

The Red Mole

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TUC Conference

The year since the last TUC conference has been one of the most important since the war. On the one hand larger struggles than in the 1950s or 1960s have been the pattern. The miners strike, the railwaymen's struggle, and the dockers strike set the pattern here. In addition new forms of struggle have been developed. The UCS work-in was the first example and the series of occupational strikes at Plessey's, Fisher-Bendix, Manchester and many other areas set a new pattern. The use of mass picketing during the miners strike was another big step forward. At the same time, however, the State has still kept most of its strongest weapons. The Industrial Relations Act is still being used (as with the fine on the T&GWU), unemployment has not been cut significantly, entry into the Common Market is still on, hard won wage rises are still being eaten up by price increases, pensions are still miserable, women workers still do not even have equal pay, and British troops are still in the North of Ireland. There is still an enormous gap between the effort put into struggle and the total of the results gained.

Many militants may be looking to the TUC conference to provide them with some way of overcoming this. Unfortunately, they will be disappointed. None of the proposals for the conference offer any real way forward. The policy of the right is clear. They aim to give in to the Government, and hope that a few crumbs may be dropped in the direction of the working class. No-one with any sense, however, ever expected anything from Cooper and company.

Here the most striking thing is the way Jack Jones is moving more and more openly to the right in support of the General Council. This has been most clearly seen in two vital cases: recognition of the NIRC and the use of conciliation machinery. In the first case the Government's plan is still to push the unions slowly into complying with the Act, so recognising the Court plays right into their hands. In the second case, Jones's call for conciliation machinery merely offers a feather-bed to the Government if it is knocked about through a big struggle against the Act.

The real question, however, is how the left is facing up to the situation. It is here that Scanlon's policy appears to offer a way forward. But the mere defensive position advanced confuses the first move with the end of the game.

For while the trade unions are attempting to resist all the Government's attacks, the movement still remains that of a permanent opposition. The political initiative still remains with the employers, the Government, and the State.

The struggles of the last year have been tremendous, and a huge step forward on the simple acceptance of government policy which used to take place under Labour. But the attitude is still defensive. The capitalist class is perfectly prepared to lose individual battles provided it wins in the end, and no army which does not attack has ever won a war. To put an end to the enemy's attacks, it is necessary for the working class to launch its own offensive. The real issue which faces the TUC is how to launch plans for solving the problems of the working class through working class power.

But, of course, the struggle cannot be frozen while the revolutionaries win the working class to the necessity of a revolutionary struggle for power. It is necessary, now, to organise all those elements who are prepared to struggle against the Act and for the immediate needs of the class. This is where Scanlon's rhetoric is so inadequate. Militant action solely directed to the negotiating table is useless. Independent action, not pressure politics, is the answer. If Scanlon was prepared to fulfil this role, he could carry the class a step forward in this period. His failure and that of his Communist Party allies pushes the mantle onto other forces.

As TUC buries its head in Brighton sand

ASIANS: BIG CHANCE FOR LEFT

The arrival of 40,000 Asians expelled from Uganda into this country is being used by the right wing press to whip up anti-black hysteria.

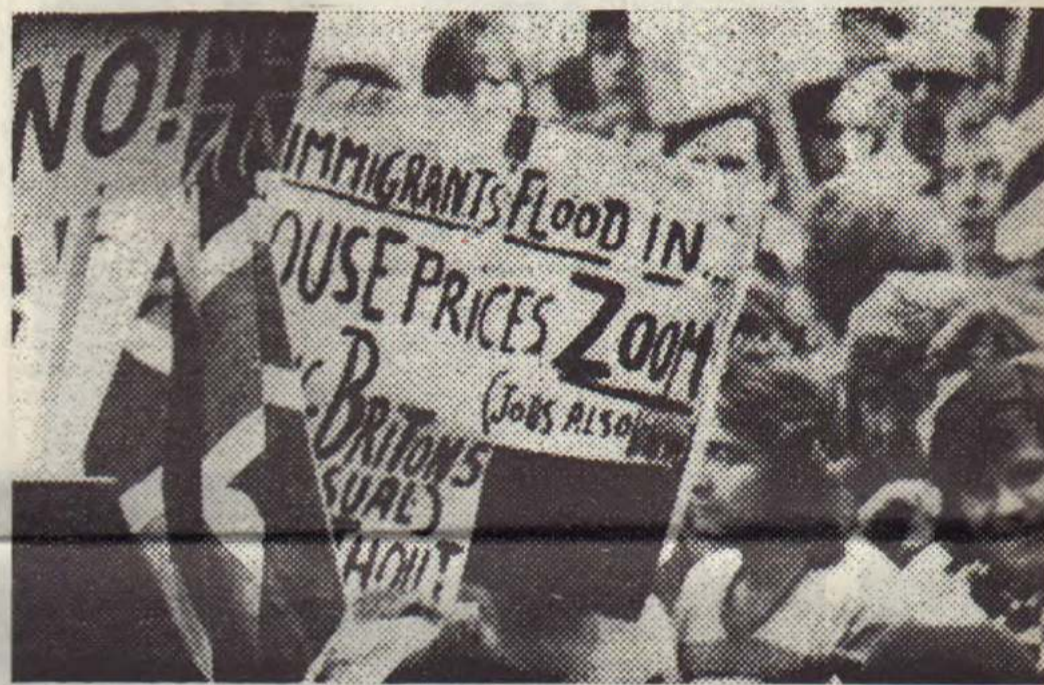
The Labour Party has capitulated right down the line. All that leading Labour spokesman Peter Shore could do was attack the Tories for not taking stronger measures against Amin to prevent the situation from affecting Britain directly.

The left wing of the Labour Party around *Tribune* showed their relevance to the working class by calling on the United Nations to effect the same thing that Peter Shore wants. Irene Short, Labour M.P. for Birmingham, has come out strongly against any immigrants going to the Birmingham area, and local Labour councillors elsewhere have been bleating for special treatment claiming an already insoluble 'immigrant problem'. It is this sort of thing which lays the basis for a racist response from sections of the working class.

INADEQUATE TRADITIONS

Action so far has underlined the absolute inadequacy of the traditions of the working class for dealing with this problem. The march of the meat porters led by the National Front and the attempt to use trade union strength to prevent the arrival of the Asians shows what sort of problem is involved. This has shown, more than anything else, that the organisation of the working class as a class demands more than simple trade union experience. No attempt to offer a solution to the working class can be made except on the basis of a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

The attempt of the Communist Party to base its defence on the legal right (*sic*) of entry of these immigrants doesn't even begin to tackle the problem. Indeed it was a CP spokesman who offered the following gem in relation to the situation in Ealing: "Local Conservatives are championing Britain's entry to the Common Market which would open the door to unlimited numbers of Europeans. Clearly the fuss they are kicking up about the Uganda Asians is prejudiced." (*Morning Star*, 31 August) With lefts



Meat porters march: shows sort of problem involved

like this the working class doesn't need racists.

THE ONLY APPROACH

In fact, the *only* way to approach this problem is to tackle it head-on. Many racists argue that the entry of these Asians will put great strains on the social services and that the job situation will get worse. We are not going to argue that there isn't a problem with the social services or with the employment situation. It may very well be true that a council house for an Asian is one less house for someone already here. But we might also say that a house for a building worker is one less for a docker.

The problem is a problem of capitalism. It is a result of its inability to solve the question of social expenditure. It is the result of a system where the skills and abilities of individuals can only be utilised if a profit is to be made.

It is not, then, the Ugandan Asians who are a problem for the working class. Rather, the problem is the continued existence of British capitalism which is unable to provide for the

immediate needs of the working class. It is an answer to *this* problem which it is a burning necessity for the working class to provide in *all* its struggles.

BEST THING FOR YEARS

On this issue it is less easy to dodge these fundamentals than on any other. In this respect the furore caused by it is the best thing to have happened for years. It is not some diversion from the main struggle over which pious noises must be made, all the quicker to brush it under the carpet and get on with the "real" job. It is one of the main ways at this point of educating large numbers of workers in the need for a *political* response to the capitalist offensive, and to point up the message that muscle is not enough.

The right wing forces are organising. They have already had one (limited) success with the meat porters. However, the working class is still in a period of buoyancy and self-confidence sufficient to face up to the racist question. The left must therefore organise to strike while the iron is hot. The Monday Club demonstration in London on 16 September can provide a focus for a reply which can begin to raise the right questions.



Part of the picket outside the Argentinian Embassy, organised by the Committee for the Defence of Argentine Political Prisoners and supported by the IMG, against the massacre of revolutionaries at Trelew airport. See back page for full story.

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Ian Fraser explains the background to

BRITISH LEYLAND: FIGHT AGAINST 'RATIONALISATION'

The major problem for the British Leyland Motor Corporation is its low profits. To jack them up requires finding an expanding market for its products; this is why Lord Stokes is a leading 'European'. But to gain any advantage from the larger market that the EEC will open up to British capital, BLMC has to improve its ability to compete with its major European and American rivals.

The methods used to increase its competitiveness are known as 'rationalisation'. This involves a two-fold process: on the one hand, the closure of smaller factories and the concentration of production into a few major complexes (the planned closure of Thornycroft's is an example of this); and on the other hand, an increase in the rate of exploitation at these remaining plants (this is what the Jaguar strike against the abolition of piece-rates and the introduction of Measured Day Work is all about).

WHY "RATIONALISATION"?

Because the giant motor manufacturers compete with each other to sell their products on the market, each firm is forced to constantly attempt to increase the productivity of the labour it employs, which means investing in more advanced machinery and plant. When greater amounts of capital are required to employ the same number of workers, these workers have to be exploited more intensively to maintain the rate of profit. And this is what Measured Day Work is meant to do in the car industry.

Under the piece-rate system, which was itself initially designed as a new way of increasing exploitation, a strong shop-floor organisation developed which was able to push up wages in the constant negotiations with the rate fixer. In particular, every time a new model came in, or an old one was modified, the workers could exploit the company's need to get the car on the market to force up the rates. This steady upward movement of wages between annual negotiations became known as "wage drift". That is why British Leyland are so keen to get rid of the system, along with the fact that piece-workers have some control over how much work they do, and the management loses control over manning levels, line speeds, and output.

WHAT IS MEASURED DAY WORK?

Measured Day Work is a payments system designed to prevent "wage drift" — that is, to hold down wages — and to restore full control over the shop floor to the management. The company hopes through an MDW agreement to get at least the following:

1. A fixed hourly rate of pay, thus eliminating "wage drift".
2. The same rate to cover as many employees as possible, preferably at combine level — thus eliminating disputes over maintaining differentials between sections.
3. Wage reviews to be conducted on a combine-wide basis between senior management and national union officials (who are more likely than stewards to accept a lower rate).

4. Management to decide individual work allocations, manning levels and line speeds on the basis of 'scientific' work study.

5. Full mobility of labour — enabling management to smash shop-floor organisation by moving the militants in order to isolate them, then finding some pretext to sack them.

BLMC is the last major car manufacturer in Britain to try to introduce MDW throughout the combine. Fords forced it through in the early '60's with the five main points intact, and the results are only too evident today — a basic rate around £12 per week less than the Midlands car workers, worse conditions, and a shop floor organisation which is still struggling to regain the strength of the late '50's. The very success of Fords has made BLMC's problem worse. The company has to restore the competitiveness eroded by the higher Midlands wage-rates in the face of the strongest trade union organisation in the industry. Moreover BLMC suffers from a shortage of liquid funds which curtails its room for manoeuvre, while the invasion of American capital into the rest of the industry has opened up vast capital reserves for BLMC's domestic competitors. (One reason for selling Thornycroft's, a profitable company, was the £5 million boost to the company's cash position.)

THE STATE OF THE BATTLE

BLMC's share of the UK market has fallen from 40.3 percent in 1969 to

28.7 percent in June 1972, but they plan to increase their share to 45 percent.

These plans depend on two models: the Marina, produced at Cowley, Oxford, and a new model, code-named the ADO 67, due to go into production at Longbridge next year. The company decided they could not afford to produce either model under the old piece-work system as this would have led to a field-day for piece-work bargaining, and so they made the imposition of MDW a precondition for their introduction. A similar battle is taking place around the introduction of the XJ 12 at Jaguars in Coventry.

Initial attempts to get united combine opposition to MDW by the combine committee were frustrated by the Communist Party militants led by Dick Etheridge, senior shop steward at Longbridge. And in spite of a struggle led by militant stewards of MDW imposed at Cowley, but with important concessions from the management. These included a higher hourly rate than BLMC had "horse-trading" between unions and management on manning levels, important restrictions on the mobility of labour, and separate settlements in the body and assembly plants.

The net effect is only a partial victory for the company — the financial press is constantly bemoaning the 'over-manning' and 'under-production' at Cowley!

At Longbridge the Joint Shop Stewards adopted a position of unconditional opposition to MDW in January, but were persuaded to drop this in February by the Austin Works Committee led by Dick Etheridge. Eventually the stewards allowed individual sections to accept an offer of an interim basis of £38.25 conditional on eventual acceptance of MDW, without obtaining in advance any concessions in return. This has prepared the way for the management to try to pick off the weaker and lower paid sections. But the battle is by no means lost, and the need to start production of the ADO 67 early next year will put the stewards in a strong position.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THORNYCROFT'S AND JAGUARS

The major struggles within BLMC in the coming months will centre around the two issues of plant closures and redundancy, and the extension of MDW to further sections of workers. The outcome of every fight over both issues will directly affect the rest of the combine.

If combine-wide opposition can be made strong enough to secure the success of the occupation of Thornycroft's, winning the demand for WORK—SHARING WITH NO LOSS OF PAY, then the future of every BLMC employee will be that much more secure. A fighting precedent will be established so that BLMC will be less able to go on responding to each up and down of the market by sacking workers as in the past.

The workers must refuse to go on paying with their livelihoods and living standards for the anarchy of capitalist, market production.

The same goes for every dispute over MDW; as BLMC want to impose the same rate and conditions throughout the combine and move toward combine-wide bargaining every concession wrung out of them in one place raises the stakes for the rest of the combine. Each settlement becomes the minimum negotiating position for the next. There must be unity of the combine in support of every fight against the extension of MDW, and where MDW has already been imposed, to secure concessions that defeat BLMC's purpose in introducing it.

The basis of the struggle must be:—

NO REDUNDANCIES IN THE COMBINE — WORK SHARING WITH NO LOSS OF PAY. A WORKERS' VETO ON: ALL CHANGES IN MANNING LEVELS; ALL CHANGES IN LINE SPEEDS AND WORK SCHEDULES; ALL MOVEMENT OF LABOUR; ALL CHANGES IN WORK PRACTICES (i.e. introduction of new machinery and methods)



THORNYCROFT'S: THE ISSUES

Last Monday workers in British Leyland plants in Oxford, Birmingham, Leyland (Lancs.) and Bathgate (West Lothian) came out on a one-day stoppage in solidarity with the occupation at Thornycroft's in Basingstoke. Earlier, combine stewards had organised a mass picket outside the factory, threatened with eventual closure as part of BLMC's rationalisation plans.

A START

This is a start, but only a start, in the stewards' campaign to make British Leyland redundancies "stop here". To win against the company's resources requires mobilising the resources of all the BLMC workers. A key component of this is also international solidarity. The Fords strike began to show the way. Link ups at an unofficial level as well as through official channels are necessary to defeat plans worked out at an international level (the recent BLMC take-over of the Italian firm Innocenti is but one example of this last). Solidarity is the keynote of this struggle in more ways than one.

SIT — INS

Throughout Britain, since UCS and Plesseys, the struggle against redundancies has been linked with the tactic of sit-ins. In many places this tactic has been successful. One of the most important reasons is that the whole workforce is kept together and involved in the strike.

But the sit-in tactic has progressed. We now have the example of the Briants printworkers. It is no accident that Thornycroft workers have asked Briants to produce their posters and leaflets for them. Throughout the campaign to free the five dockers, Briants acted as a centre for struggle. They have seen their struggle as part of the class struggle

A test of the Thornycroft's leadership is how far they have followed up these lessons. The service provided by the Basingstoke Liaison Committee through its publication, *The Spark*, in examining all the possible tactics for struggle should have been provided by the regional officials of the AUEW and the T&GWU. As shown by the mass meeting which decided to occupy, the solidarity and willingness to fight of the workers is not in doubt.

By PAUL SMITH

Yet the resolution to occupy, for example, moved by AUEW regional official Pat Farrelly, opened the way to a division in the workforce with its formulation that those "affected by redundancies" (344 out of 1200 in the first instance) should occupy and "receive support" from their fellow workers. Similarly, most of the workforce has not been kept in touch with the negotiations with BLMC and the buyers of the factory, Eatons of Ohio.

SOLIDARITY

The key issue is solidarity. A small factory like Thornycroft's, with little economic strength, relies heavily on solidarity actions from BLMC and the Basingstoke labour movement. Failure to build such a movement will have extremely dangerous consequences for the sit-in. The fight to put the issues involved at Thornycroft's in front of every worker in Britain must not be ducked.

One Basingstoke factory, Marryatt and Scotts, raised £20 in a collection as soon as they heard of the sit-in. Many of the workers are also fighting hard for the sit-in, and donations have been sent to major fac-

tories in Basingstoke and to other plants in the BLMC combine. However, other local 'leaders' are in practice not making a big national fight over the issues.

MORNING STAR

The clue to this state of affairs lies in an article on Thornycroft's in the *Morning Star* on 25 August. This makes two major points. First, "their employer had torn up an agreement". In other words, the fight is just against the nasty BLMC management, the redundancies have nothing to do with the whole crisis of the profits system, and so there is no need to involve anyone else! The second point simply confuses the entire struggle. "So a bit more of British industry goes American if the deal goes through", says the *Morning Star*, even commending the "patriotic" reaction of the workers. In other words, bosses are OK if they're British! It is completely insane to make an issue about their nationality. The question is the struggle against redundancies imposed by any bosses or government. By making the Americans the point of attack, the *Morning Star* diverts attention from the real nature of the struggle as it did in its campaign against the Common Market.

WAY FORWARD

The way forward is clear. Thornycroft's workers should use organisations like the Basingstoke Liaison Committee to build solidarity in the local labour movement. They should involve local workers in their struggle as well as fighting hard for the BLMC combine to step up its solidarity actions. Thornycroft's is the place where the fight against redundancies is being fought out. Thornycroft's must be seen by all workers as a centre for struggle.



Striking workers outside the Riverstone meatworks

VESTEYS LASH OUT IN AUSTRALIA TOO

On 9 August, the management at the Riverstone Meat Company works near Sydney in Australia announced that the company was closing down half its operations and making 696 workers redundant. What makes this particularly noteworthy is that the owners of this meatworks are none other than the Vestey family — owners of the Midland Cold Store, who have also just announced the closure of their last dockland store, Nelson's Wharf in London. The Vestey operations in Australia are a salutary warning of what lies behind the company's refusal to employ well organised men like the dockers.

In Australia the Vestey group is notorious primarily for its savage exploitation of Northern Territory aborigines and for its criminal destruction of land which it leased for a few cents per square mile and turned into an eroded desert through overstocking and neglect. But at the

Riverstone meatworks, Vesteys are gaining a reputation with a more familiar ring to British workers.

In announcing the Riverstone sackings, the spokesman for the company said that they were necessary because of a series of "crippling and unauthorised strikes". In fact the reason for the unrest was quite simple: the working conditions at Riverstone are appalling. In 1970, for example, a fire broke out on 29 July, killing 3,000 sheep and 500 pigs. Despite the warning no precautions were taken to prevent a further outbreak, and on 8 October another fire killed six workers.

More recently the company has tried to divert the workers' attention from its drive to maximise profits while minimising outlay. Instead of improving working conditions, it has attempted to promote competitive feelings at the expense of

workers' unity through a series of bribe schemes. These included a weekly lottery (first prize \$ 150) open only to employees who did not hold a stoppage unauthorised by the union, a weekly bonus of 10 per cent to workers not participating in a stoppage, and an extra week's holiday to workers who went through a year without participating in a stoppage.

But these schemes failed in their purpose. All the workers at the plant struck as soon as the sackings were announced. As a result, the company announced on 16 August that the meatworks would remain open. This is not proof of the company's generosity. On the contrary, it is proof of the fact that meatworks are still profitable and that the company's aim was to smash effective union organisation. And that, as British workers know only too well, is a marked characteristic of all Vestey companies.

STALEMATE AT JAGUARS

The strike at Jaguars, Coventry, is now in its tenth week. The management never dreamt that the workers would stay out for this long; they had expected the strike to collapse soon after the holiday. Consequently they had talks with the strike committee and proposed a deal. The terms were £44 all round, a lump sum payment of £25 and acceptance of the principle of a new method of payment (i.e. Measured Day Work instead of piece-rates). This offer was unanimously rejected by a mass meeting.

IMPROVED OFFER

After this rejection, the management immediately made an improved offer which was discussed by a mass meeting on 22 August. This deal included a lump sum payment equivalent to giving each section an average rise of £3 over the next six months. The effect of this was to split the strikers. On the one hand the trim shop were getting a lump sum of £80 and a cut in wages; thus they were still bitterly opposed to the deal. On the other hand the lower paid sections were offered a rise of £3 per week, which they were quite willing to accept. Although the offer was rejected by the meeting, it has meant a weakening in the strike and a growth in inter-sectional hostility. At further meetings with management, union officials proposed that the deal should include an extra rise of £3 at the end of six months. This was of course rejected by the management, and indicates that there is still a considerable gap between the two sides.

At present there is a stalemate. Management is now prepared to accept a deal which only commits the union to accepting the principle of a new method of payment. But, seen in the context of BLMC's overall plans for rationalising their production, management will be prepared to stick out much longer if necessary to make sure of getting this, despite the heavy losses they are incurring.

We can now see how the weaknesses in the strike committee's strategy (as outlined in *The Red Mole*, 46) have effected the progress of the strike. They have always seen and fought the strike simply within the context of Jaguars. Thus they have never been able to fight MDW; to do this requires a much broader conception which takes into account BLMC's overall plans, the general economic difficulties within the car industry, etc. Consequently when a return to work was posed, the argument was around what price will we accept to get MDW, rather than whether or not we will allow the management to introduce MDW. By failing to bring this issue to the foreground, the strike committee has made it easier for the management to split the workers, both inside Jaguars and in the combine as a whole.

William Thompson.

Once again on the Press and the IRA

The London *Evening News* seems determined to outdo even the *Daily Telegraph* (see our last issue) in its stop-at-nothing campaign against the IRA.

Not content with repeating (with further embellishments, of course) the *Telegraph's* old fantasy about the IRA offering help to Rene Desarmault, the *Evening News* really went to town in its issue of 21 August with a front-page story headlined 'IRA thugs rape girls at gunpoint'. This story, which claimed that four Belfast schoolgirls aged 13 to 15 were pregnant after being raped by members of the Provisionals, was however so completely and transparently fictitious that even the *Daily Express* felt compelled to deny that there was any truth in it.

Nothing daunted, ace reporter Iain Macaskill then merely switched his attention to the Officials. Here he discovered a major split in the offing. Indeed, "already some militants have broken away and formed their own terrorist organisation — called the National Liberation Front" (*Evening News*, 24 August).

As Iain Macaskill and his masters must surely know, however, the 'National Liberation Front' is in reality nothing more than a term used by the Provisional IRA to describe the (one and only) Official IRA. Its usage dates from the November 1969 Army Convention, when a resolution to set up such a front with other anti-establishment groups was one of the reasons cited by the Provisionals for the subsequent split. But then, what are such facts compared with the urgent need of British imperialism to attack the strength of the Republican movement with every means at its disposal?



Danish revolutionaries responded rather more commendably than those in Britain to the invasion of the Free Areas in the North of Ireland on 31 July. The picture shows a picket outside the British Embassy in Copenhagen organised within hours of the invasion by the Socialistisk Ungdo Forbund, Danish section of the Fourth International, and supported by the Copenhagen district the DSU (Labour Youth Organisation), the VS (Left Socialists) group, and the Danish Vietnam Committees.

A resolution was handed in to the Embassy from the picket expressing "its deepest contempt of the brutal suppression of the Irish population committed by British imperialism and its full solidarity with the continued struggle for national and social emancipation of the Irish people".

THE MYTH OF EQUAL PAY

by TESSA VAN GELDEREN

From all reports it is clear that the TUC has agreed that the government should not enforce the target laid down in the Equal Pay Act of 90 per cent of male earnings for female workers by the end of 1973. Thus the trade union leadership has once more demonstrated its consistency on this issue — in consistently selling out on the question.

This deal by the TUC should not be seen in isolation from its general role in workers' struggles. Operating entirely within the framework of the capitalist system, the TUC is incapable of consistently defending even the most basic interests of the working class. It is constantly susceptible to the type of argument to which it has now bowed — that it would be "against the interest of the country" to bring into effect this clause of the Equal Pay Act because it would be inflationary. To accept such arguments is in fact to accept that the working class must pay the price for the continued good working of a system which profits them (unlike the employers) not at all.

It is important not to exaggerate the significance of the Equal Pay Act, however, even though it is necessary to condemn this further retreat by the TUC. We should have no illusions that the Act will, when implemented, actually bring about equal pay in any real sense. "Equal pay for equal work" is totally meaningless as long as the employers decide what is equal work. Without a basic minimum wage, also, equal pay will mean nothing to those women who work in factories employing mainly female labour.

One factor which makes it very much easier for the trade union leadership to drop the question of equal pay is that they know that in this they have the tacit support of most rank and file male workers. The justifications used by male workers for not fighting on this issue are various: women are "incapable" of doing the same work as men; women have protective legislation and therefore do not work the same conditions as men; women are not the breadwinners — they only earn pin money; and so on. But whatever the excuse, it all comes down to the same thing — the working class is prepared to support a division in its ranks, a basic division which has its roots in pre-history but is used as a weapon against the class under capitalism. The working class, instead of realising that its strength lies in its unity, helps actively to perpetuate this division.

This division does not exist simply because women don't receive equal pay with men. Equal pay cannot be separated from the question of equal opportunity, equal opportunity cannot be separated from the different roles assigned by society to men and women — the women to rear the next generation of workers, the men to bring home the weekly wages. Until the role of the family in capitalist society, and the position of women in society as a whole is understood, then this division which harms the interests of the working class as a whole will continue.

Although the wage packet that a wife brings home each week may be an essential part of the income for that family, because

the breadwinner is 'traditionally' male the women workers does not see her position in the labour force in the same way as a man. Even where she does (one sign that this is growing is the increasing number of women in the trade unions) her active participation in the unions is severely limited by her responsibilities to her family. It is accepted that it is the woman's role to look after the children, the man's to go to union meetings.

RANK AND FILE

All these questions must be taken up by the rank and file in the trade unions. The right to work or full maintenance should be the right of all workers, not just men; 'no redundancies' must apply in every section of the work force. Use must be made of the advent of the Equal Pay Act to show that this will in no way bring about equal pay and that the only way this will happen is for the rank and file to take up this question in a serious way. There must be no increase in differentials in any wage agreement (most Common Market Countries have had legislation on equal pay similar to ours for many years and the differentials are still increasing); there must be a clear understanding that equal pay is inextricably linked to the question of equal opportunity and training; there must be a fight for a minimum wage for all workers. For too long women workers have been an expendable part of the labour force; the labour force itself must actively struggle to show that they are not.

For further material on the question of Equal Pay/Equal Work, subscribe to *Socialist Woman* (48p per year — 6 issues) at 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

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Though the initiative of the rank and file has held the line

TRENCH WARFARE HAS NO

Oliver MacDonald surveys a year of working class struggle

1. 1972 was to have been the year of victory for the Tories

From the moment they came to office the Tories placed in the centre of their work the turn to the common market as the international precondition for the revival of British capitalism and the decisive weakening of the economic strength of the working class as the internal precondition. For the first two years of office, Heath's main fight was to get entry into the Common Market. By 1972 the basic work for this had been completed. But in the domestic class struggle, the Tories had not got beyond preliminary skirmishes. These had gone reasonably well for them, particularly their satisfying victory over the Post Office workers, so that by the start of the year Heath's lieutenants appeared to relish the prospect of a fight.

The government set itself three main tasks in relation to the working class: to end its wage struggle through an exemplary struggle against the miners; to carry through a programme of modernisation at the expense of workers through massive redundancies. As on the wages front there was an exemplary struggle: Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, though whether this was of the government's choosing is more doubtful. The third crucial front for Heath was of course the direct legislative attack on the organisations of the working class through the Industrial Relations Act.

When the TUC met last Autumn there was no sign that the official leadership of the trade union movement had a policy which could begin to challenge these three central tactical plans of the government. In short, if the working class was to rely on the resources of the General Council, then Heath seemed to possess the formula for victory in 1972.

THE LINE IS STILL HELD AGAINST THE TORIES

As every militant is well aware, Heath's tactical plans were blown off course. The Miners' strike was indeed a 'resounding victory' but not for the government. The 7 per cent wages norm was smashed and the whole wage offensive has still not recovered. The current wages battle ground is the construction industry, where the biggest builders' strike movement since before the first world war has so far rejected an employers' offer twice the size of Heath's 7 per cent norm. In the government's chosen preserve of public employees the local council workers are putting in a claim for the miners' norm of 20 per cent.

The fight against redundancies and capitalist rationalisation of industry has spread throughout the working class and the battle has by no means been decisively settled: the government retreated over UCS, and by taking up new forms of struggle such as factory occupations and flying pickets some sections of workers have been able to follow Fisher Bendix and Plesseys to at least partial, temporary victories.

Most striking of all, the Industrial Relations Act, far from setting the seal on a decisive weakening of the working class's economic strength, has become a major headache for the government and provided the occasion for a series of nasty humiliations, such as in the victorious struggle to free the five and even against a section of workers with such a weak-kneed leadership as the railwaymen possess in the NUR.

In short, the neat formula of Heath's enthusiastic lieutenants has been pulled apart in the class struggle over the last 9 months and the government has been forced to work

2. Why was Heath checked and in what measure?

All this is common ground within the Labour movement: no tendency could disagree. But when we begin a serious analysis of the reasons for this Tory set-back and the degree to which the capitalist class and its political leadership has been checked, we find confusion and evasion within the left. Some want to obscure the real problems to avoid being put in the spot for failing to offer a solution. For such people — both Left and Right on the General Council — it is enough to hail the 'great victories' and denounce the wicked Tories, plus those who appear to be one step to the right of themselves. But the revolutionary left is also tending to replace analysis with revolutionary phrases combined with exhortations to workers to rely on nothing but their own militancy. This is, as a matter of fact exactly what working class militants have been doing over the last year, and if that is all they have to do then there cannot be much wrong with the situation: maybe, a bit more militancy and a little greater paranoia over the plots and conspiracies of the trade union bureaucrats, but that is all; no real need for a political analysis.

THE WAGES FRONT

An assessment of the state of battle which takes into account only the miners' strike and the railwaymen is inadequate. The most numerous section of workers involved in a pay dispute over the last year was the two and a half million strong engineering industry. Their claim has received a tiny amount

of publicity when compared with the miners or railwaymen, for one very good reason: there was no national struggle in the engineering industry: the union with the most 'left-wing' leader on the General Council avoided a national strike and its President, Mr Scanlon declared the subsequent defeat 'reasonable' — the settlement in August had won the engineers the grand total of between 5 and 6 per cent increase. Thus the first point to note is that one great victory on the wages front by a section of the working class does not by any means settle the problem of the wages struggle for the whole working class: it encourages militants to take up a militant struggle, and it changes the climate of negotiations, but it can just as quickly be followed by a defeat on another sector of the front and the whole climate is transformed.

The second point which must not be forgotten is the limitations of the wages struggle itself for solving the economic problems of the working class. Even the miners' twenty per cent is very quickly eroded by rising prices (a trend stimulated by the summer devaluation which will grow even stronger as the impact of the Common Market makes itself felt). The NUM has already found it necessary to put in a new claim for a £7 a week increase and while the capitalist class maintains its control over the productive apparatus and the state it can counter-attack with impunity on other more unfavourable ground for working class struggle: indirect taxes on goods in the shops, income tax, cuts in welfare spending, cuts in housing

3. New methods of struggle

The field where the working class has made a real qualitative leap forward over the last year has been the development of a whole range of new methods of struggle. In the face of acute social problems and a bankrupt official leadership, the rank and file has begun to use its own imagination, take independent initiatives and learn from each others' experiences. On this front more progress has been made in a year than over the whole of the previous decade. We can only briefly summarise some of these experiences here: (a) on the mass demonstrations in support of U.C.S. the Plessey workers used tactics which involved challenging the power of the police to direct the march. This preparedness to assert the masses authority over the police was shown again on the demonstration to Pentonville prison during the struggle to free the five. (b) the workers have in practice frequently asserted their direct control over the machinery in a straight fight with management. At Fakenham, for example, the women workers found the machinery which the management had moved out in anticipation of an occupation, and took it back to the factory for their own use. (c) workers in struggle have begun to take up the task of organising self-defence in various ways: first through winning sufficient support from other sections of workers to create an overwhelmingly favourable relation of forces on the picket line. Most dramatic in this respect was the action of the engineering workers in Birmingham during the miners' strike: when the police tried to smash the miners' picket at Sallley coal depot, more than thirty-thousand engineering workers struck and marched to the depot, forcing the police to close it down. Secondly, flying squads have been organised in case of police attack on occupations: for example, the dock workers in London organised themselves in readiness to send dozens of dockers to the defence of Bryant's colour printers who were occupying against redundancies. Workers at Fisher-Bendix installed steel barricades and hoses for defence against police attack. (d) During the railways dispute the ASLEF men at Waterloo demonstrated their attitude to the Industrial Relations Act in the sharpest possible way: the NIRC had banned them from working to rule, let alone striking, while a ballot was taken on the issue: instead of waiting for the ballot papers to arrive through the post, the workers struck to march to the social security office to pick up their ballot papers and then took the rest of the day off

to fill them in! (e) Recent articles in *The Red Mole* have given many other examples of the tremendous rise of creative activity by the masses in struggle over the last year, and in particular the revolutionary example of the Bryant colour printers during the struggle to free the five (see *The Red Mole Strike Special* No 47).

This spontaneity and creativity has taken the bourgeoisie and the trade union bureaucracy by surprise. Saturated in the prejudices of bourgeois politics they thought the workers were inert, stupid pawns which they could manipulate at will. Now they are convincing themselves that other forces — the Reds — are doing the manipulation. In fact, of course, the initiative and creative imagination of even the most class conscious vanguard cannot possibly match that of the masses in struggle. The job of the vanguard is to learn from these experiences of the masses and communicate them throughout the society and to other countries' workers.

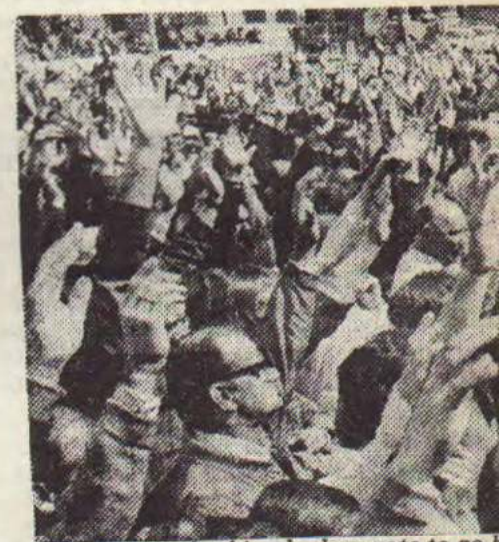
But the principle job of the revolutionary left however is to situate these new tactics within a political perspective for mass struggle. Without such a perspective being offered by the left, then this spontaneous self-mobilisation of the masses to solve their social problems will tend to be provided with a perspective of struggle by the bourgeoisie. Already there are the first signs of this occurring: (a) the reactionary mobilisations of the road hauliers wives against the dockers pickets was due to the fact that the National Port Shop Stewards Committee, under the leadership of the CP was unable to get beyond sectional demands for the dockers, and demands which actually cut across the immediate interests of the lorry drivers.

(b) The dock pickets' militant struggles against the police had no political meaning for the rest of the working class because it did not express a goal to be struggled for by the whole class. (c) The porters in Smithfield and Billingsgate, though amongst the first to back the dockers in the freeing of the five were also quick to mobilise themselves (albeit in small numbers) behind the Fascists against the Ugandan Asians: the reason was the lack of any political perspective being offered by the left to deal with the social problems of housing, jobs, etc. So the workers turned to those who did offer a readily assimilable perspective for struggle.

programmes, increasing rents, emasculating the health service, stepping up redundancies, as well as directly attacking the organisations of the workers. These obvious facts need to be repeated in a situation where the British left tends to glorify the type of battle which is in the end least favourable for the working class: namely the passive withdrawal of labour power for an improvement in wages and conditions of work. And the situation becomes doubly dangerous when the revolutionary left attempts to 'lend this struggle a political character' by the simple verbal trick of proclaiming the battle to be exactly the reverse of what it actually is: when on one side the miners were attacking a single policy of the government and when on the other side the state was attacking the miners on all the fronts mentioned above, some comrades on the left fooled themselves into believing that it was actually the miners who were attacking the state in a general assault, while the state was impotent with its back against the wall.

It is precisely the absence of significant forces organised within the labour movement on the basis of an understanding that the economic problems of the workers cannot find a solution even in the short term through an economic struggle, however militant, and however much led by the rank and file which constitutes the fatal flaw in the working class defences against the capitalist offensive.

This does not mean that militants should give up the struggle on the wages front as hopeless, a treadmill which they jump off to mount the political struggle to smash the state. What it does mean is that militants must begin to operate on the wages front in the way that is most useful from the point of view of strengthening the movement against the whole system, including the state. It means that demands must be fought for which have as their main purpose not earning as much or more for one group of workers as another, but strengthening the unity, fighting spirit and understanding of the entire class. Thus a demand like equal pay for women becomes more important than the demand for an extra pound for ones own immediate work-mates. We support without qualification the demand for the extra pound, but we recognise that the fight for equal pay is of enormously greater practical significance for helping to solve our most immediate and pressing economic problems because it ends a vicious division within the working class and carries the whole labour movement forward against the entire capitalist system, because it implies a fight for the liberation of women



Failure of leadership: dockers vote to go

4. The Tories ha

The Tories have in fact still got considerable room for manoeuvre and have already got the elements of a new tactical plan:

(a) The reflation of the economy which will paradoxically make it easier to speed up the redundancy drive in some respects since the electoral threat from rising unemployment will be mitigated: they would hope that levels will not rise sharply, thanks to expansion. (b) The use of arbitration machinery plus endless talks with Feather to gain a breathing space over the Act. Secondly to retrieve the initiative of the Act itself by occupying

FUTURE in Britain

from a special slavery which capitalism inevitable breeds.

One single organisation on the left has been playing a leading role in the major class battles of the last year: the Communist Party. To assess the prospects for the future it is essential to carefully analyse its role in the main battles of the last months.

THE FIGHT AGAINST REDUNDANCIES: U.C.S.

The example of UCS is crucially important here. The leadership of the struggle at UCS, the Communist Party, argues that the government was forced to retreat on this issue. If this is correct then by following UCS tactics the problem of fighting redundancies is solved. But forcing somebody means applying either economic or political sanctions against him. And, like all other workers facing a shut-down, the U.C.S. workers had very little economic sanction to apply: only the refusal to complete existing contracts and the threatened destruction of existing plant and property which could otherwise be sold off. The work-in tactic involved surrendering both these economic sanctions. Other economic sanctions which could have been applied outside the yards — solidarity strikes in other industries involving some loss of taxation and a drain on Social Security payments, rent strikes, etc. — were not used.

The Communist Party did in fact launch a political campaign around UCS: the campaign for the 'Right to Work'. But its influence was an electoralist one, an influence within the framework of bourgeois politics. For ever since the war the bourgeoisie has accepted the right to work, the right of the working class to full employment: any party which failed to grant that right was threatened with being cast out of the role of governing party within bourgeois politics, with being defeated electorally. Bourgeois politicians know this fact only too well, the Heath government was, by the new year getting alarmed at the electoral consequences of such high unemployment and UCS dramatised the issue as no other case did. Thus the CP's political campaign did not in essence say anything different from the hitherto established political ideas of the bourgeoisie. It was a political campaign which attempted to mobilise official public opinion on the existing political positions of public opinion — a campaign for welfare capitalism. The Communist Party was, in essence doing no more than running a publicity campaign, pointing out that the government should do what the bourgeoisie

had been saying for 25 years should be done.

A section of the revolutionary left replied to the CP's political campaign by saying: ignore public opinion and do what workers have always done in the economic struggle: rely on their own muscle — the economic sanctions they can bring to bear by striking and occupying. This is an equally bankrupt approach. It is necessary for revolutionaries to utilise the contradiction between bourgeois public opinion and the existing practice of the bourgeoisie, and it is vital to change the opinions of the working class public in order to win. Where the Communist Party was guilty of opportunism was in basing its tactics on bourgeois public opinion and in failing to educate working class public opinion in a practical method for tackling redundancies. A slogan should have been raised which would not simply win sympathy from the working class but which would give workers a practical orientation against unemployment: the correct demand should have been: **WORK OR FULL MAINTENANCE: FIVE DAYS WORK OR FIVE DAYS PAY.** Around such a slogan, the UCS workers would have been transformed from the most hard-hit, yet determined section of the working class into the leadership of a national political fight of the whole class; between June and August of last year the eyes of hundreds of thousands of workers were turned to the UCS looking for a lead: on 14th June the government refused aid to the yards. One week later one hundred thousand workers in the West of Scotland struck against the closure. At the Scottish TUC, the bureaucrats were under such pressure that they stood for minutes to give a standing ovation to the UCS stewards — the Communist Party had the whole working class movement in Scotland at its feet. The mobilisation continued from June when 25,000 workers marched through Glasgow till August when the streets of Glasgow were filled with 80,000 demonstrators. But without a political orientation, without a perspective for struggle, the movement faded away. Instead of the pressure of bourgeois public opinion on the government being strengthened, made more urgent by a working class offensive, the UCS workers were left at the mercy of Heath's electoral calculations, and American capital's thirst for profit.

The Government's UCS retreat did not signal a general retreat into saving redundant workers; it was a retreat all on its own, an exemplary retreat, a symbol of reconciliation in order the more easily to get the substance of rationalisation through redundancies without the odium of the electorate.

THE DOCKS: THE LIMITS OF THE C.P.'s POLITICAL RESOURCES

At UCS the Communist Party's political line did not lead to the clear and open defeat of the struggle against redundancy. The struggle appeared to be a success of some kind. In the docks, on the contrary the problem could not be dealt with by the CP, and the result has been a bad defeat.

The National Port Shop Stewards'

Committee did not actually raise the demand that the dockers should be given the jobs of the workers in the container depots; instead it demanded that all work in the container depots should be undertaken by registered dock labour. This could mean that the stewards were demanding that the workers in the container depots should be allowed onto the dock register and should be paid the same wages as other port workers. But it could equally mean that the container depot workers should have been sacked in favour of the dockers. The demand was ambiguous, it glossed over the issue. But the actions of the dockers in picketing container depots were not so ambiguous: they were fighting the containers depots for one thing: the jobs within them. The situation was a very difficult one for the dockers: many of the workers in the depots were influenced by the most backward prejudices and some at least of their leaders were prepared to operate as the bully boys of their employers. But it is precisely to deal with such difficult situations that the working class needs a political party. And such a party must be clear, not ambiguous. Its demands and lines of action must at all times stand for the interests of the whole class and must point the way towards practical solutions for real problems.

But as at UCS, the Communist Party refused to approach the problem from the point of view of strengthening the whole struggle of the entire working class, and instead approached the fight against docks redundancy in a sectional way and in a way designed to placate bourgeois public opinion.

At U.C.S., failure to keep the workers' jobs would obviously lead to a catastrophic loss of employment in the surrounding areas: the west of Scotland was a depressed area for all to see: therefore a struggle within the political limits of the sectional needs of the UCS workers and the utilisation of bourgeois public sympathy was not catastrophic. But the docks were quite different: the success of the dockers' sectional struggle appeared to involve the loss of jobs by workers in the container depots in the surrounding areas. Secondly, it was a different story on the public opinion front; given the attack on the jobs of other workers and given the use of unofficial militant picketing, given the mobilisation of bourgeois public opinion against the unions over the freeing of the five, the choice was immediately posed: either be defeated by the contradiction between bourgeois public opinion and a sectional dockers' struggle; or organise the struggle of the dockers on a basis which undermines bourgeois opinion by representing the interests, not simply of the dockers, but of the whole working class: a struggle for a common objective was in fact possible around one of the four demands of the Port Shop Stewards. In effect they were demanding five days work or five days pay for every dock worker, work or full maintenance in the docks. This great opportunity for a national anti-capitalist fight against unemployment was provided by the unique position port-workers had won through the ending of casual dock labour: the provision of fall-



Dockers' leaders, Steer & Turner.

back pay for unemployed dockers. But the CP refused this opportunity as it had at U.C.S. and the working class suffered defeat.

THE FIGHT AGAINST THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT.

The Red Mole has already made an analysis of the state of the bourgeoisie's efforts to enforce the Industrial Relations Act (see "The Ruling Class Takes Stock", *The Red Mole* 48), following the freeing of the five.

The central weakness of the trade union leadership's policy is not its lack of a firm stand against the Act, but the political assumptions on which both the militant and the moderate lines rest: first that the source of the Act lies in the heads of the Tories and not in the most basic processes of capitalism; secondly, that the fight to defend the trade unions can be reduced to a policy of opposition to the Act. As *The Red Mole* has repeatedly stressed, the only road forward for British capitalism, the precondition for its stable growth in the increasingly stormy waters of rivalry between competing imperialisms lies in emasculating the economic organisation of the working class. Therefore it is totally unrealistic for any labour leader to imagine that trade union organisation can be defeated without a preparedness to take up a struggle against the capitalist system and everything it stands for. It is criminal folly to imagine that simply a policy of militant opposition to the Act and to the Tory government will remove the capitalist offensive against the organisations of the working class. Every single resource of bourgeois society, from the school curriculum to racist propaganda against the Ugandan Asians helps the capitalist class deal with its main internal problem: the fight to cripple the working class's capacity to struggle. This means that any trade unionist who wants to strengthen the trade union movement must approach a question such as arrival of the Ugandan Asians in a totally new way: instead of viewing it as a diversion from his or her trade union work, however strongly opposed one may be to racism, trade unionists must seize on the controversy as a welcome opportunity to strengthen the working class's defence of its unions at one of its weakest points: chauvinism and racism.

The fact that on the revolutionary left itself this view of the struggle is not yet understood shows that from a strategic point of view the bourgeoisie still remains in a very much stronger position than the workers.



oom for manoeuvre

the most prized piece of political terrain which the bourgeois state offers to all who are prepared to operate within its framework: the ground labelled: 'I am the one for constructive compromises and my opponent is negative and unreasonable.' Hence Heath's talk of amendments to the Act. (c) Occupying the ground of 'I stand for the whole society against a narrow sectional interest' in order to set up another clobbering for the right union at the right time on the wages front.

5. From labourism to an anti-capitalist fight

It is not of course true that militant workers have no perspective for struggle, no objectives around which to organise. They do have a perspective drawn from the traditions of the British Labour movement: namely a Labourist strategy. It can be summed up in two phrases: Tories out! The trade union movement right or wrong.

The dock strike defeat has shown in a dramatic way the limits of even extremely militant trade union action when it is trapped within a Labourist perspective of struggle. Un til that time, the working class

had more or less been able to hold the line against the tactics of the Heath leadership. The tremendous rise in mass initiative over the past year has demonstrated that the working class is not lacking in fighting spirit and it will take a great deal more than a docks defeat to break this will to struggle: the coming period will be one of large and even sharper battles before the ruling class can approach its aim of emasculating the trade union movement. But, in the end the defence of the trade union movement cannot be secured through appeals to the masses to oppose the Act and throw out

the Tories, through piecemeal wages struggles, however militantly fought, or even through the creative spontaneity of the masses in struggle. It requires a programme which offers real solutions for the basic social problems of the working class and other oppressed sections of the society: no such programme will emerge from any of the tendencies, left or right, at the TUC congress. Militants must turn to the still pitifully weak organisations of the revolutionary left to find the tools with which to hammer out such an anti-capitalist programme.

BOOKS

Mike Cooley on Technological Change

Reviewed by PETER ERCHOV

Automation, as it begins to disrupt the established patterns of labour in factories and offices, has received precious little attention from the unions. An exception is the Technical and Supervisory Section (formerly DATA) of the AUEW, which represents many of the designers and draughtsmen who produce the blueprints for technological change, and have themselves experienced at first hand many of the changes brought about by automation.

In *Computer-Aided Design - Its Nature and Implications*, Mike Cooley, past president of TASS, traces the evolution of calculating techniques, describes in detail some typical examples of computer-aided design, and goes on - in a self-contained section - to examine the human, social and industrial consequences, analysing these in the context of technological change as a whole.

Cooley's analysis reveals the profound changes which are beginning to take place in the more technologically advanced industries and the potential of which exists for organising whole layers of technicians. The first piece of received wisdom he challenges is that automation and computerisation will eliminate routine, soul-destroying tasks, and automatically lead to a shorter working week, longer holidays, and increased leisure. Since advanced capital equipment now becomes obsolete in about five years as against 25 years or so in the 1930's, the cost of the equipment is so enormous that employers are seeking to exploit it for 24 hours a day, eliminating all so-called non-productive time. Members of TASS are therefore being pressed to accept shift-work, along with stopwatch and work-measurement techniques, which is not the kind of approach to which designers and mathematicians are accustomed.

"When technical staff work in a highly synchronised, computerised environment, the employer will seek to ensure that each element of their work is ready to feed into the process at the precise time at which it is required. A mathematician will find that he has to have his work ready in the same way as Ford workers have to have the wheel ready for the car as it passes on the production line . . .

"When one looks at the total system, the 'man component' is slow, inconsistent and unreliable, but highly creative; whereas the computer is fast, consistent and reliable, but totally non-creative. When the two are interfaced there is a perfect unity of opposites, and the load on the man as he attempts to respond to the system is very great indeed."

This subordination of the man to the machine accounts for the increasing proletarianisation of white collar workers, further promoted by the fragmentation of skills which results from increased specialisation. Cooley points out that older workers are among the principal victims of technological change.

"In the past, as men built up experience, this was part of the bargaining power with the employer, and in many ways it was part of the defence mechanism of the working class. A designer, for example, would have his little design book and he would not let anyone see how he arrived at his answers. When these people retired, everyone would try to obtain these calculation books so they would know how to do it.

"But when the man is interfaced with the machine this knowledge is absorbed and soaked from him at an enormous rate, and it is then readily available to everyone else. So that man's prestige and standing is decimated. In a Socialist society, in which he would not regard himself as being in frantic competition with his fellow in the office, this would be excellent because all that information would be available to everyone. But it now means that an up-and-coming technologist of 22 can use it quite brutally against an older man, and employers play upon this contradiction."

For mathematicians, engineers, physicists and others, "peak performance age" has been estimated to be as low as 29 or 30, after which a "careers de-escalation" can be expected. Cooley refers to the productivity agreement in the steel industry where medical checks are used to examine the response rate of workers and their ability to interface with

Reviewed by BOB WILLIAMS

No ideological current can guide the working class of any country unless it serves the interests of every country. This bitter truth has been fought by every bourgeois and petty bourgeois 'friend' of the British workers as Trotsky demonstrates in this brilliant collection of articles.

In the 1920s, the extreme left wing of British labourism was full of praise for the Russian Bolsheviks, was prepared to support everything they did, with only one little proviso: that what was good for the Russian working class was not necessarily good for the British; that Lenin's and Trotsky's tendency was excellent for Russia, but there is absolutely no need to build a movement on their line in other countries, and above all in Britain, whose working class is so peculiar that it needs its own special ideology. Thus argued Brailsford, an archetypal representative of this trend in the British Labour movement. He was a shrewd enough operator actually to write a foreword to Trotsky's book, *Where Is Britain Going?* As Trotsky points out, "Brailsford's foreword represents an intermixture of immoderate praise and moderate censure. The praise relates to what is secondary, the form of the book. The censure is directed against the essence".

Trotsky proceeds to destroy Brailsford's notions that "the instinct of submission to the will of the majority is stamped in the consciousness of the British people"; that British religion is in essence progressive with its "traditions of free discussion, its democratic form, and its relative freedom from any other worldliness" and so on and so forth; and that "naturally" Trotsky's Russian training and experience would not equip him to deal with these crucial and peculiarly British features of the working class movement. Revolutionary Marxism is fine for crude Russian peasants, but useless for the modern democratic and moral British workers.

In fact, of course, the Bolsheviks were only too well schooled in the 'National Peculiarities' school of petty-bourgeois socialism. And as Trotsky shows, the Russian friends of Brailsford used exactly the same trick

against the Bolsheviks as he did: only for them, Bolshevism was an excellent thing, just right for the German or the British masses, but unfortunately simply out of touch with the peculiar features of Russian development: the profoundly democratic spirit of the village commune and the religious radicalism of the Russian peasant!

In other words, the more British Mr Brailsford felt himself to be the more he represented an international current: the petty-bourgeois chauvinism which fights the revolutionary workers' movement in every country.

But in another article Trotsky demonstrates a more subtle variety of the petty-bourgeois rejection of revolutionary Marxism: when chauvinism fails, even 'internationalism' can be utilised against the international workers' movement. In the twenties, Bertrand Russell turned his quick mind to this line of argument in order to attack Trotsky's analysis of the British revolution. Russell agrees that both religion and Parliamentary democracy are useless in the struggle for socialism. But, argues Russell, Britain is too dependent on the rest of the world to be able to make a socialist revolution alone: an economic blockade would starve the revolution to defeat and the American fleet seal off international support.

Trotsky replies: "To make reference to the international revolution as a preliminary condition for the overthrow of the bourgeois state in one's own country represents a masked denial of revolution. For what is the international revolution? It is a chain - and not an even one either - of national revolutions within which each one feeds the others with its successes and, in turn, loses from the failures of the others".

Trotsky then applies the acid test to Russell's theories: its political consequences in other countries. It was used in exactly the same way by the Russian Mensheviks to stifle the revolutionary movement in Russia: we cannot seize power till the German workers move. Russell says the British workers cannot move till the American revolution takes place. "But then wouldn't the American Russells tell us that proletarian



PROBLEMS OF THE BRITISH REVOLUTION
By Leon Trotsky

power in the United States would inevitably be threatened by the combined navies of Great Britain and Japan?" The essence of Russell's position is this: "The mensheviks of the different countries toss the right to revolutionary initiative back and forth with about as much skill as performing seals at the circus toss burning torches from one to another".

The Labour movement is still infested with Brailsfords and Russells, although they parade under different names. Take, for example, the Communist Parties in different countries: the Chilean Communist Party declares its support for the tactics of Lenin in the Russian revolution but insists that the peculiar conditions of Chile allow for the new 'Chilean Road to Socialism'. There are, you see, the same peculiar democratic traditions of which Brailsford was so proud, etc. Meanwhile its friends abroad proclaim that Chile shows the way for their countries and that there is nothing peculiar about it. We shall see: when the Allende road in Chile is defeated, the Chilean CP will denounce the 'ultra-lefts' for sabotaging it by maintaining the line of revolutionary Marxism, and the British Communist Party will find new bogus arguments for its petty bourgeois line for the British workers.

This new pamphlet of Trotsky's is an invaluable example of revolutionary Marxist criticism of the false friends of the proletariat. In addition it contains a very important collection of notes on the situation in Britain during the months before the General Strike in 1926. Every militant should buy this pamphlet and study it.

**Problems of the British Revolution*, by Leon Trotsky (New Park Publications, 35p)



Mike Cooley (far right) at C.A. Parsons demonstration

high tempo equipment, as a result of which some workers have lost up to £15 a week.

On the shopfloor, numerical control tapes are eliminating some of the most highly skilled jobs, such as machine setting and jig boring, which are being transferred to white collar workers in the drawing office, while the operation of the machines is handed over to semi-skilled workers. Here the link between TASS and the AUEW is of crucial significance, while unions such as ASTMS can be expected to turn against the manual workers.

But as Cooley points out, in one respect at least workers can turn the effects of technological change to their own advantage. "One of the contradictions for the employer is that the more capital he accumulates the more vulnerable it becomes. . . In the past, when a draughtsman went on strike he simply put down his 6H pencil and his rubber, and there was unfortunately a considerable length of time before an effect was felt upon production. With the new kind of equipment the effects of a strike will in many instances be immediate."

"Computer-aided design—Its nature and implications," by Mike Cooley. Available free from TASS, Onslow Hall, Little Green, Richmond, Surrey.

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Below: Oliver MacDonald shows how the onslaught against the Baader-Meinhof group is merely **THE TIP OF THE GERMAN ICEBERG**

NORTH VIETNAM STATES POSITION

On 19 August the North Vietnamese Communist Party newspaper, *Nan Dhan*, carried an editorial which should be noted by all those in solidarity with the Vietnamese national liberation struggle. The article denounced in the clearest possible terms the class collaboration policies of 'peaceful co-existence' being pursued at present by the Soviet and Chinese leaderships.

OPPORTUNIST CURRENTS

The editorial denounced "disastrous opportunist currents of all shades outside Vietnam" who were assisting the American war effort. The US administration was relying on a stable relationship with the other big powers to provide a "shield to give the US imperialists complete freedom of action in checking by means of violence the national liberation movement". The writer then pinpoints the opportunism of the Moscow and Peking bureaucrats: "If out of the narrow interests of one's nation one tries to help the most reactionary forces avert the most dangerous blows, just like throwing a life belt to a dangerous pirate, that is a cruel reconciliation beneficial to the enemy and not beneficial to the revolution." This is a reference to the betrayal of the Vietnamese spring offensive by the Russian and Chinese leaders. When the puppet forces were on the run from Quang Tri the bureaucrats allowed Nixon the right to bomb the North as never before.

Such policies on the part of Brezhnev and Mao are justified in the name of narrow national interests - the development of Russian/Chinese society is the greatest guarantee and benefit for the development of the world socialist movement - or in the name of a hypocritical defence of world peace: to challenge the American blockade of Haiphong, they say, would have meant jeopardising world peace! What peace? The only thing that a firm defence of the North Vietnamese workers' state would have threatened would have been the American war. The logic of the position put forward by both China and Russia is that by engaging in revolutionary struggle the Vietnamese workers and peasants are jeopardising world peace!

MUST PERSIST IN REVOLUTION

The *Nhan Dan* editorial then goes on to explain precisely what is required: a complete break from the "Machiavellian policy of big power reconciliation with the US imperialists". The principle of compromise must be denounced: "We Communists must persist in revolution and should not compromise."

It ended by outlining the only genuinely international perspective for any socialist movement: "The evolution of each country is an integral part of the world revolution and the revolutions of all countries have the effect of impelling and assisting one another. The victory of a revolution in a country is not the end but only the beginning of the long travel towards the triumph of socialism on a world scale."

A few weeks ago, the newspapers here allowed us to spot the tip of a very important iceberg that is floating into the seemingly stagnant waters of West German politics. They reported a police raid on the Stuttgart flat of a Scotsman named Ian Macleod; he offered no resistance and was shot dead. A police claim that Macleod was connected with the 'Red Army Fraction' (also called the Baader-Meinhof group) has since been shown to be false.

Such killings were legalised in Germany this year. The police have to show simply that they were hunting criminals at the time and the new law has been given retrospective force to clear the state of another unprovoked killing: that of Petra Schelm in Hamburg in 1971.

PRETEXT

These events have been explained here as a response to the actions of the Baader-Meinhof group (an urban guerrilla force).^{*} Baader-Meinhof did pose an ideological threat to the state by denying its right to a monopoly of violence. Failure to crush such a challenge weakens the credibility of the repressive forces. But more careful study of recent trends in West Germany shows that Baader-Meinhof was at most a pretext for measures against much more profound threats to the established order.

Even the campaign against Baader-Meinhof demonstrates this. More than anything it was a rehearsal for campaigns against a different type of enemy: under a blaze of publicity a cumbersome system of road blocks was set up, combined with mass searchings of motorists. Such activity - useless against urban guerrillas - is a valuable exercise in testing military resources and reactions on the part of the mass of the people.

REPRESSIVE APPARATUS

Under cover of the Baader-Meinhof affair, there has been an unprecedented transformation of the repressive apparatus of the West German state. The police have grown by 15,000 within a year and have been given machine guns and hand grenades. The Central Criminal Department has increased its detective force by 20 per cent. Its powers vis a vis Lander (regional) police departments have been strengthened as has the 'co-ordinating' role of the Ministry of the Interior. Phone tapping, previously sanctioned only in a "State of Emergency", is now legitimate against any "serious forms of delinquency". But the most important change in the repressive machinery is the transformation of the so-called 'frontier-guard' into an internal security force, explicitly for use against 'rioters' and strikers - so much for the Baader-Meinhof explanation. Their numbers have been increased from 23,000 to 30,000 and they are supplied with the best weaponry of the army without the army's disability of being based on conscripts. This 'frontier-guard' has also been given wide powers for house searching - more sweeping than those of the police. There are virtually no limitations on its use of arms: a supreme court judge declared that shooting would be legitimate even against unarmed demonstrators.

The Social-Democratic government of Hesse subsequently noticed that this alter-



Standard equipment on a standard raid

ation of the frontier-guard's role broke the constitution of the Federal Republic, so parliament hurriedly amended the constitution.

The old emergency laws, passed in 1968, said the frontier-guard could be used internally "to fight against organised and armed uprisings". The new laws state it may be used "in cases of major importance in order to support the state police; such support may become necessary in demonstrations".

CONCERTED DRIVE

These dramatic legal and administrative changes have been combined with a concerted drive against the main centres of revolt in West German society. The most immediate target has been the revolutionary left. Since the start of 1972 more than 1,000 raids have been made on the homes of socialist militants. In one week 10 bookshops were attacked by the police. In a number of towns - notably Frankfurt, Hamburg and Mannheim - the police have started trying to suppress the right to demonstrate through massive and brutal interventions.

There have also been attacks on trade union organisation. The laws on what is called the 'constitution in the factory' have been strengthened to limit political activity. All initiatives must be taken by the union officials, and all their activity has to be public. The elections for the so-called factory councils (on which the management has a majority) are also now under more careful control, making the putting forward of an alternative slate very difficult.

The most spectacular of the new measures is the decree of 28 January this year: all those who refuse to explicitly defend the constitution of the Federal Republic are banned from employment as a state functionary. In Germany this includes teachers and university lecturers, as well as judges, civil servants, lawyers, etc. The purpose of this law is to root out all socialist and revolutionary elements at one stroke, and in the last 7 months some hundreds of teachers have been thrown out of their profession on the basis of it. At present lawyers are being investigated in order to eradicate any sympathetic defence of militants who fall victim to state repression.

IMMIGRANT WORKERS

A crucial piece in the jigsaw puzzle of repression is the attempt to crush all political organisation of the immigrant workers. The bourgeoisie received its warning signal from the metal workers' very tough strike in Baden Wurtemberg last Christmas: foreign

workers played a prominent part as one of the most militant sections of the strikers and the Italian Communist Party made significant progress in organising those workers. The Lande government is now declaring its intention to ban the CPI. In Frankfurt, Santiago Carrillo, General Secretary of the Spanish CP, spoke to a meeting of two thousand Spanish workers. The response of the police authorities was to expel Carrillo and another member of the Political Bureau from Germany within 48 hours.

TENDENCY TOWARD 'STRONG STATE'

During the 1950s and early 1960s the left wing of the Labour Party used to seize on the slightest whiff of repression in West Germany as a pretext for an 'anti-Nazi' campaign. The CPGB, following the Moscow line of Bonn being the main enemy, used to follow suit. Today, when there is a genuine turn to the right on the part of German capital, both the Labour lefts and the CPGB are silent. For the initiator of this turn is none other than Willy Brandt's SPD, and Moscow is now busy consolidating its ties with German capital.

The real explanation for this turn by the German bourgeoisie was given by Ernest Mandel in a recorded speech to students in Frankfurt following his expulsion from Germany this spring.

"The central meaning of this entire development is that they are attempting, through a continuous escalation of repressive laws and repressive physical measures, to delay or completely prevent the unfolding of the West European working class's fighting strength and its transformation from a force for immediate goals into a clear-sighted, anti-capitalist, fighting power. We are faced with a quite clear tendency toward a "strong state". This is a state that attempts to intimidate the workers' movement with laws and repressive measures against the unions and the working class. In this manner the bourgeoisie hopes to throw back the anticapitalist offensive that has been under way since May 1968 and to weaken the fighting strength of the workers".

^{*}Those who refuse to contemplate political action outside the framework of bourgeois legality have tried to comfort themselves by saying the Red Army Fraction are 'lunatics'. An important pamphlet containing their writings destroys such stupid slanders. The pamphlet, called *Armed Resistance in West Germany*, is published by the Stoke Newington Eight Defence Committee and is available from Red Books.



Recent Vietnam demonstration by Japanese section of the Fourth International



INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP

(British Section of the Fourth International)
182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

I would like more information about the IMG.

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Paul Smith looks at how and why LEADERS SCAB ON BUILDING STRIKE

Women Workers Organise

Two hundred and sixty women in the Lucas factory in Burnley who left the General and Municipal Workers Union to form their own union have now joined the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. They have disbanded their Women's Industrial Union in a conscious move to put the pressure back where it belongs, inside the trade union movement.

In so doing the women, led by Mrs Pat Sturdy, hope to benefit from the experience of having had their own organisation by spreading their ideas and demands (contained in their Manifesto, some of which is printed below) inside the trade union movement as a whole. At a time when the question of what role the unions should play is posed so sharply, the willingness of the left to support moves of this kind which go beyond and in some ways contradict the traditional trade union framework may well be crucial for the success of the struggle as a whole.

Mrs Sturdy, who is now speaking to other groups of women workers about the Manifesto, stresses the importance of rank and file activity in fighting for such demands, and the need to place them within a wider political context. "We need a change of political system. Under the present system of Parliament, anyone, no matter who it was, would end up as a Wilson or a Heath, for all their ideals: the Parliamentary system would change them." She is confident that the struggle of women workers in the trade unions will have an important part to play in bringing about this change.

MANIFESTO

Women have for a long time not been fully active in the Trade Union movement because they have most responsibility for running their homes and looking after their children. This is why they are the most exploited and poorly paid workers. We must organise ourselves to struggle in the Unions for our rights. All Trade Unionists must support our demands since they are in the interests of all workers. We women need to take a more active part in our Unions and in Politics generally.

Our campaign centres around the following issues:-

1. For equal pay and against low pay - for a decent wage for our labour.
2. Against any kind of job evaluation scheme - for these only divide the workers more to the advantage of the employer.
3. For equal opportunity for women - no discrimination in training opportunities and for more opportunities for women as well as men.
4. Against all redundancies - for the right to work of all workers.
5. For nurseries controlled and financed by local councils - to free women to participate more in their Unions and stop being pushed around.

We want to organise industrial groups of women to fight within our Unions, to put pressure on the Trade Union officials for our demands. We need to form a network of groups and factory committees around the country and to get a bulletin going for exchange of ideas and experiences.

If you are interested contact:-

Mrs Pat Sturdy,
31 Hogarth Avenue,
Burnley, Lancs.
Telephone: Burnley 31783

If you are in touch with other women workers she would be happy to come and talk to you.

FAKENHAM FILM

A film has been produced on the Fakenham occupation of women workers in a shoe factory in Norfolk and is available for hire.

Please write for details to SOCIALIST WOMAN, c/o Pat Masters, Flat 3, 20 Queens Gardens, W.2.



UCATT secretary George Smith (left) takes conciliatory attitude towards bosses' leader Glyn Lloyd

With the return to work of 20,000 workers on 87 sites, the dangers outlined in our last issue seem to be coming true. The desire of the UCATT and T&GWU bureaucracies to avoid a national strike means they will do anything to get off the spot. Their latest move in this direction is to allow men who have reached a settlement with individual companies to return to work. So once again the bureaucrats have scabbed on the one important issue in the trade - the splitting up of the workforce. Time and again since 1947 the basic issue of the organisation of the trade has been dodged. Now, when at last pressure from the militants had forced a national stoppage of sorts (using the strength of all workers in the trade), the union leadership duck for cover again.

DANGERS INCREASED

Individual settlements for the full claim will undoubtedly put pressure on the Employers Federation to settle, provided the men involved stay out meanwhile to maintain the solidarity which the weaker sites so desperately need. But what is criminal is to settle for less. This is what has happened on some sites in Aberdeen and Dundee

where the workers are going back on a basic rate of £25 for 40 hours. This is a classic way to break the strike - and make sure the full claim is never reached.

George Smith and the rest of the UCATT leadership cannot lead an all-out stoppage. Even in this period of intensified attacks by the Government on the trade unions, Smith as chairman of the TUC General Council has been spending much of his time in setting up the new conciliation board between the TUC and the Confederation of British Industry. The trade union leaders, including Brother Jones, O.B.E., are not prepared to lead big struggles because such struggles take on the whole weight of the capitalist state. Even when the Government is desperately trying to use every split in the labour movement to its own advantage, men like Smith have no choice but to conciliate.

CHARTER

Throughout the course of the strike Charter too has ducked the issues. The Charter groups in Manchester and Yorkshire are furious with the lack of the necessary news-

papers and information that Charter could have provided. Any working class leadership worth its salt would be campaigning up and down the country to win members, readers and supporters.

Why has Charter failed? Again it is a political question. It is quite clear that these 'leaders' see their role simply in terms of "putting pressure" on the bureaucrats. To do that no independent activity must take place. This is done in the name of not "splitting" the movement. It would make better sense to keep the rank and file organised and informed (through Charter) as a method of stopping Smith & Co. from scabbing on the strike. Yet the Charter leadership, dominated by the CP, has now tied itself completely to the bureaucrats (not only has the *Morning Star* been giving the run of its pages to George Smith - see 18 August issue - but far worse, CP militants in Scotland have been to the fore in urging individual settlements below the national target).

THE ALTERNATIVE

As long as Charter sees itself as a pressure group it will always fail when the chips are down. Many of the rank and file militants will continue to fight site by site. But the purpose of a national rank and file organisation will be lost. If Charter is going to concentrate solely on replacing the 'bad' boys in the bureaucracy, instead of using its potential strength to conduct national campaigns in the trade, then it will be of no value to militants. As Brothers Scanlon and Jones prove, it's not the people but the positions which lead to sell-outs. Only a mass movement organised against the way the trade splits up workers will prevent it. Charter should have been building such a movement, now, while building workers realise their strength as a national movement.

ARGENTINA MOVES TOWARDS CIVIL WAR

by JAMES WILCOX

On 15 August twenty-five leading members of Argentinian revolutionary groups broke out of the maximum security prison at Rawson in the desolate wastes of Patagonia.

After making their way to the nearby airport of Trelew, the escaped prisoners put six of their number on board a plane, which they took over. These six together with four other comrades who were already on board, flew to Chile, where they asked for political asylum.

The 19 revolutionaries who remained behind ensured the safe escape of their comrades by defending the airport which had been surrounded by military units. After some negotiations they gave themselves up to the military authorities who offered them the necessary judicial safeguards. Six lawyers who flew down to Trelew to help the prisoners in their defence were arrested and kept incommunicado until Tuesday, 22 August.

The Army allege that on 21 August the prisoners attempted a new breakout in which all of them were shot; fifteen died immediately, one later and three are very seriously wounded. The story that the nineteen prisoners were shot trying to escape has been denounced as a blatant lie by the Asociacion Gremial de Abogados (Lawyers Association)*. The Government imposed a strict censorship on all news relating to the events at Trelew and no journalist or lawyer has been allowed anywhere near either the Rawson Prison or the barracks in which the massacre took place.

When the ten revolutionaries who escaped

arrived in Chile their position at first looked precarious. Relations between the Chilean and Argentinian Governments had been improving (last year there was an exchange of visits between Allende and the head of the military government, Lanusse) and an extradition treaty was in force covering situations of this kind. Reaction within the ruling Popular Unity government was mixed. The political committee of the Popular Unity declared its solidarity with the refugees but a Communist Party spokesman declared that the matter would have to be dealt with in a straightforward legal fashion and not on a political basis. The Government declined to give the Argentinians the asylum they asked for. While the situation was still unclear news of the massacre at Trelew came through. Within a few days it was announced that the Argentinians had left for Cuba.

Inside Argentina the events of 21 August had an impact on the general political situation comparable to the after effects of the Derry massacre in Ireland. On the 24th the Peronist trade unions in Cordoba conducted a one day General Strike and in other parts of the country there were vigorous demonstrations against the regime. In Cordoba, centre of the strike movement against the dictatorship in 1969 and 1970, workers and students raised the Red Star of the ERP on the streets, and 600 were arrested by the army.

The revolutionaries who had been murdered in Trelew belonged to three armed groups: the ERP (armed wing of the PRT, Argentinian section of the Fourth International), the Montoneros and the FAR who are generally Peronist in political orientation. Twelve of the victims belonged to the ERP. So too did two of those who escaped, including Roberto Santucho, a founder of the ERP.

The bodies of three of the prisoners were taken to Buenos Aires where the Peronist Party arranged for their funerals. Army units invaded the building where the coffins were lying, seized them and buried them in the local cemetery. This attempt to prevent a demonstration arising out of the funeral further accentuated the mass outrage at the massacre. However the government swiftly imposed a new series of emergency measures and arrested over 700 members of political and trade union groups.

The bloody events at Trelew have already had a major impact on the relationship of forces in

Argentina. The reaction to them has greatly complicated the position of General Lanusse's military regime, which is already riven by internal dissensions and has proved quite incapable of dealing with a deteriorating economic situation.

Before Trelew there had been a tendency for a rift to appear between the armed groups and the Peronist trade union movement. Peron himself seemed disposed to do a deal with a section of the army, which would clear the way for his return. Now popular outrage has brought the trade unions closer to the armed groups, and Peron himself has been forced to denounce those responsible for the massacre.



Peron: offers no perspective for working class power

Argentina is clearly moving in the direction of civil war. Peronism has given the workers an intense corporate class consciousness but does not equip them with the politics capable of overthrowing capitalism in Argentina. Peron first established ascendancy over the trade unions during the war years when he was Minister of Labour. But although Peron encouraged economic militancy at this time and later as President, he did not and in the nature of things could not encourage it to display independent political initiatives.

If imperialism is to be defeated in Argentina, the Argentinian working class will need to create political institutions which can smash and replace those of the bourgeois state. This is why the actions of the PRT/ERP have cardinal importance in the Argentinian class struggle. And this is also why the military have so brutally sought to eliminate their militants and those of the other armed groups. They recognise in them their most dangerous enemy.

* *The Times* (30 August) also reports that on examination of the bodies, the back of the head of one of the women murdered was found to have been smashed by heavy blows, while another of the bodies was perforated by bullets in the back.



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