools; the banks which had to lock their doors because of the rush of people to withdraw their money; or the case of the factory where on learning the news the management simply got up and left their offices.

And on top of this there has been the silence of Franco himself and his absence from the funeral of Carrero Blanco.

There seems to have been a show of strength by the Francoists on the occasion of the funeral. Was this a mass mobilisation? What was the reaction in the popular quarters?

The execution of Carrero Blanco did not bring the workers into the streets, that's true, but they certainly didn't go into mourning either! There was a very favourable response to the operation. Everyone in the working class quarters saw it as a spectacular and hard-hitting blow against the dictatorship.

As for the demonstration on the day of the funeral, there is nothing surprising in the fact that the regime can bring twenty or thirty thousand people out onto the streets. Apart from anything else, everybody working for the administration in any capacity was mobilised for it. The fact that it was confined to Madrid, and that even here it was so limited in size, shows on the contrary the narrow social base of the regime. Even after the Burgos trials, at the beginning of 1971, the Francoist mobilisations were bigger than this.

There was another difference: at the funeral the extreme right went no further than threats against the archbishop of Madrid, Tarancon, who is thought to represent the liberal wing in the catholic hierarchy. It did not take the initiative in launching a response, as it did when a policeman was killed during the last May Day demonstrations.

To come back to the reaction of the workers, the execution of Carrero Blanco did not lead to any street demonstrations against the dictatorship. If it had taken place within the framework of a mass mobilisation, as during



Demonstration of the Workers' Commissions

the Burgos trials for instance, it could have had a powerful stimulating effect. But today, largely as a result of the attitude of the Communist Party, the mobilisation against the trial of the leaders of the Workers' Commissions (the 'Carabanchel 10') has been very inadequate except in Barcelona. The explosion took place on the same day as the opening of the trial, 20 December, and the subsequent concentration of police in the centre of Madrid was so great that demonstrations could very easily have been mounted in the popular quarters. But nothing had been seriously prepared: any real mobilisation was sabotaged by the CP, while the revolutionary organisations have had to devote most of their resources recently to defending themselves from repression.

But it would be completely untrue to pretend that the bomb which eliminated Carrero Blanco in any way hindered the mobilisation against the trial of the Carabanchel 10, or that it found no echo inside the working class.

The day afterwards, 21 December, you stated your position in a public declaration as follows: 'The consequences of this operation seem to us to be positive, as much for the stimulating effect which the execution of Carrero Blanco will have on the masses as for its objective effect in removing a key figure from the ranks of the ruling class. For these reasons we give total support to this action.'

Yes, it's important to explain our position fully. In the present case, our support goes further than simple recognition of the unconditional right to use violence, including terrorism, in the struggle against the Francoist dictatorship, one of the most bloodthirsty in the history of the world, and beyond simple defence of the militants against repression. That is only the first point—absolutely necessary, but independent of our estimate of the usefulness of the action, its consequences, and our disagreements with the organisation which it carried out.

With the execution of Carrero Blanco, we have no hesitation in taking a position of positive support, declaring that the effects of this action are positive and favour the development of mass struggles which alone can overthrow the dictatorship, culminating in a revolutionary general strike.

More than any other, Carrero Blanco embodied the terrorism of the Franco regime. His execution met with a very favourable response, the more so as it was carried out within the framework of the struggle against the increasing

repression. In the six months of its existence, the Carrero Blanco government had chalked up a notable series of repressive actions: heavy prison sentences against the leaders of the Workers' Commissions; death sentences hanging over anarchist militants in Barcelona; the murder of revolutionary nationalist militants in the Basque country; and so on.

No-one believes that the dictatorship will be brought down by knocking off Franco's ministers one by one, not even the comrades of ETA (V), although they do have a militarist conception of the confrontation with the State apparatus. But the workers saw this blow struck at the very heart of the regime as an encouragement to struggle, exposing the dictatorship's vulnerability and depriving it of its key element in the operation to ensure the succession.

The removal of Carrero Blanco has weakened the regime and accentuated the conflict between the different sections of the ruling class, all of whom are incapable of assuring a trouble-free transition to 'Francoism without Franco' in the face of the continued rise in mass struggles.

It is obvious that the repression will be stepped up, but this will only be a sign of the growing crisis of the dictatorship. The response of the masses to the intensification of Francoist terror must therefore be an offensive one, preparing for the overthrow of the dictatorship.

In giving your support to the execution of Carrero Blanco, you are supporting an action carried out by ETA (V). However, not only do you have deep programmatic differences with these comrades, but you also reject their conception of the armed struggle against the dictatorship.

Of course, Our break, as ETA (VI), with the nationalist militants of ETA in August 1970 was based on fundamental programmatic differences and on an understanding of the dead end to which the militarist activism of our organisation had brought us. ETA (V) sees the struggle against national oppression as a national liberation struggle, and not as an element which while essential is closely tied in with the whole class struggle at the level of the Spanish state for the overthrow of the Francoist dictatorship and the creation of a federated socialist republic.

Its petty bourgeois nationalist ideology has sometimes led it to adopt reactionary positions and even to deny the existence of class confrontation in Euzkadi (the Basque country). But

the headlong development of workers' struggles is exposing the glaring contradictions of such conceptions. Today ETA (V) is being forced to link its armed actions to the struggles of the masses. But its activity still remains almost entirely on the military level. It does no serious work in terms of propaganda, agitation and organisation in the factories, the universities or the popular quarters.

ETA (V) sees the overthrow of the dictatorship as a process of direct confrontation between the State apparatus and the revolutionary organisation, whose courageous actions will arouse the sympathy of the masses and lead to their spontaneous mobilisation. In essence it is a putschist conception which is based on the illusion that the daring actions of a small group of revolutionaries can overthrow the dictatorship without basing themselves on the organised violence of the working class and its allies.

We think that the armed minority actions of the vanguard must have the definite aim of contributing to the organisation of mass self-defence and violence, by inserting themselves in the present mass struggles.

It has just been announced that Arias Navarro will be the new prime minister.

Yes, that confirms the hardening of the regime: confirms that its only perspective is to step up the repression in an attempt to halt the rise of mass struggles, which directly threaten the dictatorship faced as it is with the problem of the succession and the likelihood of an international recession.

It is necessary to bear in mind the difficulties with which the operation to ensure the succession was prepared, and the decisive role which Carrero Blanco was to play in this, to understand that in this situation the regime has for the moment no alternative to hand. Carrero Blanco had occupied leading positions for 33 years and was Franco's trusted companion; indeed, he was considered to be more Francoist even than Franco. Not directly linked to any grouping, he seemed capable of at least making a stab at replacing Franco in the role of Bonaparte, and of maintaining a balance between the various groupings inside the ruling class.

Arias Navarro is incapable of playing such a role. He has no political ability, no authority. He is simply the top cop in the land.

What the choice of Arias Navarro basically shows is that the regime has fallen back on

Fourth International group fuses with ETA(VI)

A few weeks ago, there took place the 3rd Congress of the LCR (Liga Comunista Revolucionaria—Revolutionary Communist League) and the 7th Assembly of ETA (VI), the Marxist wing of the Basque liberation movement. At both the vote was overwhelmingly for a unification of forces through fusion to form a new organisation, to be known as the LCR-ETA (VI).

This fusion occurred as the result of a double process: on the one hand, a political clarification and an organisational consolidation of the LCR since the crisis a year ago, when the organisation split in half; on the other hand, a rapid evolution of ETA (VI) following its break with the militarist nationalist wing of the Basque movement, ETA (V), which led it to adhere explicitly to revolutionary Marxism and to the Fourth International.

After a period of intensive political discussion between the

leaderships, and of consistent unity in action in their interventions, the two organisations came to the conclusion that the time was ripe for fusion on a clear programmatic basis, on a thoroughgoing agreement on the necessity to build the revolutionary party.

The circumstances in which the revolutionary party is being built in Spain make this experience in many ways an object lesson for revolutionaries all over the world. Only five years ago there existed no Trotskyist grouping in Spain, no nucleus of revolutionary Marxists. Yet since then, in a period of spectacular growth in the class struggle, an organisation has developed which has shown itself able to organise a section of the student and working class vanguard, and to win to the construction of the revolutionary party an important current emerging from the crisis of radical nationalism in the Basque country.

As the comrades of ETA (VI) declared in a message sent to the 3rd Congress of the LCR: 'We are convinced that we will be able to overcome all the difficulties which will arise in the practicalities of fusion of our two organisations—arising from their different origins, history, growth and traditions—through basing ourselves on our programmatic clarity, through a unified intervention and adherence to democratic centralism. In this way we believe we can bring a new experience of obvious value to the construction of the Fourth International and its national sections. We send our fraternal greetings to the 3rd Congress of the LCR, which confirms the maturity of an organisation which has been able to win to itself a centrist organisation like our own, through standing firm on its principles while at the same time developing a flexible set of tactics for the concrete situation. Long live the LCR! Long live the Fourth International!'

iraultza-ala hil!



E.T.A. (VI)

But the development of workers' struggles all over Spain towards the end of the 1960s highlighted the political dilemma in which ETA found itself. Its petty bourgeois nationalist ideology led it to adopt reactionary political positions, counterposing the mass of the Spanish people to the mass of the Basque people without any class differentiation. Thus when the police killed three striking building workers in Granada in August 1968, ETA refused to contribute to a fund to support the families of these 'Spanish' workers.

It was in August 1970, on the occasion of the 6th Assembly, that ETA split into two sections. The majority of the organisation, which was to take the name ETA (VI), broke with the previous narrow nationalist framework and the militarist conception of the struggle in Euzkadi. But a minority split, declaring its adherence to the resolutions of the previous conference, the 5th Assembly. This wing, ETA (V), clung to radical nationalism and military activism, carrying out several kidnappings and most recently the spectacular execution of Carrero Blanco.

Following the 6th Assembly, ETA (VI) underwent a political evolution in the course of which the majority of the organisation developed similar positions to those of the Fourth International. At the end of 1972 a minority split from the organisation, rejecting the perspective of fusion with the LCR; but this group has shown itself incapable of embarking on the process of building a revolutionary organisation, with its militants departing in a number of different directions (some have rejoined ETA (VI)).

At the same time as developing its relationship with the LCR, ETA (VI) concentrated on building up its apparatus and developing its mass work in the student and working class movements. Its membership is roughly the same as that of ETA (V). At the time of the general strike in Pamplona, in June 1973, the comrades of ETA (VI) played a vital role in the extension of solidarity and in the leadership of the strike in several factories.

Through its fusion with the LCR, ETA (VI) brings not only a militant base tested in the toughest conditions of the struggle in Euzkadi, but also a real implantation in the Basque country. In taking the decision to struggle against national oppression in Euzkadi on a truly revolutionary basis, our comrades can rapidly win over the best of those militants confronting the Francoist dictatorship, not least among them some of those now in ETA (V).



At the beginning of 1971, militants of the Comunismo group decided to set up the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR), which at its first conference in January 1972 declared its support for the Fourth International.

The Comunismo group had emerged in 1969 as a left split from a centrist organisation, in reaction to the latter's ideological eclecticism and bureaucratic methods. In the following period, Comunismo underwent a political evolution which led it to strengthen its links with the Communist League in France and finally to declare its support for the Fourth International.

The LCR rapidly began to play a prominent role in the mass mobilisations of 1971 and 1972. It played an active part in the campaign to boycott the elections in the official union federation, the CNS—a campaign in the spring of 1971 which was outstandingly successful, expressing the new rise in working class militancy after the massive demonstrations against the Burgos trials. In this way the LCR was able to establish itself as a national organisation, with groups in Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona and the Basque country.

At the time of the general strike around SEAT in Barcelona in October 1971, the LCR was in the forefront of the mass mobilisation and was able to force the Communist Party into united action. In all the

major struggles which broke out against the dictatorship (the strikes in Vigo and El Ferrol, the building workers' strike in Madrid), the LCR organised publicity and solidarity on a national scale. Its numbers swelled to almost a thousand militants and sympathisers, and it became a recognised pole of attraction for the new student and workers' vanguard.

However, this rapid growth highlighted internal problems which came to a head in the spring of 1972 with the establishment of two tendencies. The major differences concerned the tactics of party-building and the basis for breaking with the previous ultra-left sectarian line. While both tendencies agreed on the need for systematic work inside the Workers' Commissions, they disagreed on the tactical methods of intervention. After several months of intensive internal discussion, the organisation split in two in December 1972, leading to the creation of the Liga Comunista (which also supports the Fourth International).

The LCR held its 2nd Congress shortly after this split. This congress marked a conscious and thoroughgoing break with the previous ultra-left orientation, and established a general framework for building the revolutionary party in this period of crisis for the Franco dictatorship. The LCR also decided then to step up its joint work with ETA (VI) with a short-term perspective of fusion.

In spite of suffering several blows as a result of the repression, the LCR was gradually able to replace the forces lost through the split, and to consolidate its national implantation, particularly in Galicia. The fusion with ETA (VI) establishes it as the most important organisation on the extreme left, and therefore a special target for the dictatorship.

At its 3rd Congress the LCR was able to elaborate its analysis of the crisis of Francoism and the tasks of revolutionary marxists, to adopt a resolution on the national question, and to strengthen its method of organisation.

Its ability to play a leading role in the coming confrontations will open the way for the LCR-ETA (VI) to establish itself as the dominant force in the mass vanguard and take giant strides towards the building of the revolutionary party.

ETA (Euzkadi Ta Azkatasuna—Freedom for the Basques) was formed in 1959 by a group of young militants who broke away from the old Basque nationalist party, rejecting its policy and its abandonment in practice of the struggle against the Franco dictatorship.

The group first attracted public attention in July 1961 through an abortive attack on a train taking Francoist veterans to a commemoration of the fascist rising in the Basque country.

The struggle of ETA against the dictatorship in Euzkadi (the Basque name for their country) was proclaimed as a struggle of national liberation in a colonised country. The independence of Euzkadi was laid down as the main objective, a necessary stage in the final liberation of the Basque country. The social contradictions in Euzkadi were thus overshadowed by a struggle for national liberation, which took the form of armed confrontation with the apparatus of the Francoist state: bomb attacks on police stations, against the offices of the official 'yellow' trade unions, execution of the commissioner of police Manzanas in August 1968, etc. Through this struggle, ETA succeeded in drawing in a militant layer of working class youth, and was able to rely on considerable sympathy within the Basque country.

its past—on its trusted servants, the police and the army. It is an attempt to banish temporarily all the problems which have confronted it for more than ten years and which will break loose as soon as Franco dies, if not before. There is therefore no future for this government. It is simply a short-term stop-gap measure.

As far as the repression is concerned, we will not have to wait long to discover its policy. The leaders of the Workers' Commissions in the Carabanchel 10 trial have just been given prison sentences of between 12 and 20 years each. And the trial of the MIL anarchist militants is expected to open soon...

These last face the threat of the death penalty. At the time of their arrest, one of them defended himself and killed a policeman. Their trial was announced for December, but has been put back. The prosecutor is demanding two death sentences, and it is not in the present government's nature to be merciful. It is more than ever true that only a mass mobilisation can save them.

This is also the case with the comrades of ETA (V), who have sought asylum in France and are accused of being responsible for the bombing. There has been a hysterical campaign in the press demanding their extradition.

We appeal to all revolutionary, workers' and anti-fascist organisations to mobilise in order to prevent a new fascist crime, to save the anarchist militants of Barcelona and the revolutionary Basque nationalist militants.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

NEW YORK: A big campaign has been launched in defence of three civil liberties organisations whose offices were destroyed by a high power bomb on 3 December. The bomb went off at a time when the offices are usually crowded with people, and it was pure chance that no-one was killed and only three people injured.

The organisations which were the victims of this attack are the US Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners, which has been active in denouncing US involvement in the Chilean coup; the Political Rights Defence Fund, which has been prominent in exposing FBI surveillance and infiltration of political groups; and the Committee for Democratic Election Laws, which has been fighting for the rights of small parties and minority groups like Blacks, Chicacos and Puerto Ricans. Those responsible are so far unidentified, but it has been noted that the record of agents of the Administration is not exactly clean in respect of such incidents.

STOCKHOLM: The myth of 'liberal', 'neutral' Sweden received a hard knock last week when two journalists were each sentenced to one year's imprisonment for disclosing information on the operations of the Swedish Secret Service. Their crime was to expose Sweden's deep involvement in the activities of the international imperialist intelligence network, revealing its collaboration with other Secret Services and giving details of operations in

which it had spied on various Arab embassies and engineered a break in at the Egyptian chancellery in Stockholm.

GREECE: Despite the reported release of many of those arrested by the Papadopoulos regime after the events in Athens, a number of militants are still held by the new junta. Among them is Trotskyist worker militant Theodoros Thomadakis, who has already spent six years in prison since the military coup in 1967 and was only recently released under the general amnesty last summer. Together with a score of other trade union militants he is being held in the Bogiatou military prison.

DHOVAR: Three thousand Iranian troops have moved in to back up the Sultan of Oman against the guerrilla struggle of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG). They are reported to have landed near Salalah in the province of Dhofar on 20 December, and to be operating alongside the Sultan's British-officered troops and British-supplied airforce in an all-out bid to re-open the road from Salalah to Muscat, which was cut by the guerrillas in 1969.

This sudden escalation of the war undoubtedly reflects the increasing strategic importance of the area in the light of the present oil crisis. The activities of the liberation forces are a real thorn in the side of imperialism and its partners in the area. PFLOAG claims to have killed or wounded 129 enemy soldiers between 20 and 29 December, as well as shooting down two helicopters. But their resources are still slim as compared to those of imperialism, and socialists in Britain have a particular responsibility to come to their aid should the need arise.

MOZAMBIQUE: The rail link between Rhodesia and Mozambique was cut by guerrilla action for the first time last week when FRELIMO commandos



mined the track on both sides. Rhodesian Railways spokesmen were unwilling to reveal details 'for fear it might embarrass the Mozambique military authorities', but the attack is believed to have occurred near the rail hamlet of Garuso, about 30 miles inside Mozambique from the Rhodesian border town of Umtali. A breakdown train sent to the rescue is reported to have been machine-gunned, killing a Portuguese Army captain on board.

This operation marks a big step forward in the liberation struggle against Portuguese colonialism, and will also have a considerable impact on the Rhodesian regime. Thousands of white Rhodesians use this line to travel to the port of Beira, which is also a popular holiday resort.

WORKERS VS.

Today millions of workers are squaring up to the Tory Government in the fight against Phase 3 and tens of millions more are being dispatched by Heath & Co, for a two-day a week holiday on the dole queue. In the debate on how to deal with this new attack the past experience of the workers' movement in its struggle against capitalist class rule can allow us to subject various plans and theories to the soundest test of all—that of practical experience.

That is why the last two issues of *Red Weekly* have looked in some detail at an important phase of British working class history—the years from 1918 to 1921, when the struggles of the workers' movement were dominated by the powerful Triple Industrial Alliance of the railway workers, miners, and transport workers.

Many changes have taken place in capitalism between the 1920's and 1970's. The economic boom after World War II was on a far larger scale and lasted much longer than any of its predecessors. But just as the most dressed up poodle remains at heart a dog, so British society continues to follow the fundamental laws of capitalism. The boom is over, and the British ruling class once again finds itself in a particularly disadvantageous economic position in a crisis-ridden world economy. Just as in 1921 it has one solution—attack the gains won by the working class in a more prosperous era. Once again a showdown with the workers' movement is on the cards.

But all big battles are preceded by smaller

concessions to the miners and the imposition of the 3-day week—suggests that the Tories may have decided to make 1974 their version of Lloyd George's 1921. This makes it all the more urgent for us to study and understand the experience of the Triple Alliance.

Power of the Triple Alliance

The most striking feature of this body was its tremendous power. It certainly puts to shame those trade union leaders who try to squirm off the hook by arguing that the major unions are powerless against the Government, and that only the TUC can lead effective action. When the TUC and the Labour Party failed to act in 1918, the Triple Alliance proved that it could make and break Government policy by itself, if necessary.

Moreover, the struggles of these years shows the tremendous willingness of the rank-and-file to fight. Time and again it was the insistence of the rank-and-file on solidarity that pulled the fat out of the fire—during the 1918 rail strike and the 1920 coal strike, for example. Then, as now, the feeble bureaucrats' excuse that they cannot act because their members would not follow was a treacherous slander.

At the same time, the workers' movement remained trapped in a contradiction that persists to this very day—on the one hand, the tremendous strength of its organisations and the combativity of the rank-and-file, on the other, the ruthlessly pro-capitalist nature of the trade union leadership and the



Right-wing bureaucrat J.H. Thomas...

as in 1919, it meant selling the miners down the river.

From the very beginning the Triple Alliance was caught in the dilemma of being a powerful instrument for 'direct action' which counted among its leaders the most dedicated enemies of the direct expression of working class might in the land. Of course, like all bureaucrats, Thomas was crafty: if he had just walked out of the Triple Alliance his influence would have been weakened and opposition within the NUR to his policies would have been stimulated. Instead he stayed, taking a deft 'left turn' whenever necessary, to carry out his fundamental role of wrecking and destroying working class unity.

But the left-wing leaders of the Triple Alliance

LESSONS OF THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

—men like Ernest Bevin and the miners' leaders—were in no position to undermine Thomas' influence, because they did not fundamentally disagree with him. They were more prepared than he to use their industrial power for limited objectives—to alter a particular Government policy or win economic demands—but they were equally reluctant to challenge the power of the Government as a whole—to threaten its right to govern. Thus when Thomas condemned the threat of general strike action as a challenge to the Government and Parliament, rather than replying 'That it is—and that is how we can best advance the interests of the working class', the 'lefts' hung their heads and tried to deny that any such challenge was intended.

Nor is the situation any different with today's



The collapse of the Triple Alliance meant that the ruling class was able to impose savage unemployment despite militant demonstrations like the one above

skirmishes as the opposing sides jockey for position and tactical advantage. Many of the struggles that took place between 1918 and 1921 had this character, as have some of the recent struggles in which the British working class has engaged: over the Industrial Relations Act, the Pontonville 5, the 1971 miners' strike, the NIRC fines, Phase 2, and, currently, the Shrewsbury sentences. The line of the Government over Phase 3—its refusal to make any

political backwardness of the movement as a whole.

Thus it was that a wretched toady like J.H. Thomas could hold on to the leadership of the National Union of Railwaymen and disorient the entire working class movement with his exhortations on the need to reject 'unconstitutional' action and stick to the rules of Parliamentary 'democracy' even if,

The Hamburg soviet

Two imperialist wars have made people in the country familiar with one side of German history: the Kaiser, Hitler, the Nazis. But the great working class movement that swept the Kaiser from power and launched a whole series of revolutionary uprisings at the start of the 1920s is hardly known at all.

By November 1918, the German armies in France were in headlong retreat. The military authorities tried to throw the German fleet into a desperate last gamble to regain control of the situation. In reply to this the sailors at the big naval base of Kiel mutinied and elected councils of deputies, following the example by the Russian Revolution. Straight away, those councils sent delegations throughout the country calling upon the workers to revolt, demanding the abdication of the Kaiser, and raising the slogan of a general strike.

Workers' and soldiers' Councils

The Kiel revolt spread like wildfire across Germany. In most of the major towns and cities of Germany, workers' and soldiers' Councils were set up during the second week of November. The first town to respond to the sailors' uprising was Hamburg.

On 5 November, Councils of workers' and soldiers' deputies were set up in Hamburg. The military and civil authorities in the city were shaken and paralysed. Elections to the Councils were completed by 10 November, each factory electing delegates to the Workers' Council and the troops sending delegates to the Soldiers' Council. The two councils then elected an executive, which in turn elected a Provisional to take up the responsibilities of

FURTHER READING:

- G Allen Hutt
Post War History of the British Working Class
- R Page Arnot
The Miners: Years of Struggle
- Alan Bullock
Life and Times of Ernest Bevin, Volume 1

THE STATE

left-wingers. The Government and the capitalist press accuse the trade unions of challenging the Government. How many left-wing trade union leaders have been prepared to stand up and say that this accusation is true, and that the full power of the trade union movement ought to be used to bring down this anti-working class Government?

The 'left' bureaucrats may be able to record certain successes as long as the Government is prepared to make concessions on individual issues. But as soon as the Government stands firm, the 'left's' militancy explodes like a balloon at the first prick of a pin. For if you are not prepared to challenge the right of the Government to govern, then what can you do if that Government refuses to make any concessions on a particular policy and proclaims its intention to fight tooth-and-nail?

The right have a clear answer: abandon the folly of 'unconstitutional' action and put all your faith in 'political action' (ie leaflets and elections). The 'left' can only run around in circles until they get dizzy. Thus it is that when the crunch comes, the phony 'left' always concedes leadership to the right, as in 1921 when Bevin gave way to Thomas.

Rank-and-file unity

The fundamental answer to the right-wing domination of the workers' movement is not, then, the election of 'left' bureaucrats, but the creation of genuine instruments of rank-and-file control over the struggle. This was the basic weakness of the Triple Alliance—it was simply an alliance of the union bureaucracies,



but the 'lefts' like Hugh Scanlon and . . .

with no effective unity at the base of the unions involved. Thus the rank-and-file had to watch the bureaucrats juggling with their fate, without any way of making their own feelings felt. When the 'left' architects of the Alliance ran out of steam and passed leadership over to the right there was nothing the rank-and-file could do.

Under such circumstances, there was little that even the most sincere left leader could do, faced with the confusion and treachery that permeated the union bureaucracies. This was the tragedy of Robert Williams, President of the Transport Workers Federation. A revolutionary socialist of long standing, a fervent advocate of the direct exercise of the industrial power of the working class for political ends, and a member of the Communist Party, Williams

faced a desperate choice on 'Black Friday'—to vote for strike action in the face of NUR opposition, action which was bound to be partial and therefore posed great dangers for his union, or to maintain bureaucratic 'solidarity' at the cost of betraying the miners. He chose the latter course.

The Communist Party expelled him for his complicity and he began a rightward drift, deepening despair and eventual suicide ending the process only after he had crossed beyond the fringes of the workers' movement in pursuit of his new masters—Ramsey MacDonald and J.H.Thomas.

How different things might have been if the Triple Alliance had sunk deep roots into the rank-and-file, creating local joint committees of railmen, transport workers, and miners. The sectionalism that haunted the Alliance could have been overcome and the ability of Thomas to use the NUR members like pawns in his treacherous game would have been greatly weakened. Even if the Triple Alliance leaders had tried to repeat the treachery of 'Black Friday', the rank-and-file would have had the means to organise solidarity independently of the bureaucrats. It would have been possible for someone like Williams to call for such action and to set about the task of organising national coordination of the rank-and-file bodies to replace the bankrupt shell of the Triple Alliance executives.

No matter what turns the bureaucracy or sections of the bureaucracy may take today we must remember this: the only way to keep the movement on course is for the rank-and-file to take a firm grip on the steering wheel, and to prepare to step into the drivers' seat, if



Jack Jones today provide no real alternative

necessary. Elected strike committees wherever strikes or occupations are launched, and joint committees of miners, rail drivers, and engineers to plan coordinated local struggles, are both ways of carrying this into practice. With the decision of the Government to make the whole working class carry the burdens of the fight over Phase 3, an urgent and practical necessity is for Councils of Action in every area. Such bodies, bringing together the entire local labour movement, can coordinate the resistance to the Tory lockout and prepare for an offensive to smash Phase 3 and bring the Tory Government tumbling down, no matter what course the bureaucrats try to pursue.

Brian Slocock

government. Policy was to be decided by a joint meeting of the two councils.

A few days earlier, on 6 November, the bourgeois city government had offered to mediate between these revolutionary bodies and the military commander of the city. Six days later, the new Presidium resolved to dissolve the old bourgeois city government and evict the Senate and the Chamber from the City Hall. After a struggle lasting only a few days, the working class established its control over the city, and the repressive forces of the ruling class disintegrated. The fate of the capitalists of Hamburg now depended on one thing: the revolutionary will of the leaders of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils.

During the War, a left wing of the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) had emerged in opposition to the pro-imperialist policies of the SPD leadership. By late 1918, although the SPD was still the largest working class party in Germany, the majority of the working class in Hamburg had switched their support to the left wing break away, the Independent Social Democrats (USPD), led by Laufenberg. It was he who proposed the dissolution of the old bourgeois city government of Hamburg and became Chairman of the Presidium.

Bourgeoisie regroups

But Laufenberg's leadership of the Presidium was not decisive enough. The old city bureaucracy was not smashed, and the levers of economic and financial power in Hamburg were not taken out of the hands of the bourgeoisie. Very soon, the Workers' Council faced an acute shortage of funds, making administration of the city difficult. The bourgeoisie seized their opportunity. Warburg, a representative of the city's banking interests, visited Laufenberg at the City Hall and made him a proposition. Funds could be provided, explained the genial Warburg, but Herr Laufenberg would, of course, understand the need to make some re-assuring gesture in return—namely to re-establish the old City Government.

Laufenberg agreed—no doubt feeling the urgent problem was money. He reasoned that to expropriate the banks would create administrative disruption, and that a resurrected bourgeois government would be quite powerless. This was a fateful error.

The Senate became an organising centre for the counter-revolution. Furthermore an Economic Advisory Council set up by Warburg and led by Hamburg businessmen took over

the city's finances. The Workers' and Soldiers' Councils were given a veto power over the decisions of the Advisory Council, but, in the circumstances, this was a step backward. The capitalists were entirely at the mercy of the working class at the time, yet Laufenberg was taking steps that guaranteed maintenance of private property.

The third power-base for the counter-revolution was the bureaucratic apparatus of the old city government. Instead of smashing this machine, workers' representatives were assigned to 'control' its activities. The old functionaries, still in office, had little problem concealing the workings of their departments from the workers' representatives and sabotaging the decisions of the Councils.

The SPD leadership in Germany regarded the revolution as completed once the Kaiser abdicated on 9 November. They wanted the councils dissolved and replaced by parliamentary democracy. In Hamburg, the supporters of the party leadership were in a minority and, for the time being, could not hold back the workers' movement. So suspicious were the Hamburg workers of the SPD following their class collaborationist role during the war, that the trade union bureaucracy, dominated by the SPD, had been excluded from the workers' councils from the beginning.

The right-wing trend in the SPD concentrated its activity, therefore, in the Soldiers' Council. Baumann, an ex-army officer, successfully infiltrated the leadership of the Council and began eliminating left-wingers from positions of control over military and police matters. On 6 December, the local right-wing paramilitary organisation, the Freikorps, attempted to arrest the leaders of the Workers' Council. The SPD leaders apparently knew about this plot in advance, but did not warn the Council. The plot failed and the authority of the Council was temporarily enhanced. Laufenberg, having been made sharply aware of the weakness of his military organisation, set in motion plans for the formation of a Red Guard. But this task was placed in the hands of Baumann, who made sure that nothing was done to establish the force.

Tide turns

By late December 1918, the tide was turning against the Councils. With the bourgeoisie controlling the economy, Laufenberg proved incapable of dealing with the shortages of fuel and food, and popular support for the Councils began to weaken. The decision in Berlin to hold elections for a National Constituent Assembly

further weakened the Councils' position. The Hamburg SPD in turn grew more confident.

On 27 December a demonstration of sailors stormed one of the city municipal buildings, and two days later called a mass meeting in protest against the newly-formed SPD government in Berlin and against the 'counter-revolutionary policies of the Hamburg SPD'. The SPD responded with a much larger counter-demonstration on 1 January. When on 9 January, a mass demonstration demanded the removal of certain trade union leaders, the SPD counter-demonstration on the following day arrested Laufenberg himself for a few hours.

The fight for the leadership of the working class had begun in earnest. On 11 January, Laufenberg was forced to agree to new elections to the councils. The SPD obtained 51% of the votes and a few days later Laufenberg resigned under pressure from the Soldiers' Council, who charged him with being unable to defend the labour movement against outrages. This was a reference to the attack by sailors on the offices of *hoho*, the SPD paper. The SPD was thus able to pose as the defenders of the labour movement, without coming to grips with the real issues. The SPD now took control of Hamburg.

Final betrayal

The Social Democrats, in line with their aim of constructing a bourgeois democratic Germany, set to work undermining the Councils in Hamburg. Previously, the Councils had been elected directly from the factories, but now they were to be held by the populace at large, giving a great advantage to the defenders of the old order. New elections on this basis were held on 23 March, 1919, one week after similar elections had been held for a new City Government. The Social Democrats, along with the Free Trade Unions and Liberals, now controlled two-thirds of the votes in both the Councils and the City Government. The Councils were thereby reduced to the shadow of the new bourgeois institutions. Their functions were to wither away until they became merely one of five representative bodies in the Economic Advisory Council. The new national Constitution incorporated these and similar councils in other parts of Germany, into a 'National Economic Council for Economic and Social Legislation'—an advisory body to the German Parliament. These bodies of workers' power thus became integrated into the capitalist state.

The final betrayal by the SPD was yet to come. In January, 1919, the SPD government in Berlin

sent troops to Bremen, just outside Hamburg, to restore the Majority Socialists to the government from which they had just been excluded by the left. On 1 February, Laufenberg, who still enjoyed support in sections of the military and police, successfully introduced a motion at a full assembly of the Workers' Council, calling for the military mobilisation and arming of the Hamburg proletariat. The SPD trade union officials, supporting the Berlin government, refused to help, and on 4 February the troops were able to enter Bremen, slaughtering many workers.

Agitation against the Hamburg SPD government now began to mount. Workers gathered outside the City Hall to protest the expected invasion of Hamburg. For the time being, the troops were held back, Berlin believing that the SPD leadership in Hamburg was capable of weathering the storm. But in April, an unemployment demonstration attacked the Workers' Council office. The military and police units, where the left still had support, were unclear whether to support them or subdue them.

The SPD was in a difficult position, its treachery becoming increasingly obvious to the working class and its middle class allies. Finally, in June, protests against food adulteration broke out and Hamburg was thrown into civil war when a military detachment occupied City Hall. Six days later General von Lettow-Vorbeck entered Hamburg with ten thousand soldiers, on the orders of Berlin. Hamburg was thus occupied by half the mobile armed force of the country until December.

Like the rest of Germany, Hamburg suffered from the lack of an established revolutionary party. Rosa Luxemburg's Spartacus Group (later to become the German Communist Party) was not present in Hamburg, and the leadership of the Hamburg left was isolated and uncoordinated.

On several occasions the German proletariat showed itself ready to seize power, and actually succeeded in doing so temporarily in several regions of the country before the final crushing of the revolutionary wave in 1923. But, in the absence of an established revolutionary party to provide this elemental upsurge with coherent and precise leadership, the working class was unable to develop a co-ordinated national challenge to the ruling class. As a result the post-war revolutionary upsurge was checked and the ruling class, with the active cooperation of the Social Democrats, was able to reestablish a firm hold on the political life of the country.

Oliver MacDonald

For more than eight months now (and with no end in sight) the American public has been numbed by a torrent of explosive revelations concerning the political behaviour of President Nixon and his associates.

The bulk of the left press, unable to compete with the muckraking scoops of papers like the *Washington Post*, has descended to populist we-told-you-so moralising about how corrupt the American system is. While this is certainly true, it doesn't explain the crisis, which is much more than a momentary tempest in a teapot dome.

Watergate is the outer face of a thoroughgoing crisis of the entire American political system. Its continuing trauma for the ruling class is that it won't go away. This is because Watergate caught Nixon and his cohorts in the midst of a major overhaul of the executive branch of the state. Minus the authority of the old structures, and with new ones not yet in place, the crisis festers on centre stage as a rotting corpse in the absence of any political force capable of dragging it off.

Impeachment, which is by now a popular remedy, appears to be the only way to dispense with the mess, but at present Congress lacks the muscle and stomach for dethroning King Richard. If Congress is forced to make a serious attempt at impeachment, and Nixon subverts their effort or refuses to go, an unprecedented political stalemate could develop. Bourgeois democracies indeed are never as stable as they appear.

HISTORICAL ORIGINS

American politics have been complicated historically by the size and socio-economic diversity of the United States and by its peculiar historical origins as a federation of local political units, some based on commercial and industrial capitalism, some on petty-bourgeois agricultural production, and some on chattel-slave plantation agriculture. This complexity has been reinforced since the Civil War by the black question, the presence of a large Chicano nationality in the South-west, and the ethnic differentiation of the urban population resulting from the successive waves of European (and more recently Latin American) immigration.

The major consequence of these factors for the bourgeois political system is the historical absence of disciplined and politically homogenous party formations on a national scale. The Democratic and Republican parties are not really 'parties' at all in the sense that the term is understood in other bourgeois democracies. Rather they are loose organisational shells which provide the basis nationally for the gathering of political blocs and alliances embracing numerous, often diverse forces. The adaptable, absorptive character of the American two-party system has been an important factor in the inability of any other political formations, especially those of the working class, to acquire a permanent mass base.

BROAD ALLIANCES

The dominant party has traditionally been the one which could assemble the broadest possible alliance of political forces. The first great 'bloc-builder' was Andrew Jackson, who in the early 1830's managed to bring together the North-eastern proletariat and the Western agrarian petty-bourgeoisie under the hegemony of the Southern slave-owners in opposition to the North-eastern bourgeoisie. Lincoln's great political feat was the destruction of the Jacksonian coalition by breaking the slave-owners' grip on the workers and small farmers through the creation of the Republican Party, which also held the loyalty of the 'emancipated' blacks for decades after the Civil War.

From the early 1930's until 1968 Democratic bourgeois politics were dominated by the bloc structured by Franklin Roosevelt. The basic components of this bloc were: the liberal wing of the big bourgeoisie and the intellectual and professional petty-bourgeoisie; the trade union bureaucracy, which was consistently able to deliver the electoral support of the organised proletariat and which provided indispensable organisational support; the urban political machines, largely based in European immigrant communities; the vast majority of black people; and finally the 'Dixiecrats'—reactionary Southern politicians.

POLITICAL ORIENTATION

The political orientation of this coalition had two elements: a 'liberal' domestic policy (ie massive use of state expenditure to alleviate social problems); and an aggressive 'interventionist' foreign policy. World War II, the Korean and Vietnamese wars, and the Bay of Pigs and Dominican invasions all took place under Democratic administrations. In conjunction with the expansion of American economic

and military power during World War II and the extended post-war economic prosperity, this formula was a successful one for a third of a century. The Democrats have controlled Congress for decades, and the only Republican President between 1932 and 1968 was Eisenhower.

The material basis for the internal political equilibrium of the US began to disintegrate during the 1960's, however. The two immediate causes were the inability of US imperialism to crush the Vietnamese revolution and the revolt of the oppressed black population. These coincided during the late 1960's with a progressive deterioration of American predominance in the world economy.

Under these centrifugal forces, the Democratic coalition began to break up. The attempts of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations to defuse black radicalism through civil rights and welfare legislation provoked a rift between the bourgeois-liberal Democratic leadership and the Dixiecrats, and did not eliminate the 'black problem'. The black struggles and the war provoked a serious ideological crisis throughout American society, and led to mass radicalisation among white youth and sections of the petty bourgeoisie. As well, there was considerable hostility to the war within the working class, while a broad layer of white suburban middle Americans, reacting against this mass dissent, drifted right.

CRISIS FOR DEMOCRATS

The sum total of these factors was a serious crisis in the Democratic Party. An insurgent radical-liberal current, largely based in the youth and the blacks, polarised around McCarthy and Bobby Kennedy. Johnson was forced to step down. Wallace, capitalising on the gulf which had opened between Southern reaction and Democratic liberalism, posed the

threat of a mass third party of petty-bourgeois reaction. In the end, Hubert Humphrey, a mediocre and unattractive remnant from the 1950's received the Democratic presidential nomination only because of a vigorous intervention on his behalf by the AFL-CIO trade union leadership.

Nixon was able to win the 1968 election largely because of the disintegration of the Democratic coalition rather than any coherent programmatic alternative of his own. The Republican campaign was based on an overt appeal to the most reactionary sentiments of the white middle class and sections of the working class. For the first time since 1932, the Republicans were able to penetrate the South electorally. Wallace primarily took votes away from the Democrats rather than the Republicans.

NEW POLICIES

Between 1968 and 1972 Nixon evolved an entirely new political orientation for US capitalism, both at home and abroad. His foreign policy was based on a recognition of the new reality—America's absolute dominance over the capitalist world was at an end. Thus the US's military profile in the neo-colonial world was lowered, ground troops were withdrawn from Vietnam, and increasingly sub-imperialist powers and mercenary armies were propped up in each of the world's hot spots (Brazil, India, Portuguese Africa, Israel, S.E. Asia) as a preferable substitute for direct American intervention.

On the diplomatic front Nixon (via Kissinger) moved to implement a detente with the Soviet Union and recognise China, while taking a tough stance with the imperialist allies to force them to foot more of the bill for the collective preservation of their mutual world system.

Domestically, Nixon recognised the unfavourable realities of the US's economy, resulting from the massive and inflationary expenditures of the Vietnam War and the new rise of Japan and the EEC to competitive equality in world markets. In the face of this, he cut social expenditure by liquidating the Great Society programmes of the Johnson era, in favour of a heavier state regulation of wages and prices via his New Economic Policy inaugurated in 1971.

BROAD REGROUPMENT

The general goals of Nixon's domestic and foreign policy were geared to making the best of American capitalism's rocky condition at home and its diminished position internationally. As a result, he managed to effect a broad political regroupment around his programmes sufficient to give him the largest electoral majority in the history of the nation. He broke the Southern reaction away from the Democratic Party nationally by being sufficiently tough on law and order to prevent a third party of the right from arising. He thereby neutralised the threat posed by Wallace to his Southern strategy.

By wooing Fitzsimmons of the Teamsters' union outside the AFL-CIO, and installing Brennan (a key member of Meany's AFL-CIO leadership) as Secretary of Labour, Nixon succeeded in splitting the trade union bureaucracy from the Democratic Party for the first time in decades. This enabled him to strengthen his electoral base in the white working class. Perhaps most importantly of all, Nixon won the begrudging support of all major sectors of the big bourgeoisie in the face of the Democratic Party's selection of George McGovern as its presidential candidate.

McGovern's nomination became the focus for the waning political energies of the late 60's radicalisation, and the result was to hasten the diffusion of these energies and the disintegration of their social base. McGovern represented the temporary default of the Democrats as a bona fide option for the big bourgeoisie, and consequently they had no choice but to defect, as they did in large numbers, under the banner of 'Democrats for Nixon'.

And so, in the 1972 elections, Nixon pulled off a massive political regroupment, but he did so without utilising the Republican Party as its organisational form. On the contrary, Nixon regrouped these forces, not around the Party, not around a congressional alliance (for the Democrats held their majority in Congress), but directly around the executive wing of the state itself.

STRUCTURES BYPASSED

It was the amorphous, fluid character of the American two-party system that allowed this regroupment to totally bypass the organised structures of the Republican Party and cluster directly around the Office of the President itself. One clear indication that this process was well under way by 1972 was that Nixon established the Committee to Re-elect the President to raise funds, strategise and organise his campaign, thereby leaving the Republican National Committee high and dry.

This move, combined with the collapse of the Democratic Party, shifted the arena of bourgeois politics outside of the Congressional forum, beyond the reach of either party, and concentrated it in the White House. The effect of this was to bypass the traditional locations built into the American political system where elected political representatives and state bureaucrats hammer out policy in a hard-nosed give-and-take fashion.

These traditional locations of the political system are points of contact where the government of the day and the permanent agencies of the state meet to determine policy. They are thus crucial interfaces in ensuring the stability of bourgeois democracies. State bureaucrats must remain sufficiently flexible and non-partisan to be able to work with whichever party is currently in power. The state must be able to absorb the conflicting pushes and pulls of contending interests within the bourgeoisie in order to remain an instrument working on behalf of the ruling class as a whole.

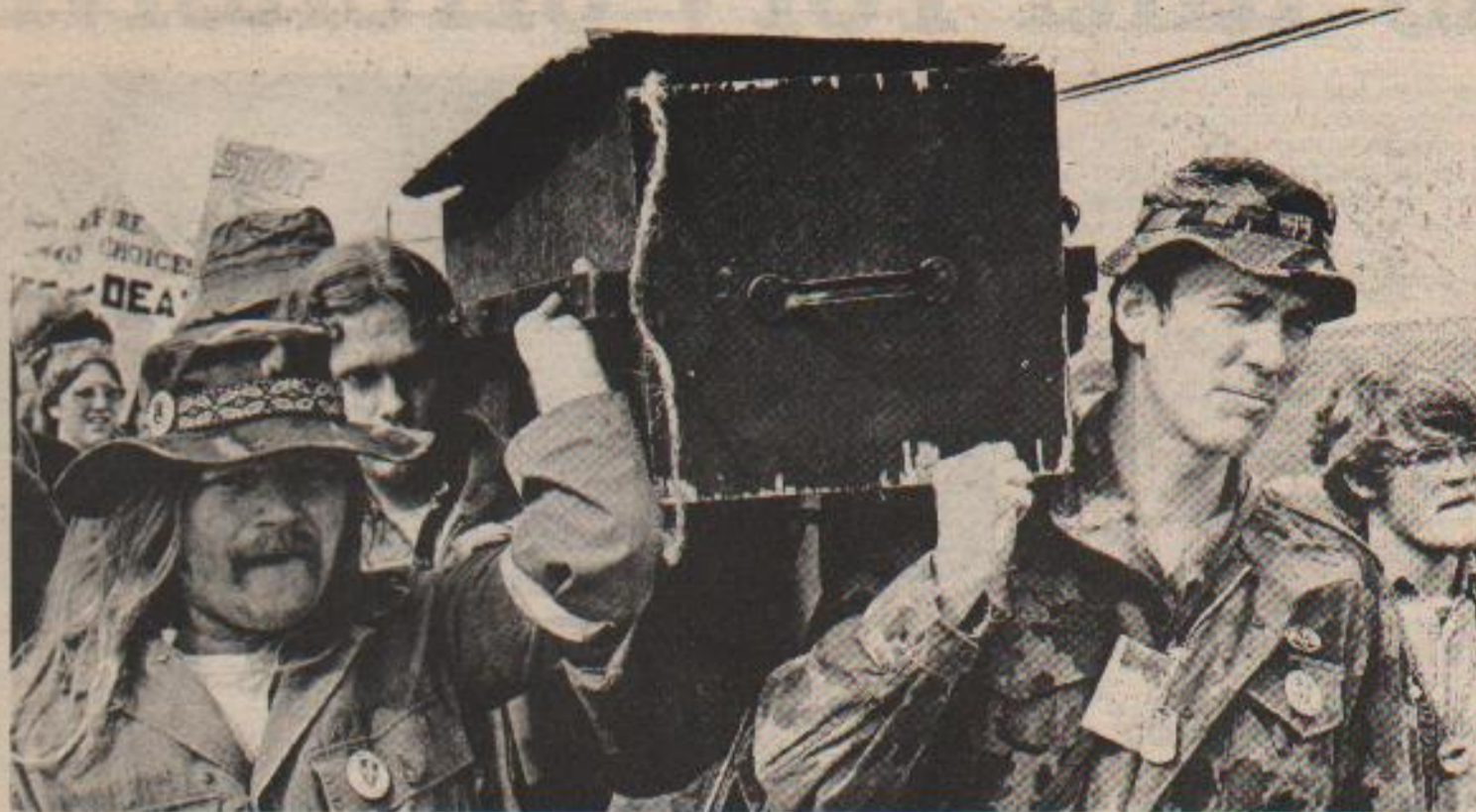
The crumbling edifice

STRONG STATE —



Poster published in the United States by 'The Committee to De-elect the President'

of American capitalism AND PARTY POLITICS



Flashback to 1970. Demonstration at an army depot in Pennsylvania, where draft resisters and veterans carried a coffin containing hundreds of draft cards, credit cards, court subpoenas, and arrest citations... 'The black struggles and the Vietnam war provoked a serious ideological crisis throughout American society, and led to mass radicalisation among white youth and sections of the petty bourgeoisie.'

'The stability of the strong state is dependent upon a president who remains above contending factions of the bourgeoisie and rules in the interests of capital as a whole...'

When Nixon bypassed the House and the Senate, where the various political blocs and lobbies have traditionally contended for political favour, he made the White House itself the sole effective interface between his regrouped political interests and state power. This inevitably meant that the power-broking conducted on behalf of ITT, the Milk Lobby, the Teamsters and Jimmy Hoffa, etc, which have always been a normal part of American politics, became the exclusive prerogative of the President's Office. When small leaks occurred and mistakes were made, and curious reporters began to follow up leads, Nixon reacted by withdrawing and surrounding himself with aides who cut off channels of communication with other bodies of government and with the Republican Party machine—and conducted more and more of the power-broking themselves.

It is to this that the bourgeois press refers when they talk constantly of Nixon's 'isolation'. Without the Republican Party as a channel and mediator of pressure from various sectors of the bourgeoisie, the politically partisan exercise of state power by Nixon and Co. became naked and direct. The necessary leeway required by the State in order to function on behalf of the bourgeois class as a whole was eliminated.

The remarkably crude appearance of the deals Nixon made on behalf of various corporate interests is a result of their direct nature. With

past presidents, these political favours were handled through Party channels and kept at arm's length to protect the President. Not so with Nixon. Without using the Party as a buffer he would often phone the head of a State department and order him explicitly to 'drop the ITT case' or whatever. It was only a matter of time before this type of direct power-broking would backfire.

STRONG STATE

Of course, there can be a rationale for concentrating political power in the executive. Its efficiency, speed, and directness can often work to the advantage of the nation's bourgeoisie. This strong state formula of political rule is often a suitable accompaniment to the economic concentration and centralisation of capital on a national scale. De Gaulle's regime in France was a case study in the exercise of efficient executive power, while the French Parliament was relegated to rubber-stamping his decrees.

But the strong state has its dangers. Its stability is dependent upon a President who remains above contending factions of the bourgeoisie and rules in the interests of national capital as a whole. While De Gaulle was able to do this, Nixon obviously is not. Nixon is a narrowly partisan politician who uses the state against his bourgeois enemies. This is precisely why the revelations of Watergate were political dynamite, fracturing his grand political regroupment into squabbling pieces. Nixon is now left, one short

year after his unprecedented electoral triumph, devoid of support from any significant sector of the ruling class.

GLOBAL CONTEXT

The implications of Nixon's domestic isolation at this time are seen when this crisis is situated within the world political context. It is clear that the class struggle is intensifying on a global scale and the stability of world political alignments are extremely fragile. In the last two months open class war has broken out in Chile and civil war is imminent in Argentina and possible in Spain. Thailand and Greece have seen student explosions which obtained working class support and forced alterations in both regimes. The Vietnamese ceasefire is collapsing and in Cambodia the Lon Nol regime hangs on to power by a thread. The Middle East came close to burying the Soviet-US detente, and Nixon felt compelled to flex his nuclear trigger finger in a show of strength. Under the pressure of the Arab oil embargo inter-imperialist rivalry has reached a new height, as EEC countries and Japan have both differentiated themselves strongly from US policy in the Middle East.

The upshot of this heightened global turmoil for Richard Nixon is that his extreme domestic weakness cuts his international authority to a new low. [Old Mole]

WALLY SECCOMBE
BRET SMILEY

'... Nixon is a narrowly partisan politician who uses the state against his bourgeois enemies'

WHAT'S ON

WINCHESTER PRISONERS: Picket Irish Embassy, 8 pm Friday 11 January to demand Free State support for their repatriation; picket Wormwood Scrubs prison, 3 pm Sunday 20 January, marching from rally at Speakers Corner at 2.30 pm to Home Office in Whitehall. Further information: Sean McDermot 01-889 1672, or Bob Purdie 01-837 8954.

'CRITIQUE' SEMINAR: Jan Kavan on 'The Legacy of Czechoslovakia', Friday 18 January, 7.30 pm in Room S175, St Clements Building, LSE.

LONDON RED FORUMS: New series begins this Tuesday 15 January, 8 pm in the General Picton pub, Caledonian Road, 5 mins Kings X tube. This week: 'What is Imperialism'.

'SANITY, MADNESS & THE FAMILY': Northwood, Harrow and Rustip Socialist Woman Group forum, Monday 14 January at 8 pm at Baptist Church, College Road, Harrow. For further information, phone Sue at 01-883 2294.

AGAINST RACISM & FASCISM: Area campaign (Kingston-Richmond-Twickenham) public meeting, Speakers: Mike Cooley (TASS), Steven Rose, Jake Bharier (Kingston LP), Steve Lynch (G&MI, Surbiton Assembly Rooms (5 mins from Surbiton station), 7.45 pm, Friday 18 January.

'THE POST-WAR WAR': Slide show telling how American involvement in Vietnam has changed over the last year. Monday 21 January at 7.30 pm in Room S101A, St Clements Building, London School of Economics, Houghton Street. Organised by ISC.

NOTTINGHAM RED CIRCLES: Wide-ranging series of discussions based on the politics of the Fourth International. Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday in the month at 8 pm in the Lion Hotel, Clumber St.

TARIQ ALI on 'The Way Forward for the Working Class', Wednesday 16 January at 7.30 pm in Tottenham Community Centre, 626 Tottenham High Road (between Bruce Gove and Lordship Lane).

BENGALI FRIENDS in Europe and elsewhere, for Bengali books and *Lara* (Trotskyist paper) contact: Bengali, Mullvadlen, Box 3274, 10365 Stockholm, Sweden.

'THE IRISH TRAGEDY: Scotland's Disgrace'. Pamphlet by John MacLean reprinted by Central London AIL in conjunction with Troops Out Movement. Available price 12p plus p&sp from RED BOOKS, 24 Boundary Road, London NW8.

Reviews ON CONNOLLY, ASSASSINATION AND INTERNMENT

JAMES CONNOLLY: SELECTED WRITINGS Ed. P. Berresford Ellis (Penguin, 50p) and **JAMES CONNOLLY: SELECTED POLITICAL WRITINGS** Ed. Edwards & Ransom (Jonathan Cape, Writings of the Left series, £2.25p)

With the resurgence of the Irish revolution, much critical appreciation has centred on the greatest of Ireland's Marxist thinkers, James Connolly, who was executed by the British after the Easter Rising in 1916. Unfortunately his longer works have only been available in fragmented, small-edition pamphlets and his shorter works, in easily available paperback collections, are therefore very welcome and should be devoured eagerly by all socialists wishing to understand the complex problems confronting revolutionaries in Ireland.

On the whole, the Penguin collection is the best value, certainly looked at in financial terms. It has a more fully-rounded introduction to Connolly's life and politics and ends with an index of names, which is a sad omission in the Cape collection. Both collections, however, contain his classic 'Labour, Nationality and Religion' essay, but the Cape selection on the whole tends to stress the strong syndicalist strain in Connolly's work, which cannot be denied. Berresford Ellis, more in tune with the immediate needs of the class-struggle in Ireland, stresses the problems of partition and Connolly's writings on revolutionary warfare and physical force in politics, which is really what gives the Penguin collection its contemporary political cutting edge.

CARL GARDNER

POLITICAL MURDER IN NORTHERN IRELAND, by Martin Dillon and Denis Lehane (Penguin Special, 45p)

Dillon and Lehane, two journalists working on *The Belfast Telegraph*, describe the assassinations in the Six Counties over the last couple of years, and on the whole it is a book which should be read with caution. The authors, being trained journalists, have anticipated establishment reaction.

The end of the book has three chapters on 'The Killers'. Killers (I) the IRA, lists as sectarian killings the executions by the Provos of spies, informers, a UDA man caught with a gun in his hand in a Catholic block of flats at 3 am and three soldiers who happened to be Protestants.

Killers (II), the Protestants, contains much original documentation on the Orange Black Hundreds assassination gangs. This chapter alone makes the book worth reading. Killers (III) acknowledges some British Army assassinations—to be exact, the ones which the British Army has itself already acknowledged! The authors admit that the Catholic community believe 'Not just that the British Army has been involved in the assassination campaign, but that it has been responsible for the bulk of the killings on either side.' But Dillon and Lehane claim 'only two deaths out of over 200 can be categorically laid at the door of the Army'.

These different findings are explained very simply: two different methods are used to arrive at the facts. When dealing with the IRA, it is enough that somebody said, or the Army thinks, or the police believe and thereafter our gallant heroes in effect demand that the evidence prove the IRA innocent. In the case of the British Army, unless the Army has admitted that they shot the person concerned, they are assumed innocent.

GERY LAWLESS

INTERNMENT, by John McGuffin (Anvil Books, 75p)

John McGuffin's book is a surprisingly well-researched study of the policy and the facts of internment in Northern Ireland. It is absolutely essential reading for all activists on the Irish question, and should figure on every left-wing bookshelf.

Having said this, it is all the more regrettable that the author, formerly a leading member of the People's Democracy, could not resist bitchy attacks on individuals in the anti-imperialist movement with whom he has clashed in the past. For example, Sean Mac Stiofain has pointed out (*Irish Times*, 27.7.73) that, contrary to the claim made by McGuffin, he did not recognise the Free State court. The digs at Seamus Twomey and the whole reference to the bombings in Belfast on so-called 'Bloody Friday' show a tremendous willingness to accept the official British side of the story, which enables the author to hit slyly at people he doesn't like. And for the record, the author of this review never signed out of the Curragh, on legal advice or otherwise.

These unfortunate slips and inaccuracies apart, the information in this book should be used by all activists fighting for the self-determination of the Irish people and the end to the oppression of Ireland by British imperialism, of which internment is just one sordid symptom.

GERY LAWLESS

Engineers' no-strike decision threatens anti-Tory offensive

There can be no doubt that the decision of the AUEW National Committee not to take action in support of the national pay claim until after the end of the three-day week, which means after the end of the miners' struggle, is a setback for the entire working class. If the engineers had added their weight to the struggles already being conducted by the miners and railwaymen, there is a good chance that the back of the Tory offensive could have been broken, along with the Government itself.

Instead the Tories have been aided in their attempt to isolate the miners and take on the different sections of the working class separately. It is important that militants learn the lessons of this setback, and at once begin a struggle to reverse it.

'A huge headline in the Morning Star said "Engineers Decide Action on Pay". What a comment on a decision to do nothing until after the outcome of the miners' struggle!'

Scanlon was elected to the Presidency of the AEU as a 'left' who, in contrast with his witch-hunting predecessor Carron, would allow the rank-and-file to get on with the struggle. But Scanlon has never taken a clear national lead in any dispute except in those cases when, as at Ford's, he stepped in on the side of the management. A classic example of Scanlon's tactics was in the 1972 pay claim when, instead of a national stoppage, it was left to the individual areas to take action. The result was inevitable. Faced with a co-ordinated national policy by the engineering employers those individual groups of workers who did go into struggle, for example in Manchester, were severely defeated.

Militants in the AUEW should make use of Scanlon's willingness to let the rank-and-file take local initiatives. Certainly they should avoid equating Scanlon with Boyd or the right in the AUEW. But they should understand, and campaign against, Scanlon's refusal to lead national struggles at a time when the situation demands such action.

This is the policy which the International Marxist Group has always advocated in relation to Scanlon. It means voting for the supporters of Scanlon against the right, and using the decisions of the Executive to initiate local action — for example at the time of the NIRC fines on the Union. But it also means continually demanding that the Executive itself give a clear lead on such questions as action against the NIRC fines, and for a national strike. A revolutionary policy must start from the needs of the struggle, even if it runs into conflict with the union 'left'.

'The only way in which the engineers can be sure of victory is to make sure the miners win'

The Communist Party's attitude to Scanlon has been quite different. Hiding behind the fact that Scanlon is not the same as the right, the CP have covered up for the false policies of Scanlon on national actions. This has been true even where, as in the case of the pay claim, Scanlon's policies are clearly in conflict with the needs of the struggle.

Throughout the autumn the CP, in the *Morning Star* and in public meetings up and down the country, called for a wages offensive. They know that very large numbers of militants who generally think of the CP as a fighting organisation also support such an offensive. However the trade union leaderships, including Scanlon, have resisted the measures needed to carry

through such a fight against Phase 3. The CP was caught between the enormous pressure for an offensive, on the one hand, and, on the other, the fact that, for the purposes of the 'anti-monopoly alliance', they had to build up Scanlon as someone who would lead a fight against the Tories. This attempt to square the circle explains the vacillation of the CP line.

First of all they were for withdrawal from the TUC talks with the Government. But when Scanlon announced that he was in favour of participating in the talks, the CP, at the AUEW National Committee during the summer, was prepared to withdraw a resolution against participation. It was only when other militants refused to support them that they returned to their original policy, which was then passed by the National Committee.

This decision was circumvented by the holding of the talks through the National Economic Development Council, since Scanlon is on the TUC delegation to the NEDC talks. But the CP has made no real criticism of his participation in these talks with the Government.

Scanlon has made clear his opposition to a national strike for the Engineers pay claim, although, as many militants know, only a national strike can win the claim in full. The CP has again found itself in a trap, and its policy has depended on the balance of forces at any particular meeting.

At the *Engineering Voice* conference, which was attended by Scanlon, they were faced with a resolution calling for a national strike which had big support, but which Scanlon opposed.

At this meeting, scared of losing their base, the CP voted for a national strike. At the lobby of the talks with the employers, held only two weeks later, the CP reversed this policy and simply called for support for the position of the Executive and Scanlon. The only thing which remained constant in the CP's position was its attempt to find a form of action which would allow it to appear militant in the eyes of their supporters, while at the same time avoiding a break with Scanlon and the AUEW lefts.

The policy which was supposed to fill this bill was a national overtime ban. The 'left' was prepared to accept this, since it could only be imposed locally, and the CP began to mobilise its forces. A large conference of engineer-

ing convenors in Manchester, initiated by the CP, was to launch the campaign for a national overtime ban.

Right from the start this was a potentially disastrous policy, which would have turned groups of engineering workers against each other, due to the different wage structures within the industry. But it was made absolutely ridiculous by the Government-imposed lock-out. How can you impose an overtime ban when you are already only working three days a week!

However the CP was still unwilling, because of the alliance with Scanlon, to go for the obvious policy of a national strike and an alliance with the miners. All the conference could do was to pass a resolution calling on



Hugh Scanlon (right) and Jim Conway immediately after last Thursday's meeting... 'Hiding behind the fact that Scanlon is not of the right, the CP has covered up his false policies on national actions'

the AUEW National Committee to 'give a positive lead on industrial action up to and including a national stoppage'.

Finally, at the AUEW National Committee last week, the CP, left with no policy at all, put down a resolution for a national overtime ban. Hardly surprisingly, this was defeated. Instead it was decided to hold an overtime ban only after the three-day week, and therefore the miners' struggle had ended. This decision does nothing to aid the miners, and will strengthen the will of the Tories to fight the NCM, because they realise they will have to face a struggle with the engineers on the basis of the miners settlement.

The CP attempted to conceal the total failure of their policy in a huge *Morning Star* headline on 4 January: 'Engineers Decide Action on Pay'. What a comment on a decision to

do nothing until after the outcome of the miners struggle! The justification individual CP militants give for this is that the overtime ban will bite as industry attempts to recover from the three-day week, and it is therefore a very powerful weapon.

This is stupid sectoralist nonsense. If the Government defeats the miners the demoralisation will be such that an overtime ban will mean nothing — in fact it is doubtful whether it would even be implemented. The only way in which the engineers can be sure of victory is to make sure that the miners win: this can still be achieved by a united national strike of both unions. But the CP has consistently opposed this policy in its attempts to maintain an alliance with Scanlon and the other 'lefts'. Nevertheless it is this policy for which militants in the AUEW will have to fight in the coming weeks.

John Marshall

Campaign for Irish political hostages steps up as their condition worsens

Despite Home Office denials, the condition of the Winchester prisoners, who are on hunger strike, continues to give cause for concern. As the prisoners have grown weaker, letters have stopped coming out of the prisons. The shifting around from prison to prison, and bureaucratic procedures have prevented relatives from visiting them. The bland assertions by the Home Office that they are being 'kept alive' covers up for the fact that force-feeding has turned their existence into a living hell. The constant vomiting, and the force used on Dolores Prier in particular, will kill her in a very short time, unless her demand to be returned to Ireland to finish her sentence is granted.

In view of the urgency of the situation, the Irish

Political Hostages Campaign has drawn up an intensive programme of activities designed to exert the maximum pressure and to win the widest support for the repatriation of the prisoners.

The activities will include a picket of the Irish Embassy, in Grosvenor Place WC1, this Friday (11 January), to demand that the Southern Irish Government take action on behalf of the prisoners. (See 'What's On' for details of further activities.) The Campaign also intends to lobby MPs, particularly those representing Irish areas, both at their constituency 'surgeries' and at a lobby of Parliament which will probably take place on Friday, 18 January at 7.30pm.

FUND DRIVE — we need hard cash to push forward the struggle

One of our newer readers, introduced to *Red Weekly* through our recent Shrewsbury supplement, writes:

'I am convinced talking, unfortunately, will not get us very far. In my opinion it has just got to be out and out revolution, violent revolution if it has to be. Let there be sit-ins, occupation of, and complete control of offices, factories, and all government buildings. This, in my humble opinion, looking back over a working life of 46 years, is the only way for the working man... to get and keep what is rightfully his in the first place.'

We couldn't agree more. *Red Weekly* exists to fight for a revolutionary solution — the only real solution — to the struggles of the working class.

But this is a difficult job — and one which requires not only correct ideas and dedication, but also

hard cash. It is a fact of life under capitalism that those who fight to regain for the working class what is rightfully theirs in the first place, have to depend for cash on the small donations which working men and women can afford.

This will not always be the case. We are fighting for the same goal which the Bolshevik Party struggled for and finally attained in October 1917. They applied socialist economic justice before the revolution, expropriating the money they needed to fight the bourgeoisie from the bourgeoisie itself.

The International Marxist Group is not yet in a position to do this. That is why we have to continue to make such harsh demands on our readership. For the month of January our Crisis Fund Drive has a target of £2,000. So far, we have just topped only £500. Send a donation now to: Fund Drive, *Red Weekly*, 192 Pentonville Road, London N.1. (cheques payable to *Red Weekly*)

Journalists call off pay struggle

Provincial journalists voted last week by a majority of five to one to accept the 9% pay increase offered by the Newspaper Society, although this falls at least £10 short of their claim for £15 a week and follows an unprecedented level of militancy on the part of many chapels.

Motions censoring the NUJ executive over its conduct of Newspaper Society disputes have dominated the union's past two annual conferences, and this year's is likely to be no exception. While the executive followed conference instructions by ordering mandatory chapel meetings to consider the pay offer, it arranged for these to be held immediately after Christmas when staffs were depleted and there was no time for discussion.

But the chances are that the deal would still have gone through even without such bureaucratic manoeuvres—even if there had been full consideration of the offer, and the view of the

lay negotiators who were opposed to it had been put to the membership.

LEADERSHIP

There are two reasons for this. In the first place, control over the conduct of the three-month dispute, which involved widespread walk-outs and a number of lock-outs, rested in the hands of the NUJ's top officials. The lay members of the joint standing committee, representing the 9,000 Newspaper Society journalists, met only three times during the dispute, and were unable to establish direct contact with the numerous chapels.

As one member of the JSC puts it: 'Chapels such as Oldham were instructed to come out for two days and instead stayed out for two weeks, which shows excellent militancy but an abject failure of leadership.' In order to be able to respond to and co-ordinate chapel initiatives, it would have been necessary to

establish a regional network of lay committees, linking the chapels to the JSC. The re-organisation of the NUJ, currently under discussion, provides an appropriate opportunity to achieve this.

However, another major drawback was the fact that most of the militancy was dissipated in an effort to get local bargaining rights restored. While this was eventually achieved, it was hardly a substantial victory in the context of Phase 3 limits. The collapse of the struggle essentially resulted from the refusal on the part of both the executive and the JSC to pose it as a confrontation with the Government's pay laws.

WORKING CLASS

This would have meant seeking links with other sections of workers determined to break through Phase 3 and for journalists this poses a significant problem. As letters

in the left press have shown, working class militants have little love for those who attack them through the pages of the bourgeois press. They have no illusions in the notions of 'objectivity' and 'impartiality' to which most journalists subscribe.

The essential task for Journalists Charter, a grouping of socialists within the NUJ, must therefore be to break journalists from this ideological stranglehold, by adopting an explicit class position and examining the means by which the Press can be made available to workers in struggle.

This week the London Press branch of the electricians' union strongly condemned 'despicable and lying' attacks on miners' and railway workers' officials. 'Although we do not claim control over editorial rights, neither will we stand for editorial abuse. The time may arise when a repetition of this provocation could result in non-publication.' The branch intends to take this up with the NUJ. Journalists must seize this opportunity.

RICHARD BRINSLEY



Richard Chavez

US farm workers' leader appeals for British support

The struggle of the United Farm Workers Union, which is one of the most significant developments in the class struggle in the United States for years, has now been brought to the doorstep of British labour.

Several shiploads of scab grapes have been sent to ports in Britain, and despite an agreement by T&GWU dockers not to handle them, and a general policy of the Union which will prevent their sale through most fruit markets, some have been distributed to shops and stores in Britain.

The dockers' decision came after an appeal from Richard Chavez, a field director of the UFW and brother of Cesar Chavez, the founder and leader of the UFW. Richard Chavez has gone on to try to close outlets for scab Californian grapes in Germany and Scandinavia.

STRUGGLE ESCALATES

The extension of the UFW's boycott campaign to Europe is a result of an escalation in the struggle. The campaign in the US to boycott shops selling scab grapes has hurt the growers badly, and they are desperately seeking outlets in Europe. Meanwhile the attempts of the UFW to win back the right to repres-

ent their members has been threatened by a major new scabbing operation by the International Brotherhood (!) of Teamsters.

In *Red Weekly* 27, we reported that the Teamsters' Union had agreed to tear up its contracts with the California grape growers, which had been signed in an attempt to smash the UFW. Unfortunately, Frank Fitzsimmons, President of the Teamsters and staunch Nixon supporter, has since announced that they will honour the contracts after all. The UFW is once again faced with a formidable alliance of the employers, the pro-Nixon wing of the capitalist class, and the world's largest trade union.

BOYCOTT WEAPON

In this situation the boycott weapon has become more important than ever. Squads of hired Teamster thugs have prevented effective picketing, and economic pressure on the desperately poor Chicano (Mexican-American) and Mexican immigrant grape workers has made victory through strike action practically impossible. Only a successful boycott campaign, which mobilises left-wing and liberal support in the cities, can prevent the UFW from being smashed like all previous agricultural workers' unions in the US.

The British labour movement, socialist and student organisations must make sure that Britain is closed

as a market for scab grapes, wine, and other grape products. At the time of writing no co-ordinated campaign has been set up, but the Student Christian Movement, who invited Richard Chavez to Britain, and *Peace News* have agreed to collate information. *Red Weekly* readers should check in their local fruit stores, street markets, and supermarkets to find out if Californian grapes etc which do not bear the UFW's Thunderbird emblem (reproduced in picture) are on sale. In particular the giant US owned Safeway chain should be checked, as they are a major outlet for scab grapes in the US.

FURTHER ACTIVITY

If scab grapes, wine (*Gallo* is the brand name to look for) etc are found to be on sale the information should be passed to Cecil Rajendra at the office of the Student Christian Movement, Annandale, North End Road, London NW11, phone 01-455 2311, and/or John Hyatt, *Peace News*, 01-837 9794.

Richard Chavez will be returning to London at the weekend, where he will have further meetings to extend trade union support for the boycott. He will address a public meeting in the Africa Centre, King St., on Friday evening, and will participate in a picket of the Safeway supermarket in Kings Road Chelsea at 10 am on Saturday.

GAVIN ROBINSON

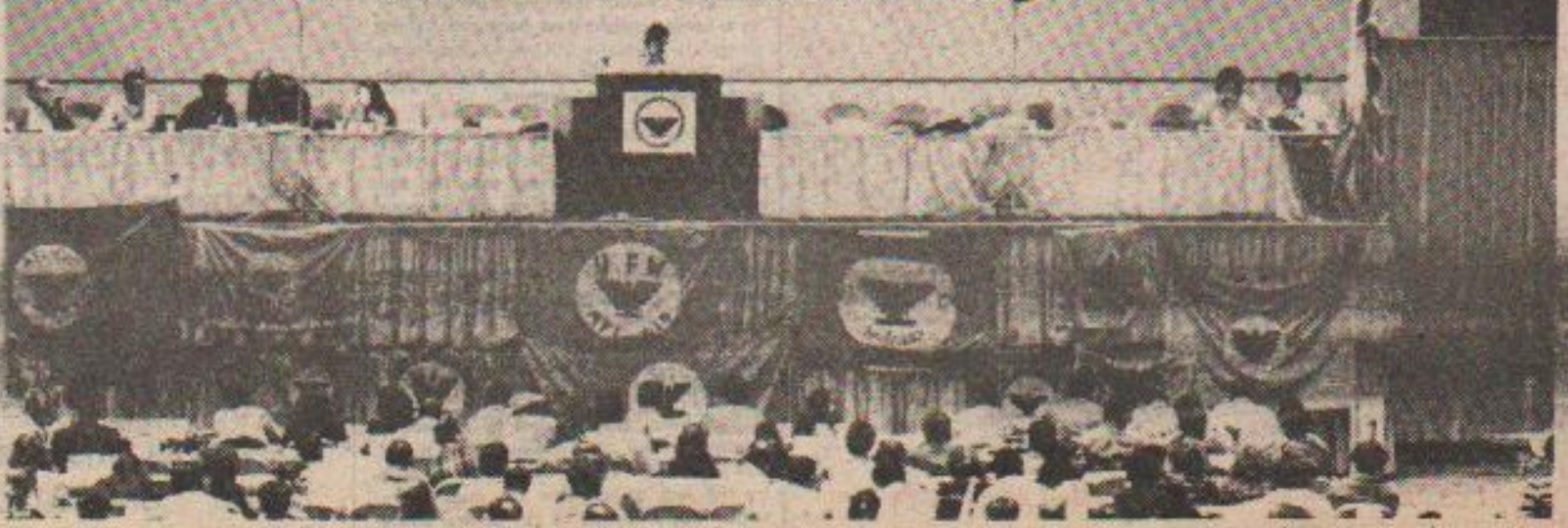
Maclaren workers push for Combine Committee

The Strike Committee at the occupied Maclaren Controls factory in Glasgow has written to shop stewards committees in 51 other ITT subsidiaries throughout Britain calling for a meeting to discuss the formation of a Combine Committee. Support for this has already been pledged by electricians in the STC factory in East Kilbride, and support is expected from other STC factories. The Strike Committee is also organising a public meeting in Glasgow to explain their fight and win support.

The setting up of a Combine Committee would be an important step forward, but it will be difficult, as is always the case when such initiatives arise from a redundancy struggle.

The effectiveness of the blacking action, which forms an important part of the Strike Committee's strategy, depends on action against work being done on Maclaren's contract. This means contacting workers in factories which are being supplied with this equipment.

The decision of the AUEW to organise an overtime ban in the distant future, rather than a strike now, in connection with the national pay claim, means that there is a serious danger that the Maclaren's workers will become isolated in their struggle. It is important that support for this militant struggle is increased.



Recent UFW convention

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

All in a day's manoeuvres



Photo: Chris Davies (Report)

The army manoeuvres around Heathrow Airport are just one of the first of a series of moves to accustom the 'British public' to co-operation between the army and the police. While it would be ridiculous to say that the British ruling class is at present aiming at a military coup, nevertheless it is consciously stepping up the integration of the army and the other forces of repression at all levels. In the north of Ireland, of course, the integration of the army and the police is total. Army experts are used for torture—politely referred to as 'interrogation'—and there is a complete interlinking of intelligence services. All this is in line with the views of the chief of army infantry training, Brigadier Frank Kitson, who has been appointed to his job as an expert in 'subversion.'

Heath's understanding on this point was clearly spelt out at his speech at the United Nations in October 1970 when he said: 'in the 1970s civil war, not war between nations, will be the main danger we will face.' This type of thinking leads clearly towards 'strong' forms of police force trained by the army. This can be seen in the training of the special anti-picket squads of the police in army methods. This is in line with most countries in Europe—in Germany, for example, under

the guise of 'anti-terrorist activities' large sections of the police are receiving army training, while in Italy it has been revealed that the fascist organisations have been receiving training from the Italian army in its training camps in the Pisa area.

In Britain, however, these policies face big obstacles. There are still memories of the period before 1914 when the use of the army against strikers was frequent and when the army shot down workers. This is why, for example, the introduction of troops to try to break the Glasgow firmen's strike had to be done so carefully. The bourgeoisie, therefore, is trying to 'break the thing in gradually' by supposed 'anti-terrorist activities' which are going to be extended to other cities. The troops at Heathrow have nothing to do with so-called 'terrorism'—this can be seen from the simple fact that they are withdrawn at night (one of the best times for an attack).

The working class movement must understand the dangers of the Government's new moves. The demands for the right of political organisation in the army and for the arming of the working class are going to have to move out of the realm of propaganda.

Red Weekly

Miners - strike is only way forward

If the National Union of Miners' negotiating team should ever get fed up with their present jobs the London Tourist Board would undoubtedly be eager to employ them for their frequent and regular safaris from the NUM headquarters to the Coal Board Offices, to Downing Street and on to the Pay Board has given them an intimate acquaintance with central London that few could match.

The men in the pits have gained nothing from all this activity. There was a brief flash of silver as the Coal Board conceded that an extra 70 pence a week might be squeezed out, but even this faded when the Coal Board shook its head.

Aware that only the crinkle of green was likely to sound like music to the miner's ear, the NUM negotiators got down to their homework and went off to see the Pay Board again on Tuesday, in the apparent belief that the Board's attitude was all a misunderstanding. But the Board quickly scotched such illusions when it treated the NUM representatives like adolescents trying to sneak into an 'A' film, and told them they wouldn't be admitted without a note from the Coal Board.

The failure of all this street-walking by the NUM negotiators has led to widespread dissatisfaction with the way the claim is being pursued. Both Arthur Scargill, President of the York-

shire miners, and Emyln Williams, President of South Wales NUM, have stated the obvious: these talks are a waste of time, and such nonsense should be stopped in favour of stepping up industrial action.

These sentiments clearly reflect a rising mood of militancy in the pits. The vigorous response of Leicestershire miners to the public scabbing operation of Frank Smith, their representative on the NUM executive, is one of the surest signs of this.

It is almost certain that the NUM executive will be forced to adopt tougher measures, but it is not yet clear what these will be. Some areas—like South Wales—are talking about tightening up the overtime ban, while Scotland is discussing the idea of a two-day a week strike. So far the only miners' leader to put forward the idea of a national strike has been Arthur Scargill from Yorkshire.

Proposals such as a tougher overtime ban or a partial strike are totally inadequate: only an all-out national strike can advance the fight for the miners' claim and put the Tories on the run. Only a total, national strike that would stop all production and prevent all coal movements could seriously dent the Government's strategy.

But, more importantly, the great power of the miners lies not merely in their ability to hit fuel supplies,

but in the impact their struggle could have on the whole working class. Vast sectors of the workers' movement are waiting for some sort of lead to go into struggle against the Tories. A national miners strike, coupled with the dispatch of miners' flying pickets to every major industrial centre in the country, would provide just that sort of lead.

The launching of such a strike must be the central concern of NUM militants in the weeks ahead. A campaign must be conducted throughout the NUM in favour of such a strike, demanding that the Executive calls an immediate strike ballot and contacts the AUEW and ASLEF Executives to work out coordinated action. Preparations should be made for the launching of flying pickets squads and firm contacts established with local raidmen and engineers. (An important step in this direction has been taken by miners in three West Wales pits who have replied to the laying on of extra lorries because of the ASLEF dispute by banning all lorries from their pits.)

Delay will play into the hands of the Tory Government. If the three-day week is allowed to bite into working class living standards without any group of workers showing a clear way forward, demoralisation and confusion will spread through the ranks of the workers' movement. The time for determined action is now.

SIEFF ATTACK — A BLOW AT ZIONISM

The attempted assassination of Joseph Sieff, President of Marks and Spencer and former Vice-President of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain, has provoked the habitual hullabaloo about 'international terror.'

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which claimed responsibility for the attack, points out that Sieff had given Israel an enormous amount of financial aid. He is believed to have donated £2 million

since the October war alone. The PFLP have denounced this as a crime against the dispossessed Palestinian Arabs, the victims of this kind of Zionist philanthropy.

Panic is being whipped up in the Jewish communities with talk of a 'death-list' of prominent Anglo-Jewish leaders, and those who defend the legitimacy of the Popular Front's action will be condemned as anti-semites and lumped together with fascist groups such as the National Front which seek to exploit the oil crisis or the Arab-Israeli conflict for anti-semitic purposes.

But the action of the PFLP is not aimed at Jewish people in general. It is aimed at the financial backers of the Zionist state. No talk of 'anti-semitism'—a vicious form of racism which must be opposed wherever it appears—must be allowed to obscure the fact that the Zionist state, and the imperialist powers which support it, are the enemies of Arab and Jew alike. Jewish people must repudiate the Sieffs and speak out against the oppression of the Palestinians, who have been made to pay for the past crimes of the European ruling class against the Jews.

The PFLP action was probably designed to do more than disrupt the flow of

Western European finance to Israel. It could have been part of a series of actions designed to provoke a shift to the right in the Israeli elections, thus making agreement between Israel and the Arab states more difficult. The PFLP is alone among Palestinian resistance organisations in condemning the imperialist peace now being cooked up at Geneva. But acts of individual terror will neither deter Sieff and others from putting their fortunes at the disposal of Zionist colonialism, nor prevent the imposition of the imperialist peace on the peoples of the Middle East.

The courageous militants of the PFLP have every right to full solidarity by the

labour movement of the imperialist countries. Indifference to the cause of the Palestinian people on the part of the European working class, gives the ruling class plenty of opportunity to perfect a terror apparatus for use against the working class movement in general. The increasing co-operation between the secret police of different countries, the international witch-hunts against 'subversion,' the call for more stringent surveillance, are all part of the same pattern. Any moves against Palestinian or Arab organisations in Britain must be met with a massive response from the British Left.

Trades Council to publish workers' newspaper

In the future struggles of the working class, there is much that will have to be brought back from the past. Newcastle and District Council understands this very well. They have decided to revive *The Workers Chronicle*, the paper produced by the Trades Council during the General Strike of 1926.

A Trades Council representative said that 'It is being brought back because we think things are gradually drifting towards those dim, dark days. We want to try to keep trade unionists in the picture.'


The Trades Council secretary said that 'The council believes the present industrial and political climate calls for the trade union movement to make more effective use of its strength by working in solidarity to preserve and progress its hard-won rights in the face of the forces of reaction and capitalism. A *Workers Chronicle* would counter the mass media which, by its very nature of control, maintains a persistent propaganda war against the trade unions.'

By following the example of Newcastle Trades Council, the working class today can avoid some of the difficulties created by the lack of foresight and preparation which was a feature of the general strike of 1926.

THE SPECIAL EDITION WORKER'S CHRONICLE
ISSUED BY A. GENNETT, 9, NUN 51
For Newcastle Trades Council of Action
No. 14. Friday May 14th. Price One Penny

OUR ANSWER TO THE TROTSKISTS
BY SUN JINER I.
Never in the history of working-class struggle—with the exception of the treachery of our leaders in 1914—has there been such a calculated betrayal of working-class interests as has overtaken us this week. What are the Trotski's?
Edition of *The Workers' Chronicle* published at the end of the General Strike

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