

LIAISON COMMITTEE BACKS SHREWSBURY 24

BY CHRIS BALFOUR

Delegates from 35 of the best organised and most important factories and shop stewards' committees in England, Scotland and Wales voted last Saturday to organise a massive lobby of the TUC when it meets in September at Blackpool, calling for an end to talks with the Government and an all-out fight against the pay laws.

The delegates, from the 'sponsoring bodies' of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions and brought together largely through the influence of the Communist Party, also decided to follow up the lobby of the TUC with a recall conference of the LCDTU. This is to be held later in September, and will take up the questions of defending pickets and campaigning against the Government's pay policy.

The meeting recognised that there is an urgent need for solidarity with the 24 building workers on trial in Shrewsbury and Mold for their picketing activities, some delegates stressing that the case was as important as that of the Pentonville 5. It was suggested that the September LCDTU conference would be an important opportunity to push forward the campaign in defence of the 24, before the trial opens at Shrewsbury in October.

New Upsurge

These moves come just when the Chrysler workers have shown that the fighting ability of the working class remains undiminished. Moreover, the decisions of the engineering workers' conference have placed one of the industrially most powerful groups solidly against the TUC-Government talks and any form of wage restriction, on paper at least. The engineering pay claim, if seriously fought for, could set this decisive section of the class on a direct collision course with the Government.

With the inspiration of the Chrysler strikers behind them, and the practical focus of the AUEW decisions before them, the mass of workers, who have only gone along with the £1 + 4% settlements on an interim basis, can become more willing than ever to go into struggle.

Rank and File Must Lead

The LCDTU is quite correct to demand that the TUC bureaucrats take up the fight against the Government. But this is not at all sufficient. The unwillingness of the Communist Party, which is in the leadership of the LCDTU, to break away from its alliance with the 'left' bureaucrats has had disastrous effects on the rank-and-file movement in the past, and it could do so again in the future.

At the same time as striving to create the broadest possible fighting unity in the trade union movement by pushing the bureaucrats into action, we must also be preparing the rank-and-file to assume the leadership of their own struggles.

Serious Campaigns

A major showdown with the Government is the only way for the working

class to win a victory. But such a fight cannot be won without widespread unity in struggle, and the use of the most militant tactics. This means moving towards a general strike. Previous LCDTU conferences have failed to face up to this reality, hamstrung by the weaknesses of the Communist Party's strategy.

Last Saturday's meeting was absolutely correct to assign top priority to campaigns in defence of picketing and against the TUC-Government talks. If these campaigns are seriously conducted, they can serve to warn the Government that we will fight back, they can strengthen the hand of the rank-and-file leadership against the bureaucracy, and they can give the mass of workers renewed confidence in their ability to struggle. The immediate need is for the establishment of Shrewsbury defence committees in every area to mobilise the widest support on this issue. Similar steps should be taken to ensure the maximum involvement in, and awareness of, the forthcoming TUC lobby.

Plan the Way Ahead

But those of us who are preparing the fight against the Tory Government and the employers must also plan out where we are headed. We must state openly that a general strike is on the cards, and prepare both ourselves and the mass of workers for this sort of confrontation. This is the critical question which will face the LCDTU in September.

This conference must include wider layers of the rank-and-file leadership than ever before. And it must be so conducted that the delegates have a genuine opportunity to discuss policy questions seriously, and work out in detail a strategy for the next stage of struggle.

The last conference represented a serious step backwards in both these respects. If this error is not corrected, then all the moves the LCDTU is now taking will come to nothing.

But if the LCDTU is prepared to take the right approach to the critical questions facing the working class movement, then the September Conference could become a decisive force in setting the whole movement on the road to victory in the class struggle.



Part of Tuesday's demonstration outside Mold Crown Court, where eight building workers are now on trial, facing charges arising out of picketing during last year's building strike. Some of them are also involved in the trial of 24 building workers on similar charges which is due to open in Shrewsbury later this year. It was announced at the demonstration that all 24 defendants will take part in a march from London to Shrewsbury in the ten days before the case opens. Public meetings will be held in every major centre along the route in order to bring the case to the attention of the widest possible sections of the labour movement.

French Trotskyists - threat of ban

Last Friday the French fascist organisation Ordre Nouveau held a mass meeting in the centre of Paris to mobilise support for a blatantly racist anti-immigration campaign.

A counter-demonstration was organised by a number of groups on the extreme left, most prominent of which was the Communist League, French section of the Fourth International. The French authorities undertook to protect the meeting and placed hundreds of riot-equipped police at the disposal of the fascists. The counter-demonstration was a massive success, and led to hours of pitched battles between the police and demonstrators. The demonstrators, used to the ferocious brutality of the police riot squads, came fully equipped for combat, and generally seem to have carried the day.

The police promptly replied by a raid on the Paris headquarters of the Communist League. The raiders did widespread damage inside the building, and took twenty five members of the League into custody. Fourteen have since been charged with violating the weapons laws, and central committee member Pierre Rousset has been kept in custody for almost a week without bail.

The right-wing has launched a big campaign calling for the banning of the League and the arrest of Alain Krivine, a prominent League member often treated by the capitalist press as its 'leader.' The French cabinet meets today, 28 June, to discuss the matter.

Fascist activity has increased over the past few months, and a number of armed attacks on striking workers have occurred quite recently. But the actions led by the League have prevented the French fascists from acquiring the kind of mass support they have in Italy. They have also revealed the close links between the fascists and the capitalist state, thus making it difficult for the former to masquerade as 'radical' and 'anti-capitalist.'

The League is receiving very widespread sympathy from trade unionists and other groups in French society

who have less than pleasant memories of fascism, both past and present. One of the main trade union confederations, the CFDT, the congress of the French Socialist Party, and the United Socialist Party (PSU), have all blamed the incident on the authorities' decision to allow the meeting to take place.

The whole British left has a duty to solidarise with the Communist League if any further repressive moves are made against it. We could well learn much from the way in which the League has carried on the fight against the fascist organisations.

International Marxist Group & Socialist Labour League JOINT MEETING

**DEFEND
WORKERS RIGHTS
SUPPORT
SHREWSBURY 24**

speakers: DAVE JACKSON (Chairman Shrewsbury Defence Committee)
BOB PENNINGTON (IMG)
GERRY HEALY (SL)

FRIDAY 6 JULY 8 PM

ACTON TOWN HALL
HIGH STREET ACTON

Collection will be made for Shrewsbury 24

Coaches to the meeting

King's Cross - York Way, N.1

St George's Circus (nr. Elephant & Castle) - William Hill Building

Both leave at 19:00

CURRENT ACCOUNT

Wages, profits & the freeze

The Tory government's wage freeze (from November to March) was the first stage of a strategy not against inflation but for reducing real wages and raising profits. The figures are now available to assess in detail how it worked.

During the five months of the freeze wage rates went up by about 1.5 per cent and money earnings (mainly due to an increase in overtime working and a reduction in short time) rose by 2.8 per cent. Retail prices in the same period shot up by 4.4 per cent. So, in terms of the workers' average living standards, real basic rates fell by almost 3 per cent and real earnings by about 1.6 per cent.

Since most inflation during the freeze resulted from soaring food prices it was the lower paid workers who suffered most. The contrasts between different industries are also quite marked. In the first four months of the freeze real average earnings went up in the following industries: food, drink and tobacco (+6.5 per cent), metal manufacture (+2.9) and construction (+2.0). But in nearly all the rest they went down: especially in transport and communications (-3.6), paper and printing (-1.9), mining and quarrying (-2.1), chemicals (-3.0) and vehicles (-5.9).

PROFITS SURGE

The result of this decline in real wages, along with a sharp rise in productivity and output, was a tremendous surge in profits, though less than the Tories intended owing to the unprecedented rise in raw material costs. The share of profits in the total money value of home production, which was halved between 1964 and 1970 and then static up to the end of 1972, leapt up sharply in the first quarter of 1973 (from 10.4 per cent in 1972 to 11.8 per cent in the first quarter of this year).

April, the first month of Phase 2 of the wage laws, was the cruellest so far for average living standards. Basic wage rates went up 2 per cent as the pre-freeze agreements were implemented. But the rise in earnings was only 0.6 per cent while prices went up by almost 2 per cent.

It looks as if the rest of Phase 2 will continue the same way. The formula for permissible wage increases (£1 plus 4 per cent) would give an average rise of 6.8 per cent a year; and the rate of inflation in the last three months has been nearly 14 per cent a year. If that continues it will produce a really tremendous decline in living standards over the coming months. These are the economic results of the policy in which the trade union leaderships have 'reluctantly acquiesced'.

This mixture of rising prices and falling real wages can only produce the feast of profits for which the capitalists' mouths are watering, for so long as the present rapid growth of output goes on. But further deterioration in the balance of payments (the May trade figures were once again the worst ever) and more gloomy prognostications for the world economy make this increasingly problematic.

There is, therefore, no prospect of looser wage control under Phase 3. And this is confirmed by the CBI's two demands in the tripartite talks: for the continuation of statutory control of wages and the complete ending of regulations on profit margins.

POSTSCRIPT: The efforts of Hill Samuel and Slater Walker to merge into the largest merchant industrial bank in the country (analysed in this column two weeks ago) have failed. The deal was called off, they say, because of 'fundamental differences in work-style and personality'.

But capitalists get together to make profits not love. And the declining share prices of both firms since the merger was announced testify to a lack of confidence in the earning power of the merger. The principle fear was probably that entry to the 'respectable' Issuing Houses Committee, of which Hill Samuel is a member, might have led to more scrutiny of the ruthless asset stripping methods which have made Slater Walker so profitable. Both companies are now again on the lookout for other opportunities to merge themselves out of their respective problems.

Michael Price



Picture shows the 'Wandsworth Three' — left to right, Eric Porter, Fred Scott and Fred Whiteley — at a picket held on their behalf last Saturday outside the offices of the National Union of Teachers. The three, all members of Wandsworth Teachers Association, face disciplinary charges after disturbances at a mass meeting in Central Hall, Westminster, which was held in the middle of the teachers' struggle over the London Allowance. For further information contact: A. Jackson, Wandsworth Defence Committee, Flat 4, 697 Garratt Lane, London S.W.17 (947-3999).

Flying pickets carry the day

Chrysler workers at Ryton in Coventry won a big victory at the end of last week when they heard that after a four-week strike all their demands had been granted by the company.

This success was due to the flying pickets, used for the first time in the car industry. When management provoked the dispute over 'shoddy work' they were hoping that a strike would exhaust the workers before the pay negotiations which begin this week. Instead the pickets nearly busted Chrysler out of the market. After two weeks of picketing at the

Stoke engine plant, cutting off supplies to Linwood and Dunstable, Chrysler were facing the closure of almost their entire UK operations and the prospect of laying off their workforce at a lay-off rate of 65% of the basic wage.

At the beginning of the week management had tried one last desperate ploy when they hired thugs at £500 a man to break through the picket lines at Stoke and get enough engines to Dunstable to allow a few more days' production there. But this only heightened the resistance of the pickets, and

a few days later Chrysler were forced to settle.

The successful use here of the flying picket tactic, and its rapid impact on the whole Chrysler combine, only emphasises the problem faced by the employers in this field. The use of thug tactics by the company — in this case of men who described themselves as 'professional strike-breakers' — did not arise because of a nasty American management but was determined by the whole logic of the class struggle in Britain. The labour movement must prepare to defend its picket lines against attack by making sure that the enemy, in uniform or otherwise, is not alone in using physical means.

Ed Wynn

Unionists back SN5

Last week the Appeal Court rejected the appeals of the five people convicted of conspiring to commit the 'Angry Brigade' bombings. They have been condemned to a combined sentence of half a century — no leniency was shown even to Hilary Creek, who according to a statement by the Stoke Newington Five Solidarity Committee 'is extremely ill ... her illness can be shown to be a direct result of prison life.'*

At the same time, however, the first success in getting the trade union movement to take up the case has come with the passing of a

resolution by Stockport Trades Council pledging solidarity with the Stoke Newington Five. John Broome, President of the Trades Council and himself convicted by Lord Chief Justice Widgery on a charge of obstruction for picketing during the building strike last year, commented:

'We are committed to campaigning for their release and getting as many workers as possible to support this campaign. One of the things this case shows is that divisions in the Left can be very destructive when they prevent urgent practical tasks from being done.'

'The decision was unanimous. It was recognised that this was a political trial and that they are political prisoners, just like Angela Davis. Some people linked up the repression of the five with what is happening to the building workers at Shrewsbury and to the increased repression all round under the Tories. Someone pointed out the good political work the majority of the five put into building claimants unions. People also put emphasis on the dangers of the Special Branch and how they were infiltrating working class organisations. Everyone was concerned at the savagery of the sentences. We want their release.'

Steve Cohen

* Copies of the complete statement can be obtained from: 54 Harcombe Road, London, N. 16.

Squatters go one better

Last Saturday, Harry Feldman found his home picketed by almost a hundred angry squatters and their supporters. Feldman is a director of Berger's, a property group notorious for keeping flats empty while their capital gains pile up. The squatters are occupying 11 such flats on one of Berger's private estates in Herne Hill in South London. They are protesting against an expected Court order giving Berger's the go-ahead to send in the heavy boys to evict them.

The Herne Hill squat is a new departure for the squatters movement. Usually squats take place in evacuated council houses. Councils often turn a blind eye to squatting because it serves as a means of 'solving' the problem of homelessness. They then evict the squatters when

the demolition squads move in. But in Herne Hill, squatters have occupied profitable commercial property. For this sin, they now face the combined force of the property sharks, the bailiffs, the police and the Courts.

Usually, squatters' struggles remain isolated both from one another and from the other struggles of the working class. In this case, however, the local tenants association is supporting the squat. The tenants have their own landlord problems, as Berger's have continually harassed tenants with fictitious rent arrears and have failed to carry out necessary repairs. Support is also coming in from local trade unionists, including some local government workers, and political groups.

agreement covering the industry. A deal worked out by union officials and management on Monday, by-passing the shop stewards, was overwhelmingly rejected by a mass meeting of strikers the following day, and it looks increasingly as if the company will be forced to concede the workers' demands.

The unofficial strike, by 13 women and 74 men — members of the T&GWU — began on 19 June, immediately after a pay rise within

The Herne Hill struggle opens up new prospects for the squatters movement. The urban housing crisis, in its many aspects, is bemoaned by tenants, the homeless, the Labour Party and trade union members alike. But the many aspects of the crisis are in fact linked together. Booming property values in the private sector, for example, drive up the price of building land, strangling council housing schemes. By selecting targets like those in Herne Hill, it is possible to develop centralised campaigns, involving squatters, workers and tenants.

Solidarity in such struggles is now more vital than ever after Lord Denning's recent ruling that the Courts can no longer delay the execution of an eviction order. Denning also reaffirmed that technically no court order is needed at all by owners wishing to evict squatters. This offensive must be countered by stepping up the fight against eviction as the Herne Hill squatters have done.

Anne Samson

the £1 plus 4 per cent norm. The management claims that any additional increase would be illegal, but Phase Two provisions allow the differential between male and female rates to be reduced by a third in 1973.

It was this clause in the pay code, which also brought out industrial clerical workers at two GEC plants in the North-west earlier this month, with the official backing of the clerical workers' union APEX.

Alistair Buchanan

All out for equal pay

Men have once again come out in support of women's demands for progress towards equal pay. H. K. Porter, an industrial rubber goods factory in Stirling, is in the throes of its first strike in 50 years after management refused to increase the female rate by 80p to £18 a week, the minimum level established by a joint

From ADAM GREY

The steelworkers of Harland and Wolff's Belfast shipyard returned to work on 11 June after a ten-week lock-out.

They had lost their fight for parity with steelworkers in Britain (£38 a week instead of £32). They were forced to accept the British Government's £1 plus 4% pay norm. They lost their claim for a £3.50 productivity bonus and accepted 63p. And they got a £50 lump sum for loss of productivity caused by management redevelopment plans.

An important issue in the dispute was that of 'dilutees'. Before the dispute, the unions had accepted 600 new apprentices. This was on a two-thirds Protestant, one-third Catholic basis. Even this ratio, which accepts the imperialist framework in the Six Counties, provoked a reaction from the Protestant workforce. One of their demands in the claim was for 'compensation' for accepting the Catholic apprentices. Although forced to accept the Government's norm, they won £20.90 a man as compensation for the 'dilutees'.

This strong anti-Catholic bias was not reported in the British press. British imperialism does not like to publicise the reactionary sentiments of the Protestant workers. But nor did the left press concentrate attention on it, either. On the contrary the line of the left press on the struggle was itself chauvinistic. *Workers Press* for example, quoted Sandy Scott, Member of the Order of the British Empire and Boilermakers' Convenor, at length and without comment (11 June): 'Like other British workers we have been trapped by the Pay Board... Ulster workers have memories that go back to 1690, and we won't forget this one easily.' And these comments are not just incidental. Billy Hull of the Loyalist Association of Workers was a former member of the Northern Ireland Labour Party, and a convenor of the Belfast shipyard engineering unions. Sandy Scott is part of the same tradition.

Do British socialists accept this sort of attitude or not? *Workers Press* accepted it. Don't they mind that it was in 1690 that Protestant supremacy was secured in Ireland at the Battle of the Boyne? Or that Orangemen celebrate this victory every July 12th? — a celebration of imperialist domination over Ireland.

The Worker, paper of the Maoist group led by Reg Birch, the AUEW executive member, described the dispute as 'Belfast's fight for parity' just as if it were any other industrial struggle in Britain (31 May).

Socialist Worker admitted that there was 'a hint of religious sectarianism in the dispute', but claimed that 'the Belfast workers are rejecting the right-wing bigots who are their worst enemy' (19 May and 2 June). Who's kidding whom?

NATIONALISATION

But it was the Militant group's *Irish Militant* and IS's Irish organ *The Worker* which took the cake. They demanded in their May issues that Harland & Wolff should be nationalised. Nationalised... by which nation? Quite apart from the fact that it is already 47.6% owned by the British imperialist state, are these groups not aware that Irish people are fighting a war to get rid of British imperialism in the Six Counties?

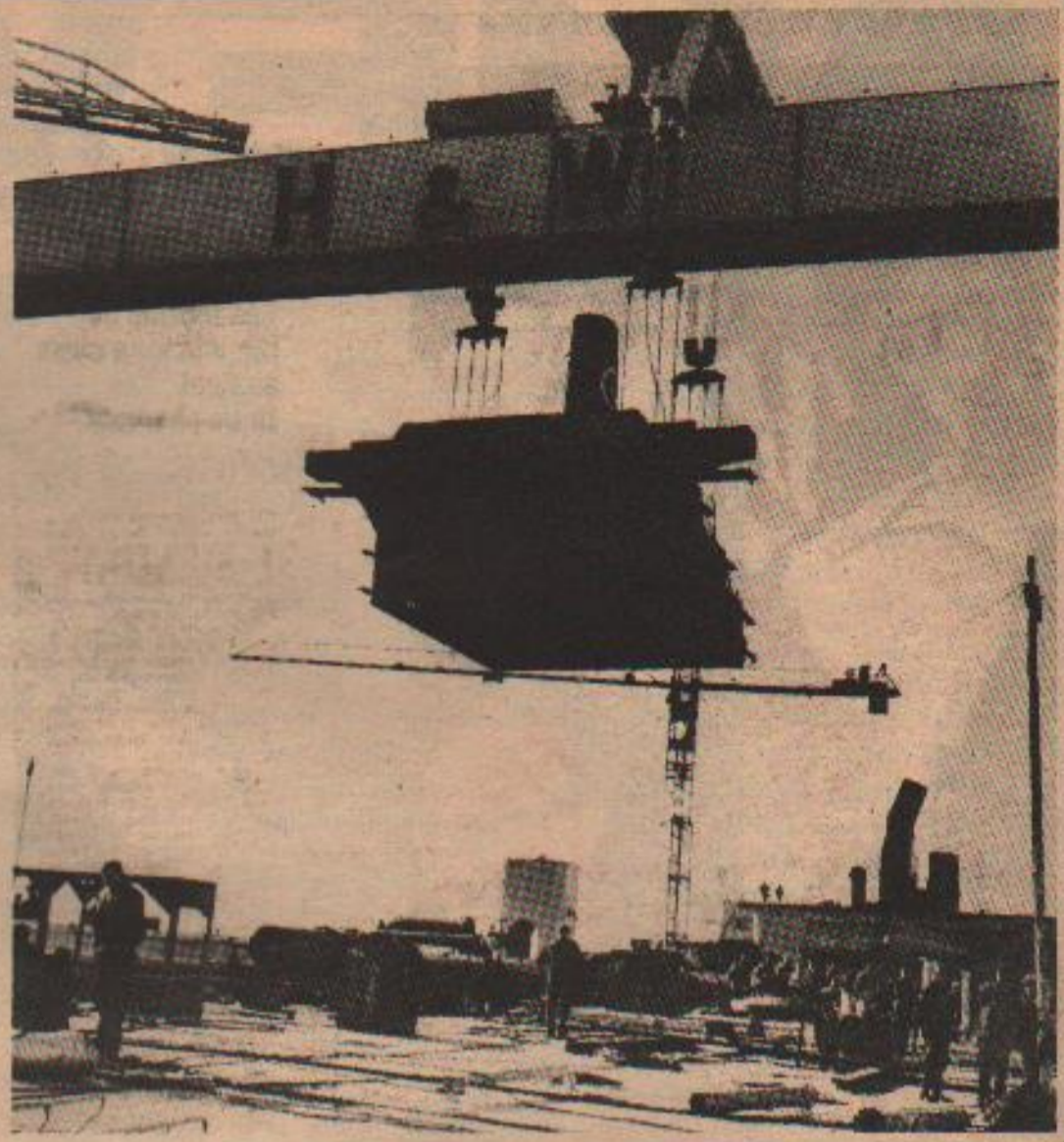
Harland & Wolff is the main industrial base of British imperialism in northern Ireland. It is one of the strongest chains with which the British ruling class enslaves Ireland economically. The shipyard, one of the biggest in the world, and the heavy engineering works around it, are the only base of heavy industry in Ireland. British imperialism keeps this in its own hand, while the rest of Ireland is kept at the level of an exporter of agricultural products and labourers, and an importer of heavy industrial goods, to the chief benefit of British capitalism.

Under these conditions, we think that socialists must fight and oppose any policy for nationalisation of Harland & Wolff by the imperialist British state, with or without 'workers control' frills. We should fight for the whole industrial base of the Six Counties to be handed over to the Irish people immediately and without compensation. Even this is far too little. Nothing can ever be too much to compensate the Irish people for the centuries of exploitation they have suffered at the hands of the British ruling class.

POLITICS

Terrific battles are lying ahead in all British owned shipyards, including Harland & Wolff. The Booz-Allen Report, released in May, said that the number of workers in the industry would be cut from 50,000 to 2,000 by 1977.

HARLAND & WOLFF: LEFT GETS IT ALL WRONG



Right: Harland & Wolff shipyard, Belfast

Thousands of shipyard workers are clearly going to be thrown headlong into politics. In huge crises like this, politics is everything. The shipyard capitalists are fighting for their life. They can only survive by carrying through a smashing attack on wages, conditions and employment. Trade unionism on its own is far too weak to defeat the capitalists. Socialist revolution becomes the only practical politics.

But what sort of politics will the Protestant shipyard workers turn to? Orange reaction or communism? How can they defeat the capitalists while they boast their loyalty to them? And how can they take the road of socialist revolution without first becoming strongly anti-imperialist?

All socialists must support the shipyard workers against the management. But the task of the

left is to raise political demands — the very minimum being no victimisation, no discrimination, a big change in the ratio of Catholic to Protestant employees, and a complete break with imperialism. And the Protestant workers must also be shown that there is no support in the workers movement in Britain for their bullying and arrogant yet servile clinging loyalty.

Army stunt backfires

A British Army recruiting parade and concert in Reading, the town where the British petition for the recall of British troops from Ireland was organised, was turned into an anti-Army demonstration by members of the Anti-Internment League last Saturday.

As British Army morale and recruitment plummets — the latest figures show a drop in recruitment over a two year period of more than 50% — the Army top brass is now determined to take advantage of the return or departure of Army units to stage similar publicity stunts.

Reading has been associated with the anti-recruitment campaign for some months, and for this reason was picked for the first of these shows.

RETREAT

The Regimental Band of the Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment was to have marched

through the town and held a concert in the town's Butts Shopping Centre before the regiment left for an 18-month tour of duty in Ireland. But as the regimental band marched down the main street, more than 100 supporters of the Anti-Internment League, led by the banner of the Oxford Trades Council, fell in behind with placards inscribed 'British Troops Out of Ireland' and 'End Internment'. Another poster stated 'Another Maiwand?' — referring to an engagement in 1880 when the 66th Regiment, ancestor to the present unit, was wiped out by Afghan irregulars.

Local people laughed at this 'joint' demonstration, and before the regimental band had covered a third of its route, it was directed by Army officers to retreat to the Butts. But only about 30 people attended the concert there, and they were more than outnumbered by members of the Anti-Internment League. The concert ended 90 minutes before the scheduled time, and as troops prepared to leave, the League members handed them leaflets.



Above: Bandsman takes leaflet. Below: The 'joint' demonstration. Photos: Mike Newton (Red Weekly)



AUEW!

1 Strugg Conferer



By Mr. Scanlon's own hand, delegates at the AUEW national conference last week voted to remove him from the TUC-Government talks on the economy.

The main resolution stated that 'This national conference declares its continuing opposition to any form of wage restraint, and calls upon the trade union movement to withdraw from dealing with the Government on any prices and incomes policy'. During the debate, the right wing tried to amend the resolution to merely 'emphasise' opposition to wage restraint during the talks. It was only at this point, while arguing for the amendment, that Scanlon stated that if it was not accepted, 'I will not attend the talks'. The amendment was defeated by 35 to 33 votes.

The mover of the resolution, and the majority of delegates who supported it, seem never to have intended that it should bar Scanlon from the talks. Indeed a motion from the TASS conference which *did* call explicitly for the AUEW to leave the talks was withdrawn by the CP-dominated TASS delegation on the first day, precisely in order to leave Scanlon a free hand to attend. This defeatist line was expressed most clearly by leading CP member Eddie Marsden, general secretary of the Constructional Section of the union, when he said that, 'There is nothing we can do about the talks. They are already on and the views of our union must be heard.'

So it was not the CP who demanded an 'unambiguous' resolution, but Scanlon. The CP, precisely because a clear-cut resolution would damage their relations with Scanlon (who continues to be in favour of talks with the Government), set out by their own admission to put through an *ambiguous* resolution which would leave the Executive Committee free to fall in line with the wishes of the TUC. The CP speakers, instead of fighting to call off the talks and prepare the working class for struggle, preferred to offer bogus justifications for the talks continuing. It was only reluctantly that they were forced by Scanlon into voting for the AUEW to break off the talks — a step which has in fact been seen as a tremendous victory by important sections of the labour movement and has led to a strengthening of the militants' hand, particularly in the T&G.

The reasons behind Scanlon's demand for an 'unambiguous resolution' are not entirely clear.

In 1875 a series of important laws regarding trade unions were drawn up by the Conservative government and passed by Parliament. The TUC, established only seven years earlier for the express purpose of agitating for these laws, hailed them as a great victory and voted overwhelmingly to send thanks to the Tory Home Secretary for their adoption.

Among these laws was the 'Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act'. Under this very act, almost one hundred years later, 24 trade union militants are before the courts in Shrewsbury. It is this same Act, hailed at time of its adoption as legalising the right of peaceful picketing, that the state is today using to spearhead an attack against picketing and against the ability of the working class to carry on its struggles in an effective way. Ironically, the very section of the Act under which the Shrewsbury 24 are being prosecuted was drawn up with the active assistance of the TUC Parliamentary Committee and its acceptance by the government was considered to be the greatest victory of the TUC.

RECOGNITION AND RESPECTABILITY

By the late 1860's the British trade union movement had emerged from the half-clandestine existence it had been forced to lead in its early years. In 1825 the laws that had made 'combinations' of workmen criminal were repealed, and in 1859 picketing was expressly legalised, as long as its aim was only to 'peacefully persuade' workers to support a strike.

At the same time a new group of unions, and a new type of trade union leader, appeared on the scene. These were the 'Amalgamated' unions that organised the skilled workers in such trades as engineering and building. They were relatively centralised, fixed high dues, and maintained a wide range of benefits for their

members. Their leaders were articulate, self-educated men who had usually 'risen from the ranks' of their respective trades. They accepted the framework of capitalism and capitalist society; and were more interested in introducing 'justice' into the 'partnership of capital and labour' than in waging the class struggle.

The central concern of this new leadership was to win legal acceptance and social respectability for the trade union movement. For, while trade unions had long ceased to be illegal, their legal position was poorly defined and most sections of the ruling class looked on them with thorough disapproval.

THREE EVENTS

In 1867 three events occurred which jolted these men into action. First a new 'Master and Servant Act' was introduced. While removing some of the worst features of the old law, this

Act left many cases of breach of contract by workers criminal offences punishable by imprisonment. Employers, on the other hand, could break contracts without committing any crime, only being liable to a suit for damages under the civil law.

Second, in a case in which the 'Boilermakers' union was attempting to recover funds embezzled by a branch treasurer, the courts ruled that trade unions, while no longer *criminal*, were still *unlawful* organisations. Therefore their funds were not subject to the protection of the law.

Finally, largely in response to an outbreak of violence in Sheffield connected with a trade dispute, the government decided to establish a Royal Commission to look into the trade union movement.

A small and unofficial group of the most prominent leaders of the London Trades Council, often referred to as the 'Junta', was set up to lead the struggle around these questions. They saw the Royal Commission as a golden opportunity to establish their respectability in the eyes of the capitalist state and win redress for their grievances, and persuaded the government to allow them to nominate someone to sit on the Commission.

LEGAL REFORM

After the Royal Commission reported, and in reply to the widespread agitation that developed for trade union reform, the government agreed to introduce a bill on the matter in 1871. In the event they passed two measures. A Trade Union Act gave the unions the legal recognition and protection they had sought. But the government also carried the Criminal Law Amendment Act, which made 'threats or

molestation' to coerce an employer or his employees illegal, and stipulated that 'persistent following' and 'watching or besetting' a premises (i.e. standing outside them) were illegal under this provision. This took the legal position of pickets back to what it had been before 1859.

A series of cases served to ram this point home. In 1871, seven women in South Wales were jailed for saying 'bah' to a group of scabs. In 1872, a number of London gas-stokers were given 12 months in prison for 'conspiracy to coerce or molest their employer', because they had gone on strike. And in 1875 five cabinet makers were jailed for picketing their work place during a strike, without there being any suggestion that violence or threats had been involved.

In the words of the TUC's legal advisor Henry Crompton:

'A strike was perfectly legal; but if the means employed were calculated to coerce the employer they were illegal means, and a combination to do a legal act by illegal means was a criminal conspiracy. In other words, a strike was lawful, but anything done in pursuit of a strike was criminal.'

TUC LOBBIES TORIES

In 1871 the TUC set up its first permanent, standing body — the Parliamentary Committee. This committee, which included many former members of the 'Junta', undertook to campaign for further amendments to the labour laws.

At first the Parliamentary Committee was distrustful of the recently elected Conservative government, but they quickly began to realise that the Tories were at least as willing as the

Liberals to cooperate with the trade union leaders.

At the end of April 1875, the Parliamentary Committee sent a deputation to visit the Tory Home Secretary, Richard Cross. They called for legal reforms to end criminal offences under the Master and Servant Act, to repeal the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and to limit the use of conspiracy charges against trade unionists.

Feeling among trade unionists had run high over the arrest of the striking cabinet makers. On the release of the cabinet makers from prison in June, a mass demonstration some 50,000 strong took place to demonstrate the solidarity of the trade union movement with their cause and to protest against the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

Who wrote the 1875 Pic

at ce

Certainly it marked a break with the normal practice of being in favour of vague motions which leave the EC room for manoeuvre. But it does mean that by not being party to any deal he will be able to avoid undermining his reputation as a 'left' by having to enforce its terms on the rank and file - particularly as the first major challenge to the viability of any deal is likely to come from his own members over the impending engineers' wage claim. At the same time he has managed to remain respectable in the eyes of the Government and the press, with right-wing Tory MP Angus Maude even speculating in the *Sunday Express* that, 'He might become a martyr - but he might become a hero as well'.

The AUEW Conference also reaffirmed the wage claim agreed by the engineering section in April, for an increase from £25 for a 40 hour week to £35 for a 35 hour week on the basic rate, along with an extra week's holiday. This was being discussed by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (which includes the T&G) on Thursday, with a recommendation from the AUEW that 'national industrial action' be taken 'if necessary' if no reply is received within one month of lodging the claim in August. But national strike action in engineering would bring much of industry to a halt and could lead directly or indirectly to a general strike, the last thing Scanlon wants. Last year's tactic of plant-by-plant bargaining was a fiasco, so Scanlon's recommendation this time is likely to be for a national overtime ban and work-to-rule.

At the same time the promise of a new 'left' Labour Government will be used by the trade union bureaucracy in an effort to quell threats of an industrial offensive. The AUEW Conference itself passed resolutions calling for any Labour Government to withdraw from (rather than renegotiate terms with) the EEC, and for the nationalisation of major industries without compensation. The AUEW block vote will strengthen the hand of the left wing at the Labour Party conference in September, but it will also give the bureaucracy a useful weapon against their members. 'Don't struggle', they will say, 'wait for the new left Labour Government to come along. Major industrial disruption will play into the hands of the Tories at the next election.' It is these kinds of pitfalls which will have to be avoided in mapping out an alternative way forward in the coming months.

Later that month the government introduced a number of measures into the House designed to reform the labour laws. The 'Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act' now protected trade unionists from the most oppressive conspiracy charges - those used to make into a criminal offence an act that would not be a crime by itself. The new law provided that no combination to carry out an action, connected with a trades dispute, would be a criminal conspiracy unless that action was in itself a crime.

There had been no provision for repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act in the original draft bill the government had produced. But the trade union movement across the country was insistent that this hateful law had to go. The TUC Parliamentary Committee undertook to lobby for its repeal and redrafted and endorsed an amendment prepared by Robert

ket Law?

Lowe, a prominent Liberal MP. This had the effect of repealing the Criminal Law Amendment Act and incorporating many of its criminal provisions into the new Act. The Lowe/TUC amendment was, with a few changes, accepted by the government and became part of the new Act.

This Act now removed the worst parts of the old law, but still gave only limited protection to pickets. Picketing was only permitted for 'communicating information', and could not even include 'peaceful persuasion', as it had between 1859 and 1871. Today, the TUC amendment is the infamous section 7 under which the Shrewsbury 24 are being tried, and under which two Pilkington strikers were tried and convicted in 1970.

The emerging trade union bureaucracy that

2 After the Resolutions

The AUEW Conference was a vital one for the whole working class movement. A number of extremely important resolutions were passed, which could serve to take the struggle of the working class forward providing that the problems of how to carry them out are solved.

The most vital decision, of course, was that which forced Scanlon to withdraw from the Government-TUC talks. The ruling class is under no illusions about the importance of this. The *Financial Times* on 21 June declared that the decision, 'reduces the prospects of any agreement involving a wage restraint formula being acceptable to the TUC Congress in September Moreover, even if such an agreement were to be endorsed by the Congress, its effectiveness could be jeopardised by the opposition of the 1.4 million member union.'

NEED FOR CAMPAIGN

But the Conference did not go on to express the need for a campaign in all other unions to get the TUC to call off the talks. To make the decision really effective it is now necessary to conduct a concerted campaign in all the other unions to get the TUC out - the T&G especially, where Jack Jones is the other 'left' negotiator for the TUC. Now is the time to put into practice the age old sentiment that the TUC must be accountable to the working class movement. Sid Harraway's line about individual unions having no say in the 'personalities' in the talks implicitly accepts that the rank and file cannot dictate to those who speak in their name. This line is worse than useless.

The second potentially vital decision was that the AUEW would not accept an incomes policy under any government. This asserts the principle of maintaining the independence of the trade unions from the capitalist state - whether the hangman's noose is offered by Tory or Labour. It is only by maintaining this principle of complete independence from the employers, both in individual firms and from their state, that the way forward for struggle can be kept open. The AUEW decision is a big step forward to the fundamental position of 'No to any form of incomes policy under capitalism'. It must now fight for this position against the plans of the Labour Party, both its left and its right wing, for a voluntary incomes policy under the next Labour Government.

A second part of the main resolution expressed the alternative to the talks: 'to build a cam-

paigned of industrial action designed to defeat the government and its policies of legal restrictions on the trade union movement.'

The alternatives were summed up sharply by speakers in the debate. A right winger, Jack Hadley, said that, 'if we can't beat this is government we must go in and negotiate the best deal we can'. Cliff Roberts, however, speaking for the main resolution in opposition to talks and to incomes policy, stated clearly that, 'if you are not prepared to back this resolution with total industrial action you might as well forget about it'. It was this policy which the AUEW adopted.

This could easily be forgotten by both the Executive Committee and the CP in the midst of the surprise and embarrassment over Scanlon's insistence on forcing the vote. Forgetfulness would be in line with the ambiguity which the CP cultivates on questions which might disrupt their alliance with the 'lefts', such as the general strike. Now the AUEW is in favour of a campaign of 'industrial action designed to defeat the government', the CP must come out openly for the general strike and all the means necessary to prepare it. Though the *Morning Star* continually talks of the necessity to get rid of the Tories, and Bert Ramelson in his pamphlet on the Industrial Relations Act talks of the demand for a general strike 'pouring in like a torrent to Congress House', they want to remain ambiguous given that the 'lefts' prefer to get rid of governments only by electoral means.

An essential part of preparing any general strike confrontation is to ensure that the necessary technical means are not impaired and that the working class is educated to use them. A key instrument for developing and extending a general strike is the flying picket. In the discussion on picketing at the Conference, Bob Wright said: 'Let's not have any of this nonsense about neutrality' on the part of the police. 'The establishment of this country, including the police, have always seen their role in the protection of property.' Len Misdeline from London pointed out that, 'The police have now organised themselves with heavy squads' which are being used 'with the sole purpose of causing an affray', as at Biant's. The Conference called on the TUC to set up a co-ordinating committee, armed with a defence fund, to investigate cases against pickets and help defend those like the Shrewsbury 24.

made up the TUC Parliamentary Committee were never interested in giving the trade union movement the necessary teeth to wage the class struggle. They agreed wholeheartedly with the government and capitalist class that 'threats, violence and intimidation' should never be used by workers, and should be treated as crimes if they were. Thus they gave their blessing to a law that could easily become a powerful weapon in the hands of the ruling class against the workers' movement, as we are seeing at the present time. Despite a few minor advances, the law of picketing still remains today one of the weakest legal spots in trade union activity.

The trade union bureaucracy has never really been concerned with gaining the leeway to carry on effective picketing. They have been willing to fight for legal recognition of the organisations they head and for legal protection of the funds out of which their salaries come. But they have always accepted the framework of capitalism and capitalist law. This means accepting that 'threats and violence' are the exclusive privilege of the ruling class, and that anyone else who tries to fight back in kind deserves to be ruthlessly suppressed.

Trade unionists have, for many years, benefited from a fairly loose application of the picketing laws, because of the strength and determination of the rank-and-file of the movement. Today, when the traditional rights of picketing are once more under attack, it will only be the rank-and-file militants who are really prepared to fight this attack. The weapon of effective picketing is a crucial instrument in the class struggle, but that struggle has never interested the trade union bureaucrats.

Brian Slocock

George Odger, a leading member of the TUC Parliamentary Committee in 1875

Dave Bailey and Alan Jones

But what is really needed is for the trade unions to defend every picket regardless of the ruling class 'law'. The working class is going to have to confront all the armed forces of the capitalist state as well as the unofficial gangs of thugs used by the bosses as at Chrysler's. It can't bother itself about 'the law'. To do this the working class must be prepared to systematically organise pickets with all physical means necessary to carry out the struggle. But instead of this the Conference confined itself to demanding the Labour Party bring in legal safeguards for picketing.

The real task is to take measures to defend the right to picket now, which can only be done by depriving the enemy of his monopoly of force.

If the AUEW is serious about its commitment to a 'campaign for industrial action to defeat the Government' a campaign of this kind on picketing is indispensable.

The same holds true of the wage claim. Since the AUEW claim is bound to exceed any norms which the Government will lay down under Phase 3, a major national struggle will be necessary to win the claim. No matter what the AUEW bureaucracy tries to do, the working class as a whole will see in such a struggle a major focus for their resistance to the Tory Government. This makes urgent the preparation of the working class for a coming fight that will necessarily take on general strike dimensions.

The danger with all the decisions lies in willing the end but not the means. If the logic of the decisions is accepted - no negotiations, independence of unions from the state, no incomes policy with Labour, pursuit of the claim, and industrial action to defeat and remove the Government - the AUEW could start a process leading to big working class victories. If this logic is not translated into practice, other demands such as for expropriating the major companies without compensation are so much hot air. If the working class is to go forward to carry out revolutionary measures of this kind, extra-parliamentary measures will be necessary. Without the deepest mobilisation of the working class against the immediate obstacles facing it, the working class will never be prepared for such a revolutionary struggle. Without confronting the immediate obstacles in a decisive manner, the working class will suffer a defeat which will put those suffered under Phase 2 into the shade.



This Endangered Planet, by Richard A. Falk (Vintage Books, £1.25) *John Ray and Kevin Todd*

In the last few years there has been a flood of books onto the market dealing with the question of the environment and its deterioration. Most of these have ended with some form of 'solution,' along the lines of curbing the 'population explosion,' control of the use of the planet's resources or some other wonderful abstract notion. This recent arrival on the environmental bandwagon is no exception.

Falk's main proposal is an insane set-up based upon the United Nations as the 'World Government,' which will solve the 'environmental problems' by application of what Falk calls 'the ecological imperative,' which he defines as '... the development of ecological politics, whose essence is a political embodiment of man-in-nature, as the ideological underpinning for an adequate conception of world order.' (p.21).

SCALE OF PRODUCTION

Clearly we would agree with the main aim of the 'ecology movement' — that is, the rational control of the planet's resources — but we must take up very strongly Falk's totally inadequate 'conception of world order' from which such control could derive. The

theoreticians of the 'ecology movement' simply do not understand the economic forces from which the problems of society derive. Thus Falk states: '... the patterns of behaviour that generate the crisis are created by the scale of production and the life-styles of the most advanced industrial countries.' (p.10). While we would agree that the polluting effect of 100 factories is greater than that of one factory, this is only a quantitative difference which does not approach the root of the problem.

The problem is not the scale of production but the form of production. We live in a capitalist society, that is a society where each individual capitalist, in order to survive, must maximise his profit margins. Looked at in this way, we can very easily show that it is this which determines mass wastage, inadequate pollution-control, the blind plunder of scarce resources, etc., etc., not purely the scale of production.

WHAT IS POLLUTION?

Pollution can be defined as the introduction of some man-made product into the environment which disturbs the natural balance that exists there. The main source of pollution is industry and the servicing of industry and not, as for example 'The Friends of the Earth' seem to think, the disposal of waste products by individuals. Is it then that each factory-owner is unaware of the damage he is causing? Is it possible to convince all capitalists of their evil

Reviews

ways simply by informing them of the facts?

The answer is of course, no. We must reject all solutions which put the cause of the problems in the psychology of this or that or all capitalists. The answer lies in the very nature — the driving force — of capitalism itself. For example, the century-long struggle by workers to have proper safety-equipment installed in factories is by no means over. Introduction of this equipment has been consistently rejected by the owners of industry on the grounds of expenditure (i.e. reduction in profits). Clearly the struggle to enforce adequate anti-pollution devices will be just as hard.

INDIVIDUAL ACTS

How then are we to overcome these problems, so intimately bound up with the capitalist system? Falk conceives of the solution in the following way: 'The first need is to awaken the consciousness of men and women everywhere to the causes of their distress.' (p.3). 'To grasp a new reality requires a combination of experience, understanding and an organised effort at positive response.' (p.5). 'The secret of beginning is to begin somewhere, with a

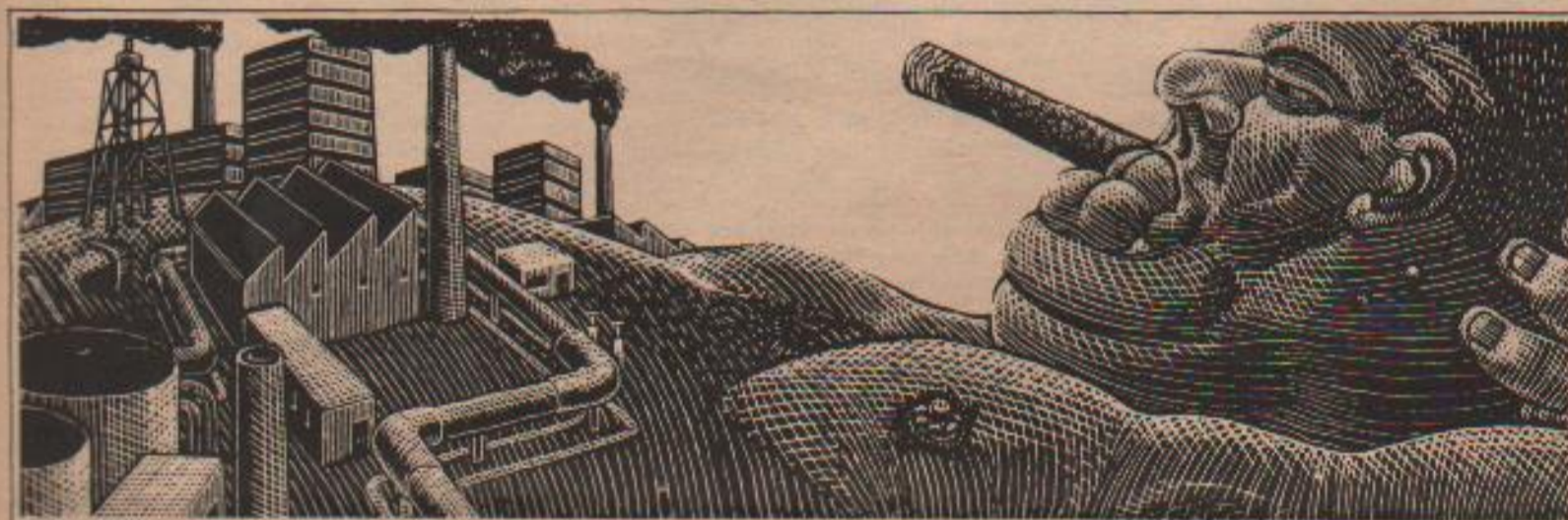
concrete and personal act, perhaps located in the mind, in one's daily routine or in one's neighbourhood. The early acts should be close at hand and gradually the circles of effect should be expanded.' (p.19).

Of course we must change consciousness, but how is this to be done? Falk argues that it will be achieved by individual acts against whatever produces this environmental danger. But it is an *entire* way of organising the economy that produces the environmental danger and individual acts of any kind cannot overthrow that. The only proven way is by organising the working class, which has no interest in clogging its lungs, fouling up the sea and poisoning its own food, to act collectively to get rid of the source of its problems through a social revolution. The consciousness of these workers will be raised by the active intervention and leadership of a revolutionary party in their day-to-day struggles, including increasingly in the future those against the oppression caused by pollution.

WHO WILL CHANGE SOCIETY?

It is by refusing to take up the question of *who* will change society — which class — that this theoretician of the 'ecology movement' arrives at the absurd conclusion that the problems of society can be solved through the United Nations. The UN, however, is a body which was set up by world capitalism precisely in order to maintain the status quo and not to strive for an 'adequate conception of world order.' If the UN cannot guarantee the democratic right of self-determination for all oppressed nations (e.g. Bangla Desh, Vietnam and Korea), then how is it going to change the basic laws by which the world capitalist system operates.

The only way is the complete restructuring and reforming of the whole of society, after the barbarities and insane, unplanned dangers of the capitalist method of 'organising' production and distribution of goods have been swept away. This will not be achieved by 'individual acts,' still less by acts of the United Nations, but by revolutionary action by the majority of the working class. It is the revolutionary marxists — not the Falks of this world — who are the realists on questions of such pressing urgency to the people of this increasingly murky, stinking planet.



Sexual dialectics, ctd

Chris Balfour turns his original error into a complete deviation from Marxism in his reply to S. Cohen's article (*Red Weekly* 6). Three points glare out:

1. The supposed fact that the male working class is the main market for strip clubs and pornography, a taste shared with other classes, does by no means prove it is a 'specifically human' (i.e. supraclass) trait. Lenin pointed out that the working class spontaneously gravitates to bourgeois ideology, being utterly enmeshed in a bourgeois society. If anything, pop, T.V., and cinema have made this pervasive influence of bourgeois values even stronger.
2. What is bourgeois morality? It is an outgrowth of commodity exchange. The ruling class (see the T.V. interview with Robin Day) views Lambton's actions — 'right or wrong' — as a part of free sexuality, and there have been attempts to defend Lambton's right to sexual freedom in our 'permissive' age, and condemnation of what some bourgeois see as the double standard of Lambton's denigrators. They identify 'free sexuality' as the right to buy who you like, just as 'free speech' is the right to buy the newspaper you like. The worst thing about Balfour's two articles is that they lend strength to an easy identification of different conjunctural phenomena, (e.g. the abortion law repeal demand and the porn boom) as all part of the same permissive movement. Though his subjective intent is towards revolutionary sexual freedom, the objective result is to identify the permissive bourgeois morality of 'the right to buy what you like' with the revolutionary communist 'right to be what you like'.
3. As well as being unrevolutionary and supraclass, his articles are ahistorical. What material factors created the conditions for this 'natural human instinct' of all (male) classes to porn and prostitutes? What are the factors that result in men buying women, rather than women buying men? Why has permissiveness ex-

tended itself now to the working class, as he claims? Even a casual examination shows the main factor to be a bourgeois attempt to realise more profit on capital, and to hell with 'morality'.

Steve Cohen's letter is erroneous on one point here. The capitalists don't now all preach repressive sexual morality to the working class. Their ideology is in a state of flux on the question. The long-term bourgeois need for a stable family unit, to give respectable male workers plus the extra of a reserve female labour force, is in direct contradiction to the short term pursuit of profit among some individual capitalists — precisely those who own the media and thereby manipulate the ideology most strongly. This, plus the ideological impasse of the petit bourgeoisie in their current economic problems, leads to a highly unstable and contradictory situation, not a monolithic repressive morality; although I think the ruling class is about to close ranks on this question.

Incidentally, Chris Balfour does make one excellent point about the split in fantasy worlds, at the end of his reply. But even this is more complex today, reflecting various fantasies put out by different vested interests.

John V. Roy

CHRIS BALFOUR REPLIES:

Comrade Roy misunderstands me. Other readers must judge whether the fault for this misunderstanding lies with him or with me.

I never suggested that a taste for pornography etc. was a 'specifically human trait'. I did argue that sexuality was a basic part of 'being human'. In this sense sex-

uality must be seen, not as *supraclass* (standing above and regulating the activity of social classes), but as *infraclass* (part of the raw material out of which classes are formed, and reflected into the activity of these classes).

As I said, 'the functioning of class society demands the perpetual subordination of these human traits to the needs of class domination'. It is this which produces the forms of sexuality specific to capitalist society: the split between male and female sexuality, the insertion of relations of domination and subjection into sexual relations, the repression of sexual needs in the interests of 'social order'. Those phenomena which Comrade Roy thinks I attribute to 'human instinct', are precisely those which I said were caused by the subordination and distortion of those instincts by capitalist society.

Comrade Roy suggests that I am 'ahistorical' in my analysis. But my original article was precisely an attempt to explain an historical problem: the changing attitude of the ruling class to the sexual exploits of its members. For example, Lord Palmerston who, first as foreign secretary and then as Prime Minister, dominated British bourgeois politics until his death in 1865, lived openly with his mistress for thirty years, until the death of her husband made it possible for them to marry. Yet today an incident that would hardly have ranked as interesting gossip in the mid-19th century, provokes a governmental crisis. My original article is the only attempt to explain this historical phenomenon so far.

Contrast this with the approach of Comrade Cohen, who appears to think that working class sexuality hasn't changed for a hundred years. Comrade Roy's 'historical' explanation in terms of commodity exchange is even worse; this places bourgeois morality in both pre-capitalist and post-capitalist societies (for both exhibit quite highly developed systems of commodity exchange) and thus lumps together more than 2000 years of human history! No thank you, Comrade Roy, I prefer to tread my own, much more mundane, 'ahistorical' path.

Comrade Roy's vulgar Marxist interpretation of 'permissiveness' is nonsense. It cannot simply be reduced to capitalist buck-chasing, because that does not explain the wide acceptability and entrenchment of these new patterns of sexual attitudes (which go beyond mere money raising ventures anyway). Unless, of course, Comrade Roy wishes to suggest that the dominant group within the capitalist class is no longer financial capital, nor industrial capital, but porn capital.

We need to study much more closely the inter-relationships between human sexuality, prevailing sexual attitudes, and the political and social needs of capitalist class rule. Only this can furnish us with an historical materialist understanding both of sexuality and of the dynamics of class domination. But first we must grasp correctly what the historical problems are.

(This correspondence is now closed — Eds.)



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BREZHNEV, NIXON — two thumbs in the dyke

This is the second time inside 18 months that the Soviet bureaucracy has come to Nixon's aid when he needed it most.

By JOAN STOTT

Last year Brezhnev helped Nixon to ward off the effects of the mining of North Vietnamese ports and the bombing of the cities by inviting him to Moscow. Last week Brezhnev's trip to the US helped to take some of the pressure out of the Watergate hearings, which have created an extremely severe political crisis for the Nixon administration.

Indeed there was more than a touch of irony in Nixon — a corrupt, second-rate bourgeois politician whose political career was built on the basis of a crude anti-communism and the politics of the witch-hunt — being comforted publicly by the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

ROOTS OF THE SUMMIT

The Nixon-Brezhnev summit has been greeted almost to a man by the American ruling class and its press. The few Senators such as Henry Jackson, who represent a small minority of the

ruling class (Jackson himself is a well-known spokesman for the Seattle-based bomber manufacturers) have found themselves isolated and subjected to rebukes by both Republicans and Democrats.

The reason for this is not difficult to understand. It lies in the crisis which has gripped the imperialist system and which has been expressed most clearly in the crisis of the capitalist economy. The 1969 recession in the United States, the monetary crisis of 1971, the enormous competition between the different imperialist countries, has compelled the United States to redefine its orientation to the workers' states. John Hardt and George Holliday, two leading specialists on Eastern Europe and the USSR, expressed this quite bluntly when reporting to a special Senate sub-committee:

'The US domestic economic recession of 1969-70 and the recurring balance-of-payments deficits gave rise to a far-reaching review by the Nixon administration of foreign economic policy. Expanded trade with Communist countries was considered as a means of increasing US exports and stimulating domestic production and unemployment.'

It is this extremely important fact of imperia-

lism's economic life that has necessitated the new orientation to both Moscow and Peking. But the Brezhnev-Nixon meeting was not just a matter of mutual trade agreements between US imperialism and Soviet economy. The talks are part of a detente on a wide ranging political front. The heroic resistance of the Indochinese people has compelled Nixon to seek the assistance of Brezhnev and Chou en Lai in order to contain the impact of the Vietnamese revolution on liberation forces struggling in other parts of the world. On these issues, the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies have proved time and time again that they are only too willing to sell their political birthright.

DANGERS

The revolutionary movement must therefore be conscious of the real meaning of 'peaceful co-existence.' What it means is that the Soviet Union and China will actively aid in preserving the status quo in different parts of the world. In that sense the united action by China, USSR and the USA to keep the Bandaranaike regime in power in Ceylon in 1971 is merely a taste of things to come.

Nixon can sign as many deals as he likes with Brezhnev and Chou en Lai. The situation in many parts of the world, however, is such



that we will continue to witness mass upheavals, insurrections, general strikes, etc. In many instances both imperialism and the bureaucracies will find it difficult to contain these struggles, particularly where those leading them understand the nature of the bureaucracies and their role.

Furthermore the *detente* opens up contradictions within the imperialist and bureaucratic camps themselves. The effect of the new orientation in South Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines (three client states of US imperialism) has been catastrophic. Similarly, inside the USSR and Eastern Europe more and more oppositionists will stop looking towards Western bourgeois democracy and will begin to turn elsewhere for solutions.



ERP under attack

Peron has returned to Argentina, with appeals for 'National Reconstruction', to take the head of a movement tearing itself apart. Since the Buenos Aires airport battle, the Peronist youth have been blaming the Peronist trade union leadership and vice versa. All day prior to the shootings which put an end to the 2-million strong welcome for Peron, there had been



Peron arrives, taking no chances.

fight and skirmishes between rival Peronist groups. They have united only in attempts to blame 'forces alien to the Peronist movement'. Whatever the reactionary forces responsible for the provocation, it is being used to intensify the campaign of intimidation and repression launched by Peron against the ERP (People's Revolutionary Army, led by the Argentinian section of the Fourth International).

The Peronist leadership aims to suppress the ERP, divide the working class from any potential Marxist leadership, and contain the war within its own ranks. Thus the right-wing CGT trade union leaders have issued an appeal to workers to end the current wave of occupations of factories and government offices — in which many Peronist groups have been active — on the grounds that they may be used by 'those outside the movement'. The Peronist trade union youth have been made the spearhead of the attack on the ERP, and threats have been made to kill 10 Trotskyists for every Peronist. The lives of known relatives of ERP members have also been threatened if kidnappings, such as the one which recently won \$1 million out of Ford's, do not cease.

The left Peronist guerrillas, for their part, have overwhelmingly capitulated to bourgeois Peronism: on 6

June the FAP (Peronist Armed Forces), FAR (Revolutionary Armed Forces) and Montoneros gave a press conference in which, though they dissociated themselves from anti-communist attacks on the ERP, they warned that there was no place for a revolutionary group 'outside the Peronist movement'. For their part, they said, if the Campora government did not work out well, they would give their support to Peron himself. It is to encourage just such illusions that the 'old fox' has put on a show, in Madrid and on his return to Argentina, of strained relations with the new President. Peron still has two trump cards to play in the game of popular demagoguery — a presidential takeover, and the return of the body of his popular first wife, Evita.

Capital, meanwhile, is biding its time. For the foreign monopolies it is crucial that Peron moves quickly to smash the embryos of an independent working class leadership. That is why they are quite encouraged by the current activities of the Peronist youth. The *Wall Street Journal* reported one businessman as saying: 'We may end up being onlookers in a battle between the ERP and the young Peronists, but it may be the only way. We should put them all out on a football field to kill themselves so that no one else will get hurt.'



Striking workers in Santiago, the Chilean capital

Chile: storm clouds gather

Popular Unity is beginning to pay the price of its attempts to demobilise the Chilean working class in the face of the counter-revolutionary offensive. Since the March Congressional elections, which strengthened Allende's hand against the right-wing parliamentary majority of Christian Democrats and the National Party, these parties, together with the fascist groups, have been openly threatening to sabotage and overthrow the government coalition. While the workers and peasants have been ready to act against the counter-revolutionaries — responding in massive numbers to strikes and demonstrations called by the trade union federation, the CUT — Allende and the Communist Party leaders have called upon them to 'exercise restraint' and 'not to provoke the enemy'.

The fruits of such leadership have ripened in the present copper strike. At El Teniente, Chile's richest mine, technicians and workers have been on strike almost two months for fulfilment of the 'sliding scale of wages' agreement they had previously won from the American owners. Under the Allende administration wages have been kept below the rate of inflation. From the outset the government has represented the strike as a direct attempt at sabotage, stressing the loss of foreign exchange — some \$ 50 million to date — and imposing an emergency regime in the mining province of O'Higgins, as a result of which over 30 work-

ers were wounded by police on demonstrations and picket lines.

The Christian Democrats have been using the strike to divide the working class. This was dramatically manifested when 5,000 miners came to the capital, Santiago, in pursuit of their demands: Christian Democrats and right-wing students joined their demonstration and fought a running street battle on 15 June against both police and Popular Unity supporters. Meanwhile the Senate was impeaching the ministers of Labour and of Mining, and the National Party paper *El Mercurio* issuing threats of such virulence against Popular Unity that the government has now taken the unprecedented step of bringing the law against it for subversion.

The Popular Unity parties last week allowed the CUT to call a massive demonstration 'to sweep the fascists off the streets'. Allende made a big speech appealing for 'unity'. But not unity in action, no general strike, no arming of the workers. 'Stabilise' the capitalist economy by producing more, 'exercise restraint' in the face of counter-revolutionary mobilisations. It is this kind of leadership which has led to the present crisis and divisions in the workers' movement. Allende prefers to lay the blame at the door of the working class.

Developing solidarity against Portugal

Over 300 people — trade unionists, students, black militants, Portuguese workers, members of various political organisations, etc. — attended a conference last weekend in Manchester on

'The Revolution Against Portuguese Colonialism'.

The conference was organised jointly by the Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola and Guine (CFMAG) and the Anti-Apartheid Movement. The main speaker was Marcelino dos Santos, vice-president of FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique), who spoke on the development of the struggle in the liberated zones. Other speakers dealt with various other aspects of the situation, leading up to a final discussion on 'Future Perspectives for Solidarity Work'.

It was agreed that co-ordination of activity on this issue had not been very effective in the past, and that although the CFMAG would continue to centralise work for the moment there

would be regular planning meetings at a national and local level, to which representatives of all groups active on the issue would be invited. There will also be a more regular newsletter, and a separate caucus has been set up to develop agitation in the trade union field.

It was emphasised that the material aid which a solidarity movement can provide is relatively small compared with its potential political impact, and that efforts should be concentrated in this area.

The discussion at this conference, particularly in the workshops, was a useful beginning in helping to establish more precisely the political basis for such a movement and the role it could play in developing support in this country for the liberation struggles in the Portuguese colonies.



Marcelino dos Santos, vice-president of FRELIMO

CP Students Reject Unity

RED NOTES

A grouping within the National Union of Students known as the 'Broad Left' convened a national conference in Leeds on 23 June. The 'Broad Left' is composed of the Communist Party and its supporters within the student movement.

The letters of invitation to this conference were sent out, according to the conference organisers, to 'a broad cross section of student activists, in an attempt to provide a wide base

JOURNALISTS AND PRINTERS STAND FIRM

Unprecedented unity between printers and journalists has marked the current dispute at the Nottingham firm of T. Bailey Foreman, which publishes the *Guardian Journal* and the *Nottingham Evening Post*.

The dispute started after management tried to force SLADE members to work a new optical plate printing method a week before national negotiations were due to start on the issue. When the workers refused, 11 of them were sacked, whereupon the other print unions staged a token walk-out demanding their reinstatement. Subsequently they were told that they would not be allowed back into the works, while the journalists were told that unless they agreed to produce copy for the new process they could also consider themselves 'dismissed'. Since then the *Guardian Journal* has not appeared, and the *Evening Post* has only continued with scab labour.

To organise the strike, the unions have set up a Joint Liaison Committee consisting of the FOCs (shop stewards) and clerks to the five unions involved. This body meets regularly to discuss general questions of tactics, publicity etc., reporting back to mass meetings held every day, morning and afternoon. A smaller, administrative sub-committee has also been elected which is in constant session and deals with the detailed co-ordination between the chapels. A further innovation has been the creation of a common strike fund. This means that inconsistencies and differences between the unions can be ironed out and democratically decided upon - thus lessening the likelihood of divisions and splits.

The solidarity thus created has enabled the workers to stand firm in face of management threats to close down the *Guardian Journal* for good. Donations, messages of support to: Jeff Hyton (chairman, Liaison Committee), c/o YMCA, Shakespeare St., Nottingham.

for future action,' with the aim of 'establishing an overall political perspective for students on the Left and for the creation of a sound basis for left unity.'

Despite this professed concern with 'left unity,' no members of the other two main left groups operating in the student field - the International Socialists and the International Marxist Group - were sent invitations, and when small delegations from each of these organisations arrived at the conference they were refused admission. The situation reached the ludicrous height of Communist Party members refusing admission even to student activists whom they had invited, on the grounds that these individuals were guilty of the crime of being 'too close to the IMG.'

As it was, the conference attracted far fewer than had been anticipated, making the exclusion of sections of the left an even more destructive

policy. It did, however, give the Communist Party the advantage of a clear majority in the conference. They were thus able to side-step the problems created by the exclusionary nature of the gathering and avoid any serious discussion of the policy to be followed in future meetings.

The Communist Party's continued influence in the student field is largely a result of their holding key positions in the NUS apparatus. However it is not possible to defend these positions against the right without a base among the new layer of student militants thrown up by the struggle over student grants.

Thus the Communist Party is now eager to organise support among this layer, through the 'Broad Left.' At the same time it must ensure that its new supporters are kept away from the evil seductions of the revolutionary left, so the revolutionaries must be excluded from this grouping at all costs.

It is ironic that the Communist Party,

who so ardently oppose bans and proscriptions throughout the labour movement, should themselves resort to such techniques in the student field. Within the trade unions the Communist Party has traditionally dismissed the 'ultra-lefts' as tiny, and irrelevant to the problem of left unity, although that is becoming an increasingly difficult policy to maintain.

But within the student field such a policy is already suicidal. The revolutionary left is a major political force, regularly gaining about one-third of the votes at conferences of the National Union of Students.

'Left unity' without the revolutionaries is indeed *Hamlet* without the Prince. If the Communist Party's student members persist in this bureaucratic and sectarian attitude all they can do is to wreck the possibility of forging any effective, fighting unity between the forces of the left within the student movement.

Piers Corbyn

BIRMINGHAM CASE DELAYED



Leaving the court - from 3rd left to right, accused building workers Phil Beyer, Graham Stevenson, Fred Ainslie, Paul Davidson, and Gerry Kelly. Photo: Chris Davies (Report)

Six hundred people demonstrated outside the court when the five building workers and three ATV cameramen accused of conspiracy to trespass after the occupation of a 'jump' labour agency in February appeared before Birmingham magistrates on Monday.

There was an unexpected turn in the case when the accused were merely remanded to appear on 23 July instead of being committed for trial in the Crown Court as anticipated. Apparently the prosecution are unwilling to proceed further with the

case until they know the result of an appeal currently before the House of Lords over the occupation of the Sierra Leone High Commission last year, when 'conspiracy to trespass' charges were also used.

This further remand also holds advantages for the ruling class in that 23 July is right in the middle of the 'industrial fortnight', when all the major factories in the area are closed for the holidays. It is hoped to mount a substantial picket of building workers then, but obviously the turn-out will not compare with Mon-

day's, when delegations included Birmingham, Coventry and Stoke Trades Councils, UCATT Midland Region, Post Office Engineering Union, Rover Shop Stewards Committee, Chrysler (Ryton), as well as the International Marxist Group, I.S., etc. Among the speakers after the hearing was Pete Carter, chairman of the Birmingham building workers shop stewards' committee, who stressed the need not just to mobilise in support of those workers but to link the case to others of a similar nature taking place, in particular that of the Shrewsbury 24.

Several hundred black parents and children demonstrated outside a Leeds school on Monday in protest against the education provided there. More than 90% of the children boycotted classes for the day and picketed outside the gate.

Earl Cowper Middle School is housed in a large, old building in Chapeltown, Leeds. 90% of its pupils are black. Children from 9-13 years are being taught in a building where facilities are unchanged since it was a primary school last year. There are no metal work or woodwork rooms, no proper domestic science or needlework facilities, and no science laboratories. School children complained of being called 'black monkeys' and other racist terms by some of the teachers, and of the high teacher turnover in general.

The campaign is a further step in the self-organisation of the black community in Chapeltown, following on the taking over of a local community centre a few months ago. The next step is a meeting with officials of the Leeds Education Authority. But not too much hope should be placed with the Labour-run council - one Labour councillor commented that 'the underprivileged tend to think that they are being discriminated against; but it is probably not as bad as it seems.' More valuable allies are likely to be the Leeds Rank & File Teacher group, who are demanding active support from Leeds NUT and an inquiry into conditions at the school.

The trial of another man charged after the police raids in Coventry on 13 April was postponed on Monday after the court was told that one of the main prosecution witnesses, a Detective Chief Inspector, had gone on a camping holiday and could not be traced. The case, where Timothy Canty is charged with the illegal possession of 100 rounds of 0.22 ammunition, was therefore conveniently postponed so as to coincide with the Coventry industrial holiday, and also transferred away from Warwick to Worcester Crown Court.

Meanwhile one of the Coventry 7, Patrick Burke, has been granted bail again after an application to a judge in Chambers. Burke, the last to be arrested, had previously been out on bail until the committal proceedings. Five of the others had their bail applications refused and a seventh is still to be heard.

Coventry Prisoners Defence Committee can be contacted at: 27 Paynes Lane, Hillfields, Coventry. (0203 58991).

People's Democracy leader Michael Farrell, sentenced to eight months in jail for 'causing a breach of the peace' during a march through Belfast last February, had his appeal turned down on Tuesday. The term of eight months is no accident - anything longer would have allowed Farrell to claim political prisoner status.

THE PLOUGH

(Paper of the Revolutionary Marxist Group, Irish supporters of the Fourth International)

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WHAT'S ON

FREE THE BELFAST 10: Regular picket every Saturday, 2.00 p.m. in Jebb Avenue outside Briton prison. Organised by Belfast 10 Defence Committee, 88 Roslyn Road, London N.15.

FUND RAISING DISCOTHEQUE for 'End the Alliance' campaign. Friday 29 June, 8-12 p.m. at Fulham Town Hall. Admission 50p-1 ticket from Betty Northage, 191 Emswara Gardens, London SW7 1AA.

WORKING CLASS FIGHT BACK IN EUROPE: Public meeting, Thursday 5 July, at 7.30 p.m. in Conway Hall. Speakers from PD (London), Lotsa Continues, and Big Flame (Liverpool).

THE PRETORIA SIX: Public meeting, Tuesday 3 July, at 8.00 p.m. at the Workers Music Association Hall, 234 Westbourne Park Road, London W.11 (over Connaught entrance All Saints Road). Speakers: John Hoxby, Sr., ANCA and Black Panthers. Organised by Kingston Liberals and Communists and West London Anti-Apartheid Group.

GAY LIBERATION FRONT: 'Gay Pride Week' demonstration, 3.00 p.m. Saturday, 30 June, assemble Charing Cross Embankment.