

The Red Mole

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Labour, Europe, and the class struggle

There seems every prospect that the Labour Party conference will occupy itself with days of political discussion and debate without once getting to grips with the real issues thrown up by the recent stormy class struggles. In this the conference will be a faithful mirror of the Labour Party itself which was a largely irrelevant and marginal element in these events.

STORMY STRUGGLES

The last year has been one of stormy class struggles in which defeat after defeat has been inflicted on the ruling class by the forces of organised labour. It has been a year in which British workers have made their own a whole new range of militant methods of struggle from factory occupations to the flying mass picket. Yet curiously enough the ruling class has been enfeebled without the working class being correspondingly strengthened. British capitalism has been prevented from raising the rate of exploitation and this weakens it vis-a-vis its foreign competitors; but the working class has not begun to challenge the system of capitalist exploitation as such so all its gains are transitory and ambiguous.

The Clydeside workers forced the Government to abandon its lame duck policy but they failed to really guarantee their own jobs and even those who do retain them at the moment have accepted a series of compromising conditions. The miners sent a flying mass picket right through the middle of the Government's wages policy and evoked a decisive demonstration of proletarian solidarity. But inflation has already eaten away the economic gains made by the settlement and there is every sign that the miners will continue to be chosen victims of capitalist rationalisation of the mining industry. The five dockers were sprung from jail but the Law Lords' decision strengthened the Government's Industrial Relations Act and the messy conclusion of the dock strike itself means that the organised force of the dockers has been gravely undermined.

CLASS POLITICS

The missing element in all these confrontations was the emergence of a vigorous working class politics counterposed to the politics of the ruling class. Throughout the last year the main political preoccupation of the Labour left was the reactionary and chauvinist campaign against British entry to the Common Market. Instead of seeking ways to develop an autonomous political mobilisation of the working class, much energy and rhetoric was expended on rallying to the defence of the sovereignty of the British bourgeois state. Both *Tribune* and the *Morning Star* were found extolling the virtues of Parliament and the necessity of defending it from the Brussels bureaucracy.

Now that Britain's entry is more or less an accomplished fact, the campaign to take Britain out of the EEC looks as if it will continue along the same lines to distract and divert the Labour left and the Communist Party from the real issues of the class struggle. Such a campaign would be deeply reactionary — reactionary in the most literal sense of the term. A return to capitalism in one country has no advantages for the working class. The real alternative to capitalist unity in the EEC is the struggle for a Red Europe.

If entry does indeed weaken the traditional political instruments of class rule then this will be an unmitigated advantage in the task of creating an independent working class politics — independent, that is to say, of bourgeois politics, above all of bourgeois politics in their parliamentarist and chauvinist guise.

By negotiating on Heath's proposals

TUC ABANDONS LOW PAID

by BOB WILLIAMS

The name is always different. This time it's 'anti-inflation proposals'; in the past it has been 'prices and incomes policy', or 'planned growth of incomes'. But the great bulk of trade unionists know only too well what the game is. In essence it is wage restraint — just what the TUC opposed a couple of weeks ago in Brighton.

But there is a new twist in these proposals. Heath is trying to present himself as the friend of the *lower paid*, holding down the incomes of the higher paid sections of workers more than the others. He can then turn on trade unionists and say: "Either you support my proposals, or you oppose any special help for the lower paid. Heads I win, tails you lose!"

Of course, nobody should imagine that the lower paid would actually be better off as a result of these proposals. In the first place two pounds a week will be eaten away altogether by inflation — even a union like the G&MWU is forced to demand £4 a week minimum increase for local council workers to maintain any credibility amongst its members. Secondly, it is a really grotesque argument for Heath at the very moment he is introducing the Housing Finance Act which will push rents up considerably. (For this reason, the General Council, the CBI and Sir Frank Figgures of Neddy have joined forces to suggest that the Housing Act should be put on ice for the moment.) Thirdly means testing and the wage stop ensures that an extra pound on the wage packet means an equivalent cut in rent rebates and supplementary benefits for the low paid.

NOT ENOUGH

But these facts are not enough to unite the lower paid and less strongly organised groups of workers with the strong sections of the working class in a common struggle against the economic attacks on the working class. It is necessary to totally oppose the Heath



Victor Feather announcing the General Council's willingness to continue talks with Heath.

proposals and any negotiations over them by the General Council. **BUT IT IS NOT ENOUGH.** The labour movement must adopt a fighting policy for the whole of the working class including the lowest paid workers. Such a policy means taking the claims of strong groups like the Ford workers who are demanding £10 a week increase and organising a united struggle of all workers around this demand; it means taking up the slogan of the building workers — £30 for 35 hours — and making that the demand of the whole class.

The same holds for the threshold agreement. It is not sufficient to reject the insulting suggestion that cost of living wage rises could take place when the price index rose above 6 per cent (so much for Heath's 'intervention to end prices down to 5 per cent!'). The working class must formulate its own policy for dealing with rising prices: for every percentage point increase in the cost of living index there should be an automatic increase in wage rates.

HEATH'S TURN MUST BE MET

What these proposals show is that the Government has learnt a lesson from its defeats over the last year. It had been trying head-on confrontations with the trade union movement as a whole and it had been

defeated. Now it is trying to posture as the defender of the weak sections of the working class against the strong. Secondly, instead of outright confrontation tactics, Heath is trying to manoeuvre to win 'moderate' opinion to his side by negotiations with the TUC, etc., so that when the crunch comes the Government will not be so isolated as it was during the miners' strike.

In the face of the old head-long confrontation tactics of the government, the class collaborators on the General Council had no possibility of a deal with Heath, and workers in struggle gained considerable support from the rest of the class. Industrial muscle could win through.

But today it would be a dangerous policy for the strongly organised sections of the working class to rely on nothing but their own industrial muscle. For if the government manages to split the working class and isolate sectional struggles from popular support, then industrial muscle will be no match for the muscle of the state. What is urgently needed is an end to the fragmentation of the wage struggle and the start of campaigns which unite the whole class around **common demands** in the interests of all workers.

RANK AND FILE ORGANISATION

Such united struggle will not be achieved under the leadership of the trade union bureaucracy: the whole history of the trade union movement shows the complete inability of the bureaucracy to subordinate their own narrow interests to those of the mass of workers.

The present period requires more urgently than ever a new rank and file leadership for the struggle in every industry and locality. The type of class solidarity action shown in the struggle to free the five must now be turned into solidarity *organisation* — committees for the defence of trade unions in every locality throughout the country. In the past such bodies have been used by the Communist Party simply for gathering sympathetic militants together to exert pressure on the trade union bosses. Now they must be turned into bodies which can generalise the demands and struggles of any section of trade unionists throughout the class as a whole.

ZIONISM ON THE OFFENSIVE

by BOB SLANSKY

Once again Israel is on the hunt for Arab blood. Golda Meir is brandishing the threat of full scale war to try to force the Syrian and Lebanese regimes to clamp down yet again on the Palestinian guerrillas. Meanwhile the Israeli government is waging a campaign for the stepping up of the 'struggle against terrorism' everywhere. It is threatening to do the job itself if the US and West European bourgeoisies won't co-operate. To strengthen its pressure, the Zionist authorities are seeking to mobilise the big Jewish communities in the West.

SUITS CAPITAL

In fact, the Israeli initiative suits the book of the West European regimes very well since they are finding it necessary to strengthen their own repressive machinery against

home grown socialist and revolutionary currents. It is highly convenient to use the Munich furore as a cover for this transformation. Nobody on the left should have any illusion that the 'anti-terrorist' machinery will refrain from attacking the labour movement and political activists within it when the need arises. Already *Newsweek* and the *Economist* have started preparing the ground for attacks against the Fourth International by printing absurd slanders against the Trotskyist movement.

By placing itself at the head of this international campaign, the Zionist movement comes full circle: it started out by presenting a haven from reactionary forces in Europe; it has now become one of the buttresses of the same reactionary forces in Europe,

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General Amin is proving to be a problem, not only for British imperialism, but also for the Left in this country. Some portray him as a tool of imperialism despite all the rhetoric. Others take the exact opposite view — he is an anti-imperialist getting rid of the Asians who have been the lackeys of Britain. A third view, peddled hardest by the press but absorbed by many on the left, is that Amin is simply a nutter and an evil one at that.

Most of these 'theories' are tailored to suit particular stands on the entry of Ugandan Asians into this country. But to grasp what Amin really represents it is necessary to analyse his actions in the context of the unfolding crisis of Ugandan society and its relations with its British imperialist masters.

OBOTE DITCHED

Between 'independence' and Amin's rise to power in January 1971, Uganda had been ruled by President Obote. For most of his time in office Obote had been a fairly willing tool of British imperialism, but by the end of the 1960s he was becoming increasingly annoying.

Two developments set Obote and Britain on a collision course. First, as the sixties dragged on the Ugandan masses found precious little to show for independence in terms of rising living standards — quite the reverse. Obote was forced to choose between the two different roads of his neighbours in East Africa: Nyerere's nationalisation of foreign interests, or Kenyatta's reliance on favours from the imperialist powers. He eventually chose the first course, to the fury of British interests in the area.

Secondly, Britain itself, particularly after the election of the Tory government, was taking an ever-more active interest in Southern and central Africa. Sections of British capital have a very substantial stake in the super-profits to be gained from this part of the world, and the Heath government from the start has made strenuous efforts to form an alliance

WHO IS GENERAL AMIN?

ask John Weal and Oliver MacDonald

with South African capital to carve up the continent while keeping the Americans at bay. Such a strategy depends on propping up Portuguese power and on having Black regimes which are at least as co-operative as Kaunda's in Zambia. What is absolutely unacceptable is someone like Nyerere, who not only nationalised foreign interests but shelters the Frelimo guerillas, fighting the Portuguese in Mozambique. When Obote turned towards Nyerere the British chopped him.

Obote was got rid of with such ease because he turned leftwards too late, and had failed to maintain any strong popular support within Uganda. Hit by capitalist exploitation and without any perspectives of socialist struggle, the Ugandan masses were turning towards tribal rivalries.

AMIN COMES IN

The British chose Amin with care. Firstly, he was the Israeli-trained head of the army; secondly, he belonged neither to the Buganda tribe whose kingdom had been dissolved by Obote, nor to the Luganda, Obote's own tribe. He belonged to a Muslim minority. Amin was to rule through a state dominated by the army.

But Britain's plans for Amin misfired. State expenditure on the army soared. This was necessary to consolidate Amin's position and absolutely acceptable to Britain's war industry, but it had a disastrous effect on the Ugandan economy. As disaffection grew, Amin tried one trick after another. But not everything could be blamed on Obote-ite wreckers or Tanzanian fifth columnists. It was to save his own position that Amin ousted the Israelis, installed the PLO, and resorted to anti-imperialist demagoguery. The benefits of

this in terms of Libyan military backing has been shown in the last couple of weeks.

But demagoguery could not supply a solid power base within the country, and the army was not a sufficient substitute for popular support. Amin had only one card left to play, unless he was to turn to Obote's nationalisation policy, which had brought about the latter's downfall. That card was the Ugandan Asians. Here was the move by which Amin hoped to unite the tribally divided African masses around himself.

BRITAIN HESITATES

So, in a bid for real mass support Amin decided to ditch the Asians, only to find himself facing bitter hostility from his former masters in Britain. By this time Whitehall was asking itself how it could get rid of this upstart who put his own interests before those of the people who had given him power — the British government.

The only organised opposition seemed to be Obote and his followers. Britain therefore seems to have assisted the Obote invasion in mid-September. The British plan seems to have been to send troops into the country to "disengage the combatants" and put a "neutral" (i.e. their own man) such as the chief justice of the country, Kiwanuka, into power. The latter could presumably have justified such an intrusion in the name of law and order. His credentials as far as Britain was concerned were excellent: he had been Prime Minister before independence in the "self-governing" phase. But the chief justice was arrested before the British had finished debating the idea of an intervention. Amin had left them with no more levers inside Uganda with which to prise him out.



To sum up, Amin is not by any means as nutty as the *Daily Mirror* might like to think. He has managed to gain some credibility as a popular leader with the country, provide himself with a new military backer in the shape of Libya, and outmanoeuvre Britain's attempt to get rid of him.

What political position should socialists in this country take towards Amin? The responsibility for the problems of the Ugandan masses lies first and foremost not with Amin but with British imperialism. However, it is equally nonsensical to suggest that Amin can provide any solution for those problems through his present demagogic policies. He is not an heroic anti-imperialist leader.

British imperialism's man in Uganda found that he had to ditch his backers in order to survive. Eating their sour grapes the British ruling class calls such activity madness: in fact it is only too normal a position for someone like Amin to find himself in. Someone, that is, who has to grapple with the problems of a neo-colonial country in the epoch of revolution without taking a revolutionary road.

A FUTURE FOR THE FASCISTS?

by RICHARD NEUBAUER

A frenzied onrush of small-scale rallies and marches by the extreme Right, in numerous localities, condemned the arrival from Kampala of the first refugee Asian families. The resurrection of black immigration as a focus for the agitation of the fascist groups in Britain on unemployment and the housing shortage, permits these elements to return to their familiar, traditional postures. The National Front's "Stop Immigration — Enoch is right" posters, now brandished with renewed vigour, are yellowing with age. Recent developments, however, have propelled the extreme Right into other, unexplored avenues of activity. An outline of the current state of the principal fascist organisations shows only too clearly the implicit dangers these have for the working class.

THE VACANT ARENA

The earnest preparations of major sections of the ruling class for entry into the E.E.C. indicate the strong possibility of a gathering ideological offensive, over the coming months, to promote the new "European" spirit. From the standpoint of the fascist groups, this nearly vacates the general arena of British nationalism, until they enter as its new standard-bearers. Very wide layers of the population, long imbued with the chauvinism formerly peddled by the ruling class and likely to suffer early disenchantment with the economic consequences of E.E.C. entry, are thus transformed into potential markets for fascist campaign propaganda on nationalistic themes.

Similarly, in relation to the Irish question,

the attempts of British imperialism to stabilise the situation, rather than unreservedly favour the Unionist camp, have exposed existing areas of chauvinistic opinion (both in Britain and Northern Ireland) to fascist agitation. If the anti-European, anti-Irish fanaticism of the extreme Right currently remains unattractive to the ruling class, given its own present strategy, this situation could alter in certain circumstances. The militancy of the British working class constitutes the key obstacle to the objectives sought by British capitalism. If the nationalism of the far Right were to demonstrably penetrate the working class movement, or externally influence its direction, diverting that militancy into less anti-capitalist channels then certain capitalist circles would rapidly pay attention. Examining each rightist group in turn, we detect greater emphasis on activities related to the working class movement, in two important cases.

NATIONAL FRONT

The emergence of this new formation in 1967 represented the first serious response of sections of the extreme Right to the economic problems of British capitalism in its contemporary, post-imperial situation, and has been detailed in this paper (1). The N.F. advocated a resuscitation of Victorian values and bitterly opposed the E.E.C., but in late 1970 — corresponding to the new Heath offensive of the ruling class — deposed its leader (A. K. Chesterton, sworn to erect a "Fabianism of the Right") and adopted confrontation tactics against the Left as a major preoccupation. In March, 1971, the N.F. invaded a Communist Party meeting

in Ilford, and other incidents multiplied.

This crude strategy has now been partially refined. A recent leaflet on Ireland, for example, begins "To British Workers from the National Front Trade Union Group. Fellow British Workers, have you a son or brother in the Army in Northern Ireland...?" and ends "Send resolutions declaring solidarity with British soldiers in Ulster... to your Union Executive. Black Irish Goods!" (emphasis added). While other items of N.F. literature still avoid any class content, an identifiable trend is occurring towards: (a) less sectarianism vis-a-vis other fascist groups, illustrated by N.F. assistance for the recent Smithfield marches despite political differences with their organisers; and (b) more "trade union work", for example in some Post Office establishments.

"TRU — AIM"

The "Trade Union Anti-Immigration Movement" constitutes an attempted rival structure to existing unions, but under a "trade union" guise. Its main organisers (S. Cripps, R. Taylor, W. Whitbread — all veterans of the extreme Right) are individual members of the T&GWU, and the group developed from an anti-immigration resolution pushed through the 1/764 Branch of that union in 1970. External to the official trade unions, the Southall-based "TRU — AIM" promises redundant workers aid in securing re-employment, deliberately linking this issue to anti-E.E.C. and anti-immigration themes. Its seeming potential in exploiting working class discontents at first attracted the support of members of the N.F., Union Movement, Immigrant Control Association,

and of Colin Jordan. It worked hard to build support for a racist campaign on unemployment. A "TRU — AIM" speaker appeared on the fringes of the T.U.C. march against unemployment in November, 1971, and it planned its own demonstration for March 18 this year in Oldham, through a front "British Workers' Committee Against Unemployment". This move foundered in the teeth of united local opposition from unions and the Left, and the group's future is consequently in doubt. However, its significance is clear — the first "trade union" front for the extreme Right in a period of working class militancy.

"UNION MOVEMENT"

Essentially the residual base of Oswald Mosley's supporters in the U.K., the tiny "Union Movement" runs against the tide of majority rightist opinion in backing its leader's support for "Europe a Nation". Mosley envisages a role for British capitalism in leading a capitalist Europe. (2) This group is declining and would command no interest here were it not for its unique foothold in Smithfield market, organised by Danny Harmston, responsible for the recent marches. We should not forget, however, that Mosley's much larger "British Union of Fascists" in the '30s urged all its members to join their appropriate unions and agitate within them for compulsory 100 per cent trade union membership, provided the unions were integrated with employers into fascist "corporations" for each industry. (3).

COMPLACENCY

Given a heightened interest in trade union affairs by the N.F. and others on the far Right, the reaction of sections of the Left is inadequate. The *Morning Star* of 25 August, reporting the first Smithfield march against the Ugandan refugees, adopted a distinct tone of humour and complacency. *Socialist Worker* of 2 September proclaimed that T.U. militancy is "the best antidote for the poison of racism", in its own right. A consideration of the current trends on the extreme Right of British politics, however, points to dangers that neither complacency nor wage militancy will dispel in the long-term.

NOTES

1. "The Face of British Fascism", in *The Red Mole*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (8 - 22 April, 1971).
2. Expressed, for example, in *National European*, 1966, and many repetitive articles.
3. *Strike Action or Power Action?* a pamphlet by W. Risdon, published by the B.U.F. in 1937.



Anti-fascist demo outside Monday Club meeting at Central Hall, Westminster, on 16 September

THORNYCROFT'S

crucial stage reached

by PAUL HUNTER

The sit-in at Transport Equipment (Thornycroft) Ltd. - British Leyland's Basingstoke factory - is now entering its most crucial phase. With Eaton's due to take over the factory on 1 October, BLMC are getting very worried that they won't have a factory to hand over to them. And with no gearboxes coming out of Thornycroft's the dispute is beginning to create supply problems for them in other parts of the combine as well. So over the last few weeks, BLMC have been trying a number of new tactics - with a little help from their friends: the local press, the Social Security, and of course Mr Stanley Orme, M. P.

"A DRAMATIC APPEAL"

First there was what the *Southern Evening Echo* called a "dramatic appeal" to Thornycroft workers from BLMC, not to be "misled into fighting other people's imaginary battles for them". BLMC were claiming that they now had sufficient "voluntary redundancies" to cover the 344 jobs they wanted to get rid of, so there was "no need" for the occupation to go on. The occupation committee replied that they wanted a thousand guaranteed jobs before they would hand over the factory plus severance pay from BLMC for workers being retained by Eatons if the deal went ahead.

The BLMC "appeal" contained a few very revealing phrases. Amongst other things, it said: "The Eaton Corporation has informed the unions of its willingness to engage some 700 men, the balance of the Thornycroft work force, at their existing rates and conditions of employment. Eaton has said that providing present market conditions do not deteriorate, no redundancy is anticipated during the rest of 1972 and throughout 1973. For such a period of time that Eatons can be expected to look ahead, job security is therefore reasonably assured". (Our emphasis).

In other words, there will be no improvements in wages or conditions - in a factory where this year's National Engineering Wage Claim has not even been talked about, let alone met.

But the statement is also quite open about the real reason for unemployment - "market conditions" - and just how uncertain the future of these "conditions" is - Eaton's can only be "expected" to be able to look ahead for fourteen months!

"CONFRONTATION"

Meanwhile, the Social Security have been playing their usual strike-breaking role - despite the efforts of a couple of Thornycroft workers who have been acting as a strike claimants union, some families have been getting as little as £3 a week in supplementary benefit and one case was reported of only 90p being paid out by the S.S.

So, not surprisingly, the wives have been getting pretty angry. A few have blamed their husbands for sitting in, which led to a press "confrontation between wives and the union men" story. But at a special meeting with occupation leaders only a handful of wives expressed discontent. Most support the sit-in despite the hardship.

MR. STANLEY ORME, M. P.

Then finally there was Mr. Stanley Orme, Labour M. P. for Salford West - the great knight in shining armour from the Trade Union Group of M. P.'s - who rushed down to Basingstoke a mere ten weeks after the sale and redundancies were first announced and five weeks after the seizure of the plant.

And what was it that he breathlessly told the Thornycroft workers after his belated arrival on the scene? - "I shall write to the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. John Davies, within the next few days. I think that to sell off this plant for only £5 million at the cost of 1,100 jobs is a sad thing for British industry".

He had no strategy for struggle, of course - except for his pathetic letter to Davies. In fact, he made no mention of any kind of class struggle at all. After all, we are all British - even Lord Stokes.

In his own small way, Orme plays the same dirty role that the *Morning Star* and the "Communist" Party have played over Thornycroft's (see the last two issues of *The Red Mole*) - blurring over the class issues by talking about a "British Industry" as if it were some vast classless enterprise.

Such patriotic verbiage is always pernicious, but never more so than when peddled by

As new student term begins

LAST YEAR'S LESSONS

by J. R. CLYNES

Last year saw the re-entry of the mass of students into the class struggle. Not for two years, and probably not since 1968 had we seen such a large number of students together in struggle. From large scale activity in solidarity with the Irish revolution to occupations and demonstrations in support of the miners strike; from varied forms of struggle in defence of Student Union autonomy, to solidarity actions with workers against redundancies. In all this a continual choice was placed before the students unions: on which side would they be in the class struggle? And in the main they chose the correct side. Thatcher, the college authorities, the LEA's and the Courts chose last year to begin a determined crack-down on the (relative) autonomy of students unions. No wonder that the revolutionaries began to organise and get a hearing amongst the mass of students. Under the banner of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Student Unions (LCDSU), a line was drawn across all the reformist and collaborationist solutions to those problems which faced students either in society generally or immediately in the colleges.

What lessons are to be learned from last year? What perspective can be given to the many new students and to those who are looking for answers after the experience of last year?

RISE IN WORKERS' STRUGGLES

F I R S T of all we have to realise that the context within which this upsurge in the colleges was occurring was quite different than say, in 1968. Direct action, mass demonstrations and occupations are no longer the privilege of students. On the contrary, the actions of the working class, especially over the past period, surpass anything that students have managed in this country. However, contrary to what might immediately be imagined, socialist students can have the biggest effect on the direction of these struggles by turning into the colleges not away from them.

MASS STUDENT ACTION

I n the miners strike, for example, lots of very useful and necessary work was done by the action of individual militants on the picket lines and in the villages. But the mobilisation of the students at the University of Colchester in occupation of their colleges to accommodate the flying pickets provided an early political lesson which had resonance in large sections of the working class. The need for active and mass solidarity with the miners was got across by this action much more surely than any amount of leaflets. This was the case, although less dramatically, with other student actions both then and in other struggles during the year. Workers at the University of Kent, for instance, were faced with a fight against redundancies. Through the occupation of the administration block in solidarity with this fight, revolutionaries were able to get across the basic message that workers should not be made responsible for the problems of capitalism.

C.P. REFORMISM

A lthough these sorts of struggles were the most important last year, they were not the 'typical' struggles. They were generalised only through a fight against the dominant trend in the leaderships of the students unions and the NUS - that of the Communist Party. For the latter, student struggles should be a mixture of bread and butter college issues plus anti-Tory protests and token support for workers' struggles. No attempt was made by the NUS executive to lead struggles which challenged the social functions of the colleges within capitalist society.

AUTONOMY STRUGGLE IS CLASS STRUGGLE

The dominating struggle from the beginning of last year was the struggle over student union autonomy. Here the CP posed the question as simply a move from the reactionary forces in the Tory party. At the same time its emphasis was on defending students' 'bread and butter' concerns like money for rugby and chess clubs. In this way a truly broad alliance was created by the C.P. including college authorities, LEA's and all 'progressive students'. However, whilst the college authorities and the LEA's were opposed to the particular form of the Tory attack, they were united amongst themselves and with the Tories on the defence of the social function of the colleges in higher education



Students and miners at Colchester

or Labour, were quite prepared to withhold grants from student unions or individual students. Similarly, college authorities despite their different political hues (Carter of Lancaster, the liberal; Miller of N. London Poly, the racist) also went on the offensive. They realised all too well that the development of higher education in line with the needs of British capitalism demanded the reintegration of students unions into the State either locally or nationally. Their differences were (and remain) only how not whether such a policy should be adopted.

Consequently last year was punctuated by what the C.P. referred to as 'local' struggles to which the C.P. could only counterpose some abstract 'Fight against the Tories'. In those rare cases where the NUS had to take some action, the whole thing was couched in terms of 'fair play' or 'academic freedom'. And where the struggle was fought on different principles as at N. Poly, the NUS deliberately scabbed, blaming the whole affair on the 'wreckers' of the LCDSU. The truth of the matter was that these 'local' struggles were the fragmented manifestations of what should have been the real movement on the autonomy question. It was this which should have provided the basis for any alliance. The 'bread and butter' question could only spread, as it did, confusion.

REVOLUTIONARIES ARE 'WRECKERS'

B ut to 'wreck' the cosy policy of the C.P. and fight for a correct strategy in the student field was indeed the reason for the formation of the LCDSU. What the IMG intended in initiating the LCDSU was to fight for a different understanding of politics. The framework for the C.P.'s politics is the fight to change governments and government policy; the revolutionary must start from the fight against capitalist social relations themselves. Clearly, a fight on this basis in the colleges is dependent on the balance of forces in society generally. It is a precondition then for any advance, even in the colleges, that students and student unions intervene actively in the class struggle. Consequently, one of the basic planks of the LCDSU was the need for the sharpening up of the student unions locally and the NUS nationally as instruments in the class struggle.

The difference in the two strategies was clearly seen in the miners strike. Whereas the NUS leadership were content to pass a resolution of solidarity, the LCDSU was advancing the line its supporters carried out in Colchester. Comrades here actually challenged the social function of their college by turning all their resources in support of the miners. Again, whereas the NUS leadership considered the autonomy struggle as quite separate from that of the miners, the LCDSU took a large part of the January 23rd autonomy demo to demonstrate solidarity outside the National Coal Board offices, and consciously asserted the autonomy of student unions from the State by for instance voting large sums of money to the miners.

AGAINST THE TORIES, AGAINST ANTI-TORYISM

B ut the mass of students have not at all been won to follow this line consistently. In one respect this is not surprising since it cuts across the stream of the spontaneous understanding of students of their situation. The secret of the C.P.'s success is its ability to locate the lowest common denominator amongst all the heterogeneous layers of students and then inject the 'movement' with a dose of popular anti-Toryism. There is only one problem with this and that is

function of higher education and, especially in a period of large scale change, offers no way forward to combat this.

END OF AN ERA

This year marks the beginning of a whole new period of planning in higher education. The Robbins era is over. There are extensive plans in the pipeline for a reorganisation, rationalisation and reorientation (so-called 'technocratic reform') on a scale not till now contemplated by the bourgeoisie.

This whole enterprise is not just a technical question but requires political and ideological underpinning. Mrs. Thatcher made her problem as far as she saw it was not only the total inadequacy of the student union bureaucracies for controlling students but that student unions were, in a number of ways, being used as organised centres of resistance and for launching political movements. Her task was twofold: To break the influence of the revolutionaries and to integrate students unions into the college bureaucracies. She failed in her ill-prepared attempt last year but more proposals will be ready by the turn of this year.

By that time we must really have sharpened up the students unions and the NUS. Any notion that the root of the matter is the Tory government must be decisively scotched. The proposed week of activity by the NUS on this question should be seized as an opening to ram the correct message home.

FIGHT THE TORIES: FIGHT CAPITALISM

This message must be that any struggle against the plans of the bourgeoisie in higher education can only be conducted as part of the class struggle as a whole. What this boils down to is that the bourgeoisie must be hit at their weakest point whenever and wherever that may be. It is the issue of most relevance to the class struggle at any particular time which must become the focus for all efforts to be concentrated upon - in particular those of students.

This is not to counterpose struggles inside and outside the colleges but to indicate within which framework they should be situated. Once this is decided then it would be sheer folly to disregard any gauntlet thrown down by the bourgeoisie in the colleges. It should be obvious to anyone that a defeat in the colleges would itself remove a large part of the forces which could be mobilised in the struggle outside the colleges themselves.

It is within this framework and perspectives that the struggle of last year can be a gain and that the struggles of students can become an integral part of the class struggle. It is this which can provide a perspective for a continuing struggle against the bourgeoisie whether in the form of the Tories, the college authorities, or anything else.

FOOTNOTE

A t a meeting of the steering council of the LCDSU on 25 September, called to prepare the intervention for the beginning of term, the I.S. comrades on the steering council read a prepared statement announcing their withdrawal from the LCDSU on the grounds of a likelihood of a peaceful solution to the Thatcher proposals on autonomy rendering the LCDSU a hindrance to party building. The IMG considers that this short sighted move by the I.S. is a big set back to the organisation of the revolutionary forces in the colleges and to the winning of a revolutionary line amongst the mass of students. The IMG will decide its action in relation to this when the statement of the I.S. is formally received. We hope to be able to print this in the next

MUCH MORE THAN A RENT

In these two articles, Jack Lewis examines the nature of the Housing Finance Act and the res

HOW CAPITAL TRIES TO SOLVE THE HOUSING Q

The Housing Finance Act is an attempt by the ruling class to ameliorate in a new way the problems of social expenditure and social crisis in the big cities under monopoly capitalism. In order to understand this new turn for the bourgeoisie we should briefly look to the past.

A HISTORICAL NOTE

The time of the industrial revolution saw a massive depopulation of the countryside and the crowding together of a mass of people into rapidly developing factory towns where wage workers were organised in the service of industrial capital.

PERIOD 1 — 1800 - 1848 NO STATE INTERVENTION

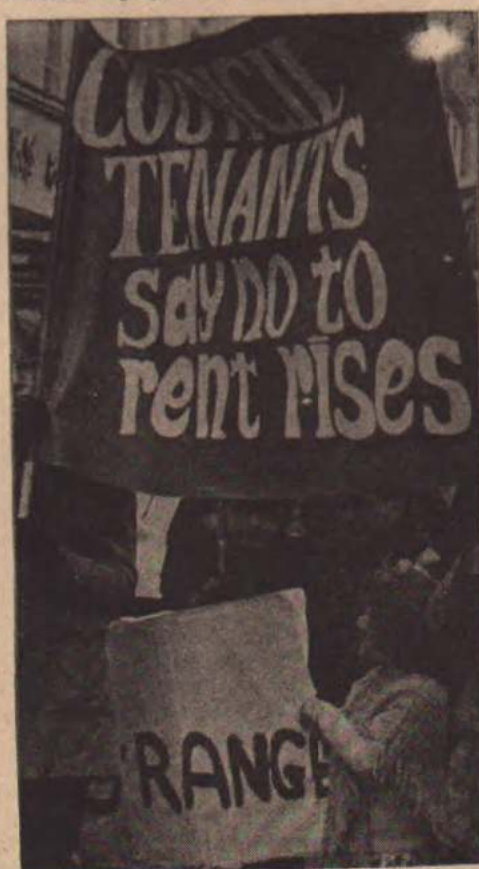
The organisation of industry under capitalism was not accompanied by any attempt by the state nationally to organise housing for the thousands of workers uprooted from their rural homes in this way. Instead the period to 1848 saw a rapid worsening of conditions in the developing towns: older residential areas were converted into slums as the well-to-do moved out, and poorly-built houses were erected on a large scale and with no overall planning by individual contractors intent on cheapness and profit.

THE STATE INTERVENES

The subsequent intervention of the state in house building can be characterised broadly by a second and third period, and it is a new fourth period which is heralded by the Housing Finance Act.

PERIOD 2 — 1848 - 1917 HEALTH LEGISLATION

A period chiefly characterised by public health legislation reflecting the concern of the ruling class about the epidemics of ravaging diseases bred in the crowded workers' quarters. The inevitable spreading of infection to the richer parts of town explains how the bourgeoisie then became filled with the spirit of philanthropy and the state attempted to remedy the insanitary conditions. Virtually no state-financed housing in this period, but some individual capitalists needing housing for their workers and realising the advantage to any boss of striking workers if he is also their landlord, built houses for their employees. Also some small "charitable" organisations provided workers' lodging houses.



Demonstration in Preston

PERIOD 3 — 1917 - 1972 CENTRAL STATE AND MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIP

— a marriage with room for initiative by both partners.

Three elements open up a period of municipal initiative in building housing for the working class :

1. A growing need for state intervention in housing to ensure some housing provision for the workforce and to ameliorate the chaos of private enterprise in housing;
2. Over a decade of intensified working class struggle;
3. An overwhelmingly successful rent strike in Glasgow 1915.

Money, legal powers and general policy are provided centrally, but the final decisions and initiatives lie chiefly with the local apparatus. The chief theory about the housing problem connected with this period, especially after World War 2, is that the housing problem is simply a housing shortage and is solvable merely by numerically larger building programmes.

A GROWING PROBLEM TODAY

"The situation today is that there is an apparent numerical sufficiency of housing, with 19m. dwellings to go around 18.3m. households." However, the housing problem, far from having disappeared, seems to be intensifying. The spare dwellings are in the wrong places!

There is a permanent and growing social crisis in the major cities. This crisis is reflected in innumerable ways: squatting, the rise of community action groups, the newspaper reports of scores of people, including office workers, sleeping rough in the central London area, the flooding of every social agency from the Citizens Advice Bureau to the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child with housing enquiries, the calls by the London Chamber of Commerce, the Civil and Public Services Association, and other bodies for more homes for workers in inner London, the report of hundreds of men sleeping in a hostel in Westminster which the *Times* journalist found to be a fire trap; all these are symptoms of a profound crisis in the major urban centres, especially London.

Waiting lists are growing longer. Camden Council, for instance, has 250 additional applications per month, but this increasing need is not met by increased house building; on the contrary, the number of dwellings built, especially council housing, is falling:

AVERAGE ANNUAL OUTPUT OF HOUSES IN U.K.

	Council	Private	Gross Total
1967	211,247	204,208	415,455
1968	199,767	226,068	425,835
1969	192,408	185,917	378,325
1970	187,925	174,342	362,267
1971	168,123	196,313	364,436

From these gross totals, the following has to be subtracted:

	For the year 1970
1. The number of dwellings demolished for slum clearance and road widening.	110,000
2. The number of new households — people leaving parents to live independently, getting married, etc.	150,000
3. The number of dwellings not demolished as slums but which nevertheless have become unsuitable for human habitation through falling into disrepair or simply being too old.	estimated at least 100,000
TOTAL:	360,000

These figures mean that today, despite ever-lengthening waiting lists and a crisis of homelessness in the large cities which forces some local councils to lodge their homeless families in hotels and boarding houses, British capitalism can achieve virtually no increase whatsoever in the number of habitable dwellings.

HOW DOES THE CRISIS HIT THE RULING CLASS?

The market in land in inner urban areas is putting rents absolutely too high for the lower and average paid workers. But such workers are nevertheless essentially required for work in these areas.

Thus the crisis hits the ruling class through its continuing need in big cities for low paid unskilled labour. This problem is particularly acute in central areas which require armies of dustmen, sweepers, postmen, transport workers catering and other low paid service industry workers.

For example, the low paid, restaurant worker, finishing work as he does in the early hours of the morning, must live in the inner city, near his work. He can do this only by squeezing himself and his family into one or two rooms...

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS OPEN TO THE RULING CLASS?

Capitalism must attempt to enable this layer of workers, essential to the life of a city to be able to live where they are required for work.

Rent control was a policy of the past, but after over 25 years of property boom and fortune-making there are influential sections of the ruling class who would be bitterly opposed to any control of or closing down of their areas for profitable business, and who indeed want all remaining controls lifted.

This argument also applies to any proposal to nationalise land.

The other option is some form of increased subsidy from the exchequer to provide cheaper dwellings. However, as we have explained before in *The Red Mole*, increased state expenditure has to be met out of the capitalists' rate of profit, and this, naturally, they are not keen to accept. Indeed, in the present period, the whole motivation of the British ruling class is to raise their average rate of profit so as to enter the common market as favourably as possible for British capital.

As shown earlier, the problem is one created by capitalism, but the capitalist class is not prepared to pay for the solution. The Housing Finance Act attempts to find a solution to this problem of capitalism at the expense of sections of the working class.

Four interrelated elements open the door to this solution:

1. The state power of the ruling class nationally.
2. The widely differing rents paid by tenants of different local authorities.
3. The income differential within the working class.
4. The political weakness of the mass organisations of the working class and the left.

If most of a local authority's houses are of an older vintage, with low historic costs, and it is not building much now, its average rents will be lower than a council with a high proportion of newer houses, built at higher costs, and which has a heavy construction programme under way. The former type of local authority is characteristically not in the inner city, where continuing crisis has meant higher costs and higher council rents. The imposition of a national rent fixing scheme determined centrally means the flow of funds raised in

this way from the tenants of the former to the latter type of (big city) council.

Similarly, a means tested rent rebate scheme conditions the flow of funds raised in the form of a rent rebate or allowance. These rebates and allowances both to council and private tenants are financed by the raising of council rents by about £1 this year and an average of 50p each following year until "fair rent" level is reached. Private landlords of controlled tenants provided their houses are in up-to-date condition, will now also be able to raise their rent to this level by applying to the Rent Officer.

Thus higher paid council tenants, especially in non-major city areas, are paying for the solution chosen by the ruling class for its problems in this field.

The national state power of the ruling class enables it to extend the state apparatus to ensure, through rigorous means testing, that no-one tries to "cheat" the ruling class when applying for a rebate. It also enables the ruling



Nalga Action cartoon

class to counteract any possible revolt on the part of workers which might force Labour Councils to refuse to implement the Act.

Thus the government has included in the Act a number of repressive clauses against local politicians or bureaucrats: in this respect, the power of the District Auditor to surcharge (claim money from) local councillors and officials for any revenue lost by their illegal actions to the account of the local authority has not been thought sufficient by Whitehall. Secretary of State has been given wide administrative powers, the most important of which are: holding back of central state funds from district local authorities, b) the power to appoint a Housing Commissioner to take over the housing functions of the local council, c) imposition of a fine of up to £400 on any councillor or local government employee who refuses to cooperate with or work under the instructions of the Housing Commissioner, the power of a housing commissioner to employ his own staff to carry out functions in the absence of opposition by existing local government employees, and to charge their salaries and expenses to the account of the local authority.

RISE

ise of the Left

QUESTION

Thus, the Housing Finance Act is quite a clever manoeuvre on the part of the capitalist class. It is designed both to guarantee massive profits for that section of the capitalist class which operates in the land and house building fields, and at the same time ensure that lower paid workers will be able to get accommodation of some kind in the urban centres at the expense of other workers.

GROWTH OF THE 'STRONG' STATE

Lastly we should see how the Act generalises the control of the state bureaucracy over the entire field of housing for rent - by generalising the concept of a "Fair Rent" which is defined as a) the rent realisable if there were a balance between supply and demand in an area; and b) as the rent to be charged having regard to what would be a 'reasonable return on a dwelling as an investment'. In other words, these two typical mechanisms of capitalism - market price and profit rate - can no longer operate freely but must now be determined by the state bureaucracy. Since the free operation of

The forgoing analysis differs from those made by most others on the left. The latter tend to see the Act as nothing more than a rent increase, a means of squeezing all tenants for more profits for the ever hungry capitalists. Thus to achieve a united struggle against the Act they have to try to prove that everybody will face large rent increases. The Communist Party's folder 'No Rent Rises' therefore has to tell us simply: "What is the aim of the Tory rent Bill?.....To increase rents - double for council tenants and 2½ times for private tenants". And what is the reason for the introduction of the Act? Not some important features of the crisis of capitalism but this: "The Tories'.....hatred of the working class and its hard won democratic rights." Similarly the IS pamphlet, 'Tory Rent Robbery and How to Fight It', ever so anti-Tory, explains: "The Tory Housing Bill is designed to inflict massive rent increases on the five and a half million families who live in Council houses and also on the one and a third million families who rent from private landlords". As for the rent rebate scheme, this is a Tory conspiracy: "The truth is: the rent rebate scheme is a major con-trick by the Tories to dress up their rent rises."

This is also the analysis which the Labour Party has made of the Act, and in our view it is inadequate. In the first place, the government has made a number of 'concessions' on the actual scope of the rises this autumn. Crosland, the Labour Party spokesman has heralded this as a 'great victory' for the struggle of Labour MPs in the Commons, "driving a coach and four through the Act". This would indeed be the case if the purpose of the Act was simply a steep increase in rents this autumn. Secondly, a number of tenants, mobilised by left groups against the 'rent robbery' have discovered that their rents will not in fact be going up after all this autumn. Thirdly, some rebated tenants will, on paper, have somewhat less to pay in rent in the short-term. For example, an internal document of one inner London Council, which has refused to implement the Act, reports: "We calculate that, under the basic national scheme, some two-thirds of present rebated tenants will be better off.... and one third will be worse off than under our present scheme". 8000 private tenants are expected to apply for rent allowances from Camden Council. (Of course, the 'poverty trap', by which wage rises for the lower paid result in loss of rebate and other benefits, means that the rent act will not make the low paid richer. But this does not make the rent rebates a 'con-trick'. The ruling class is not primarily concerned to convince the lower paid. It is concerned to exploit them in the big cities and to do that adequately, these lower paid workers must be got off the street at night. The rebates are designed to do that.)

Thus it is absolutely inadequate to organise the struggle against the Housing Finance Act on the basis simply of fighting a rent increase. While the Act will involve substantial rent increases for a large number of tenants, its basic purpose is much more far reaching: it is an attempt, as shown already, to provide a long-term solution to the housing crisis in the big cities in the interest of monopoly capital. It must therefore be fought as such, and not only as a fight to keep rents at their present levels.

BOURGEOIS FORCE VS PROLETARIAN FORCE

The ruling class, to solve its problems relating to housing introduced the Housing Finance Act. The capitalists utilise the forces of their state, the bureaucrats, police, courts, etc. The job of working class leaders is to show the

NOTES

1. *Financial Times*, 7/8/72 - Sandy McLachlan, 'Growing need for more adequate housing'.
2. Action Group on London Housing chaired by Reginald Eyre, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of the Environment.
3. *Financial Times*, 19/6/72 - David Bebb of Shelter.
4. The Government's White Paper "Public Expenditure to 1975-76", published 25/11/71, shows that for housing the average annual percentage increase 1971-72 to 1975-76 will be one-fifth of one percent, i.e. virtually nothing.
5. *Labour Monthly*, July 1972, article "Rents - Time is short....."

workers how they can utilise all the forces at their disposal against the Act. An example of this is when the republican workers in Northern Ireland, led by the IRA, built barricades and defended them and declared 'no-go' areas. In most parts of Northern Ireland, unfortunately, it was the British army, the armed force of the British capitalists, who by setting up road blocks decided who should and who should not go through. In Free Derry however a section of the Irish working class decided who could pass. They laid down their law.

Some tenants associations in Britain have learned from this and have said they will make 'no-go' areas of their council estates if the council attempts to evict rent strikers. They will try to stop the forces of the capitalist state - courts, bailiffs and police - from deciding in practice who does and who does not remain in their council flat.

So while we support each and every action of tenants against the Housing Finance Act, we think it is necessary for the struggle to be developed into a struggle against capitalism and capitalist law.

STRATEGY

"The trouble", said several delegates at the National Association of Tenants and Residents Conference on July 29, "is that there are too many generals and not enough soldiers". They were voicing the sentiment of many militants who are themselves prepared to fight the Housing Finance Act, but who feel that the problem lies in their lack of active mass support among the tenants.

Is it true that the potential 'generals' against the Act are stymied for lack of soldiers? If so, then the outlook for the fight against the Housing Finance Act would be bleak. However, the real problem in our view, is actually the opposite of that posed by the slightly despondent comrades of the NATR conference. The problem is that while even today there are thousands of people doing battle with the state because of capitalism's inability to solve the housing question, the labour movement and the British left have, so far, failed to work out a strategy for the successful waging of that battle. The soldiers, unnoticed by those who aspire to lead, ARE ALREADY FIGHTING. THE PROBLEM IS THAT WE LACK REAL GENERALS.

In London well over 200,000 families are on their local council's waiting list, and every day over one thousand families go down to their local council's housing department. They are homeless families, people on waiting lists, slum dwellers waiting for the bulldozer, council tenants thoroughly dissatisfied with their mediocre or downright bad housing. The vast majority plead with the council's officials in vain. Their need remains unsatisfied despite the huge daily queues of people who come to ask, argue, shout, bang fists on desks and even physically assault the council officials.

It is up to those who wish to lead a struggle against the act to see that these unsatisfied people are victims of precisely that urban crisis which a struggle against the Act has to take account of. The families who go in their thousands to argue with the council's officials struggle in an individual way, family by family. And because the state in the form of the local council is geared perfectly toward denying these individual approaches by bureaucratic trickery and administrative violence, the struggle of these people has for 25 years and longer been in vain. It is up to socialists to show tenants who are against the Act that they must solidarise themselves in that struggle with this mass of ill-housed people.

Every socialist agrees that the labour movement must be brought into the struggle, but it must be brought in on a broader basis than merely resisting rent increases. For instance, the CP sees little possible initiative for the trade union and labour movement. Instead we are to "back up the 300 Labour councils" if they take a stand against the Act. In other words, if by taking a stand against the act, they care to legitimise for the CP its own involvement in the struggle. The CP more and more is making its own fight dependent upon the possibility of it reaching an alliance with the Labour left. Where the *Morning Star* correctly reports that local government workers could play an important role in making the law inoperative, the CPs ability in practice to carry out this struggle is

dreadfully hampered by its strategy of seeking alliances which will take it into Parliament with the Labour left. Such a Labour "leftist" is Millie Miller, leader of Camden Council, who wrote the 'militant' article on the Act in the CP's "magazine of left unity", *Labour Monthly*. This same fighter against the Act and contributor to the CP's magazine has instructed Camden's local government workers to comply with the law and obey a Housing Commissioner if one is appointed for Camden. On 2 August 1972 the same night as they voted, for the benefit of their local working class electors, not to implement the Act, the council of which she is Leader passed another less widely publicised resolution as follows: "That, in the event of a Housing Commissioner being appointed, to take over some or all of the Council's housing functions, the Council will expect its officers to comply with the law in respect of any orders given by the Commissioner and will not discriminate against any officer for this action." The last ten words of the resolution are simply the go ahead being given by the "socialists" who run the Council to local government officials who want to implement the Act that they have nothing to fear from their Labour employers. Needless to say, the concept of "forcing the Labour left to fight" or of "putting pressure on the Labour left" is inadequate. The attitude of the Labour left to the demonstrations and petitions launched to achieve such pressure is merely to use these activities as evidence of the "support of the people" for the Parliamentary Labour Party and its policies.

Mrs. Miller, her Labour colleagues and ultimately her suffragin in the CP, act like this because of their political conceptions. They believe that change is to be had through Parliament. This means that for them, extra Parliamentary activities, such as the mass action of tenants and workers are mere adjuncts to the Parliamentary process - that is, it may be useful to Mrs. Miller, if she becomes MP for Ilford North, that when she makes a speech in the House of Commons a few hundred people are standing outside waiting to present a petition in support of her speech. But direct intervention in politics by workers, such as the disruption of the state by local government workers working in the heart of the monster, this is taboo for Mrs. Miller, for if the working class can independently of Parliament achieve its ends what use will it have for Mrs. Miller? And what use will it have for those "communists" who have tied themselves to Mrs. Miller's apron strings?

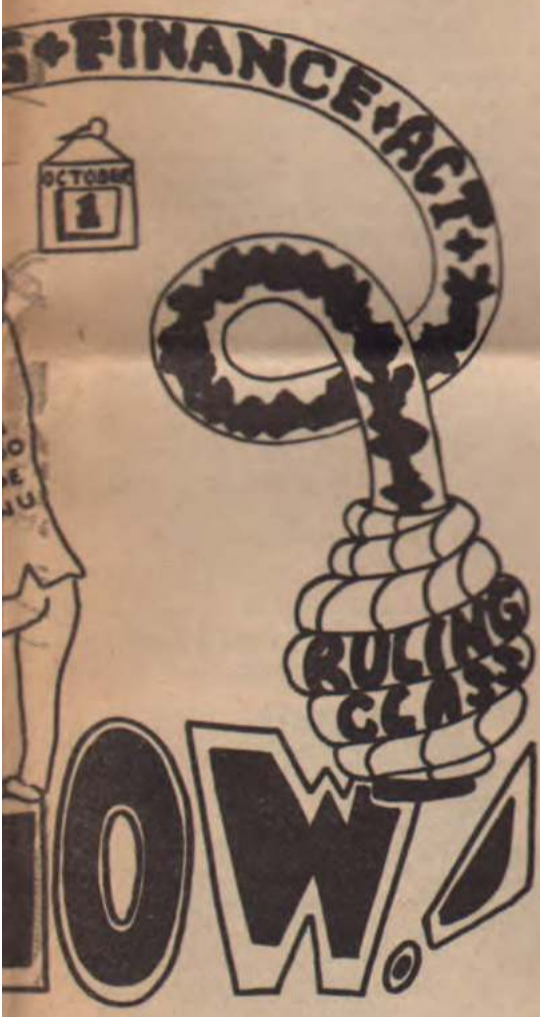
LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKERS

We support rent strikes and the actions of tenants such as the setting up of "no-go" areas on their estates to defend their strike against bailiffs and police.

An immediate task for socialists is to extend the struggle to win support among local and central government workers. The struggle can be strategically strengthened by actions of these workers to make inoperative the law that the ruling class is attempting to use to solve its problems. And tenants on rent strike have far less to fear if they know that local government workers are refusing to produce rent records, refusing to collect rents, refusing to report who is on rent strike and refusing to be involved in any way against the tenants.

THE DIFFERENCE

The working class in Britain has numerically and organisationally the strongest trade union movement in the world. But it suffers a crippling weakness: its reformist, social democratic ideology which restricts the direct intervention of the working class in the class struggle to the terrain of wages, conditions at work and rents, leaving the class battle on all other questions to be fought in Parliament - the terrain chosen and controlled by the ruling class. The difference between the sorts of struggles I have posed on the housing question and the sorts of struggles promoted by the Labour Party and the Communist Party is that both the LP and the CP ask us to wage our struggle on the parliamentary terrain - the terrain of the ruling class. They ask us to attempt to struggle within institutions such as Parliament and local councils which were created by the bourgeoisie precisely to prevent the successful struggles of the working class.



the laws of capitalist economy threaten to produce a massive social breakdown, the state takes over, extending its bureaucratic apparatus into new areas, while at the same time abrogating any autonomy of the local apparatus in favour of the central machinery. This is how the "strong state" evolves to guard the capitalist economy under monopoly capitalism. Unless the 'natural' laws of monopoly capitalism are controlled by the bourgeoisie a social crisis will emerge which would open the way for a revolt against the capitalist system itself. Thus the state intervenes in an attempt to render these economic laws 'harmless'. Such intervention is not a submission of the capitalist class to the state, but on the contrary signifies the service rendered by the state in the long term interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole. The intervention of the state, needless to say, does not solve the problem; it merely guards against the immediate effects of the problem while creating the conditions for the problem to appear in a different form.

BOOKS

From Rousseau to Lenin

From Rousseau to Lenin, by Lucio Colletti (New Left Books, £3.75)

This book is by far one of the most interesting to appear in the New Left Books series. It deals with a central question, the theoretical origins of the growth of reformism in the Second International, in a way which is both clear and thorough. The book then finishes by a clear statement of two of the fundamental principles of Lenin – the theory of the state and the rejection of Marxism as a classless 'truth'. As it is precisely the theories of the classless state and of classless science which were at the heart of the revisionism of the main theoreticians of the Second International, Colletti's book as a whole can be taken as a systematic exposition of Marxist theory as developed in a struggle against the views of Plekhanov, Kautsky, Hilferding, Bernstein and the other representatives of classical Social Democracy.

AMBIGUOUS LEGACY

In developing his analysis of the theoreticians of the Second International, Colletti is forced to begin with an analysis of the profoundly ambiguous legacy of Engels. This is shown both in his great illusions in Parliamentarianism and his revisionist views on the question of philosophy. These two ideas, which in Engels always remained eclectically combined with revolutionary and Marxist views, were built upon by Engels' literary inheritors Bernstein and Kautsky. They lead to a complete fatalism and consequent passivity in the face of the class struggle. How frequently in the course of the development of reformism were Bernstein and Co. able to quote Engels when he said: "We can count even today on two and a quarter million voters. If it continues in this fashion, by the end of the century we shall conquer the greater part of the middle strata of society, petty bourgeois and peasants, and grow into the decisive power in the land, before which all other powers will have to bow, whether they like it or not. To keep this growth going without interruption until it of itself gets beyond the control of the prevailing government system, that is our main task". (my emphasis) In this one passage is the perfect combination of Parliamentary illusions and fatalism (growing 'of itself') which lay at the heart of the ideas of the Second International.

The philosophical origins of this fatalism of course lie in those revisions of Marxism introduced by Engels in his later works. Here Engels reverted to the Hegelian idea of a "Dialectic of Nature". It is true that there are certain important passages in the *Dialectic of Nature* which go against this concept, but the general effect was to bring about a reconciliation between Marxism and classical materialism. Once this is done then of course man's action becomes a mere 'effect' of 'material causes'. This leads to both Engels and Plekhanov resurrecting Hegel's ideas on freedom and necessity (see Colletti, page 69) and turning Marxism into a sub variant of Darwin's theory of evolution. Once this particular road has been taken, the way is open for every possible crude brand of determinism, fatalism and any theory which justifies passivity. As against this, Colletti re-asserts the Marxist views that "Both subject and object are part of an objective object-subject process" (p10) and "Consciousness belongs to life insofar as it is one of its parts. Theory is practice insofar as it is one aspect or moment of practice". (p11)

JUSTIFICATION

If all these early parts of the book sound somewhat obscure and abstract, the justification clearly comes in the last two essays, and particularly in the essay on Lenin's concept of the State. This is a classic of clear exposition. Nothing could sum up Lenin's conception more clearly than Colletti's formulation that: "The destruction of the bourgeois State machine is not the Ministry of the Interior in flames, it is not the barricades. All this may take place, but it is not the essential point. What is essential to the revolution is the destruction of the diaphragm that separates the working class from power, the emancipation and self determination of

The General Electric Company Limited – an Anti-Report

The General Electric Company Limited, an Anti-Report (Counter Information Services, 25p)

Counter Information Services have now published the second in a series of 'exposés' of big corporations, the first being a report on Rio Tinto Zinc. Their aim seems to be to build up casebook examples of what they call the evils of "monopoly power in a democratic society", and here they go to work to prove the popular (mis) conception that GEC is a peculiarly evil case. Perhaps there is comfort in the fact that the writers do not convincingly prove that GEC is so exceptional.

The Anti-Report includes material on GEC's investments in Southern Africa and contribution to the American aggression in Vietnam. Comparisons between GEC profits and the wages of the African workers they employ (from 10.7p to 21.5p per hour) and the various legal restrictions and penalties they suffer, are very effective; but they do not give any quantitative estimates of GEC investment to prove that GEC is exceptionally implicated in the build up of imperialist investment in what was, until the Sixties at least, an area relatively free from colonial revolution. GEC has certainly been exceptional for a British firm in winning military contracts from the Pentagon, but is still clearly a very small fish in this particular pond. And concentration on these 'dirty' aspects of GEC unfortunately creates the impression that these activities could cease if the company abandoned what they call the "GEC morality".

"NATIONAL INTEREST"

In their anxiety to assert that GEC behaves contrary to the "real national interest", the writers make several complaints. We are told that GEC are unusually prone to pushing up prices in order to increase their profits, even though elementary economic theory can show that this often has the opposite effect. The writers also demand greater "public accountability"; but as they point out, the Monopolies Commission (a body which exists to protect capitals from one another rather than the 'public' from monopolies) could find no cause for complaint since the majority of GEC's customers were nationalised industries, themselves monopoly buyers.

Furthermore, to spend a whole chapter saying that the history of the electrical industry is marked by cartels, trusts, and price-fixing arrangements, is only to indicate what it has in common with every other major sector of capitalist enterprise since the turn of the century. There is more substance in the charge that GEC eliminated the TXE3 electronic telephone exchange at Woolwich because it would have made obsolete the Strowger switching gear which GEC manufactures elsewhere for the GPO; but such examples could be cited from every industry. Moreover, they are only a surface manifestation of the contradiction between the development of the productive forces and private property relations.

REDUNDANCY

The central concern of the Anti-Report is the question of redundancy. Although the research team state in the Introduction that GEC is not exceptional in creating redundancy they do say that it has the worst record

the former, the transmission of power directly into the hands of the people". (p21)

It is at this point that we can see that Colletti's long explorations of the theoreticians of the Second International are not something abstracted from revolutionary practice. They are the essential preparation for a practice which can reject the narrow stereotypes of revolution which abound on the left. This, in short, is a book which everyone should attempt to read. The main obstacle to this is not going to be the translation or Colletti's style, both of which are admirably clear, but the absurd price. Colletti stresses the need to break down the diaphragm separating the masses from power, but New Left Books appear to be intent on erecting a diaphragm which separates the masses financially from the best Marxist literature. In a period of relatively mass interest in Marxism, what is wanted is a paperback publishing house, not a collection of beautifully bound books for a select elite of academics to pore over. Now that some of the earlier issues in this series are coming out as paperbacks, we can only hope that it is financially viable to bring this book of Colletti's out in the same way as soon as possible.

Robert Mossgeil.



on this score, and the process of "dehumanisation" has gone further here than in other companies. In the space of six years, GEC has cut its inherited labour force from 245,000 to 181,000. This has certainly been partially responsible for the rise in profits from £49 million in 1969 to £77 million in 1972; but is Weinstock's concern really only with "chopping", to the exclusion of "long-range planning"? We also suspect that this kind of redundancy rate is common in British industry – the British Steel Corporation, for example, is cutting the labour force from 317,000 to 215,000 in 7 to 8 years. Another thesis seems to be that the GEC merger resulted in redundancies which would otherwise not have occurred. But, as the authors point out, AEI-Woolwich had already sacked 2,000 workers and "it is likely AEI would have closed the factory even if the merger had not taken place".

The fact is that every major sector of British capital is at present faced with the option of concentration (leading to redundancy) or a rash of bankruptcies (also leading to redundancy). International productivity and profitability comparisons would demonstrate this, but the writers do not give them, not do they give economic indicators for the pre-merger firms.

The failure of the unions to build a combine-wide fight against GEC rationalisation, the cynicism of the leadership, (and the lies coming out of Weinstock's office) are well documented. But the line of some of the shop stewards was not much help either: Harlow should not have concentrated exclusively on the KV Electron microscope (many shop stewards seem to know GEC's interests better than GEC); redundancy was opposed not on class grounds but because it breaks up valuable research teams; and refuge was finally sought in that last gesture of despair, nationalisation by the capitalist state. The authors endorse these views, placing them at the centre of their own sheet of charges against GEC.

The claim that the GPO could have taken over Woolwich and run it in competition with GEC lacks credibility. First of all, the state nationalises only in favour of monopoly capital. Secondly, state corporations derive much of their capital from the same banks which have interests in GEC. Some 20 to 25 per cent of European industry is run by the bourgeois state, the banks receiving interest direct from the profits, or, where they make a loss, from the state treasuries. Thirdly, it should be said in passing, bourgeois nationalisation

is only another form of concentration of capital, usually resulting, as with other forms of capital concentration, in redundancy (e.g. National Coal Board, British Railways, British Steel Corporation, etc.).

TYPE OF RESEARCH

It would be easy for CIS to produce a string of such Anti-Reports, but the exercise would lose interest as a string of exceptions turned into a picture of the normal, thereby undermining the premise of the exercise itself. This type of company research logically belongs in either the trade unions or a revolutionary organisation. The unions could pivot such publications around the sections on management closure strategy and tactics; the revolutionary organisation around the problem of the relation between capital and the state, using examples like GEC to attack the notion that the state is neutral or that its foreign policies, for example, are governed by pieties (this latter point escapes the writers who do not seem to understand that the repression in South Africa or counter-revolution in Vietnam, not to mention bourgeois nationalisation, are operations designed to create the preconditions for successful capital accumulation). The lists of GEC subsidiaries given in the report could provide a useful starting point for an investigation by the unions of GEC's locational strategy; and the lists of GEC's connections, via directorships, with other sectors of industrial and financial capital, provide the revolutionary organisation with a useful picture of the cohesion of the big bourgeoisie. Left to itself, CIS, having started out by saying some monopolies are worse than others, may well end up 'proving' the (as yet not quite stated) idea that all monopoly is bad in comparison with long-lost 'free market forces'.

A. E. Jennings.

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Second Conference at Imperial College, London SW7, 20-22 October, 1972

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Saturday 21st: 11am * Marxist Theories of the Soviet Union – H.H. Ticktin (Glasgow)

2.30pm Transitional Economy – Ernest Mandel (Belgium)

7pm The Soviet State – Ralph Miliband (Leeds)

Sunday 22nd: 11am Political Change Since Stalin – Mary McAuley (Essex)

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News from Vietnam

POPULAR DEFENCE MEMBERS CROSS OVER

More than 21,000 "popular defence" members in Central Nam Co have crossed over to the people's side in the past five months of simultaneous offensive and uprising of the South Viet Nam patriotic forces.

In the period under review there were over 100 collective mutinies during which the revolted "popular defence" members killed their cruel commanders and went over to the revolutionary side. In co-ordination with the people, more than 100 "popular defence" members overran enemy concentration camps, then left for the liberated areas.

BIEN HOA VICTORY

The Liberation Armed Forces in Bien Hoa province mounted attacks on the Bien Hoa airfield on the night of August 1 and the Long Binh storages on August 13.

In Bien Hoa airfield, the P.L.A.F.:

- wiped out 517 U.S. and puppet troops, including one U.S. general and 20 U.S. "advisers", and 46 puppet staff commanders, 39 pilots and 103 technicians,
- heavily damaged 3 U.S. and Saigon battalions and,
- destroyed on the ground 74 aircraft including 29 jets, 33 helicopters, six fighter-bombers, two shinoocks, two L. 19 and two OV. 10 reconnaissance planes, grounded 13 military vehicles, razed to the ground one radar station and one radio centre, exploded one napalm bomb depot, one ammunition dump, two gasoline depots and two depots of hardware, burnt down two hangars, two bomb-loading houses, 24 barracks and one big food storage - All the activities in the airfield were help up for 5 days.

SOUTH KOREAN MERCENARIES MASSACRE VILLAGERS

A company of the Pak Jung Hi "Tiger" Division (South Korean) stationed in Xuan Son village, Cong Xuan district, Phu Yen province, massacred 27 civilians in a raiding operation in the village on July 30 and 31.

Enemy aircraft and artillery had wantonly bombed and shelled the village, killing six civilians, to clear the way for the operation. The raiders broke into the hamlets comprising the village and shot many persons dead in their homes. The Pak Jung Hi mercenaries gathered many other civilians in an outdoor place, then opened fire. Twenty-one of the victims were old persons, women and children.

TRADE UNION STATEMENT

The South Viet Nam Liberation Federation of Trade Unions, on August 29, issued a statement denouncing crimes against workers. The statement noted, first of all, that many firms and workshops have reduced their activities or closed down completely, laying off many workers. In the first week of July alone, employers in Saigon dismissed one thousand workers. Among the companies involved were the USAID firm, the Sicovina Textile Mill and the Shell Oil Company.

Secondly, the Trade Union Federation noted that about 40% of the workers in the areas under U.S. - puppet control are currently unemployed. Thus life is quite precarious for the working people of South Viet Nam - a bitter consequence of the U.S. policy of "Vietnamization".

Thirdly, the statement noted that Thieu has been forcing working men from 17 to 43 years old to join the army. This is part of his programme to step up forcible conscription and to "upgrade" paramilitary forces into the regular army.

Taken from the Information Bulletins put out by the Information Bureau of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam in Paris. Their address is: 39 Avenue Georges Mandel, Paris 16.

Spartacus League Pamphlet

THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE BOURGEOIS UNIVERSITY

by Ernest Mandel

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Meg Mansfield reports on two strikes which vividly illustrate the GROWING OPPOSITION IN CEYLON

Two strikes by powerful unions in vital sectors of the Ceylonese economy, both "illegal" under the Emergency Laws introduced in March 1971, are the clearest indication yet of a broadening out of the political opposition to the harsh anti-working class policies of the Bandaranaike regime.

BANK EMPLOYEES

The Bank Employees' strike, which began on 1 September, commenced as a result of a blocking by the Government of long overdue wage and salary demands. The two main employers are both State-owned: the Bank of Ceylon and the People's Bank. The Ceylon Bank Employees Union, the union leading the strike, is strong in both.

Support for the strike has been growing steadily, and there is considerable evidence that the Government's strike-breaking tactics are not meeting with the success anticipated. These tactics are fairly classic, and rest partly on the near-total Press control by the Government, and partly on the extremely high level of unemployment which has also hit the trained and technically qualified sector of the workforce (1971 unemployment stood at 12 per cent).

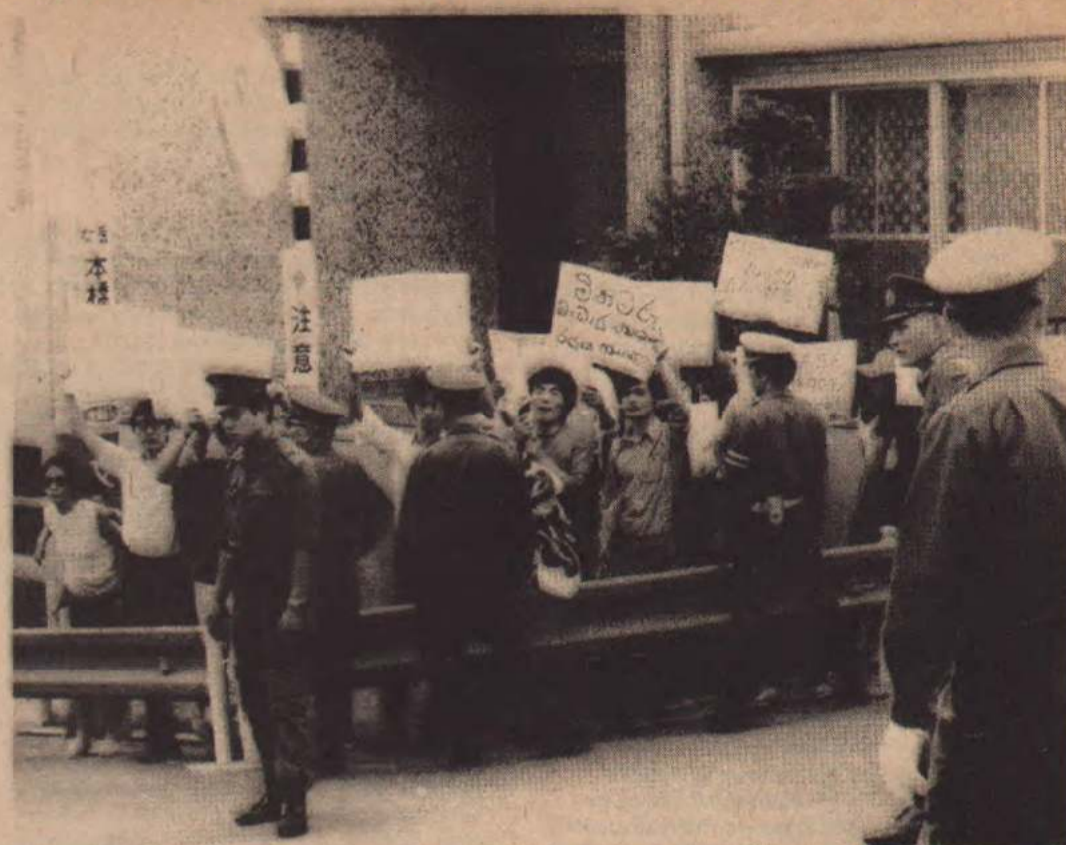
The Government's first move was to give an ultimatum to the strikers to return to work. During this period strikers "wishing to return to work" were asked to report to the nearest police station (for protection, presumably). One recalls with irony the fate of many young JVP members, sympathisers and friends who at the time of the uprising gave themselves up on the "assurances" of the Government that they would be "fairly treated". Thousands of them are still languishing in Mrs Bandaranaike's "rehabilitation" (i.e. prison) camps, awaiting "trial" under the new Criminal Justice Legislation.

INTIMIDATION

The Government was hoping to avert by this tactic the necessity to lock out strikers and recruit new staff to replace them, a tactic subsequently adopted, however. During this period many strikers were visited at their homes and threatened by supporters of the SLFP and LSSP and their unions; false reports that the strike was virtually over were and still are being circulated, verbally and through the Press. The Government and its unions have used this confusion to make accusations of threats and intimidation against the strikers. But as a Strike Bulletin of the Bank Employees puts it: "There is some truth in the report that attempts have been made to intimidate strikers. These were not by strikers, who have absolutely no reason to do so. But the Union has received several reports . . . that well-known political supporters of the Minister of Finance have gone to the houses of strikers, especially girls, and made crude attempts to frighten them into returning to work. They were in all cases told in no uncertain terms what was thought of them".

The Government still poses as the socialist saviour of Sri Lanka (Ceylon), thanks to the participation within the governing coalition (in a weak, minority position) of the Moscow-oriented Communist Party and the social-democratic, reformist Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), which broke with the Fourth International in 1964. This sordid relationship is used by Bandaranaike's bourgeois Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) to condemn all opponents as "imperialists" and "reactionaries". Government propaganda condemns the strikers as agents of the BBC, the Voice of America, the CIA, the Herbert Ebert Foundation, the right-wing United National Party, the Federal Party, Borah merchants, and landed proprietors in the out-stations who are allegedly giving the bank employees "handsome contributions in cash and kind".

However, all the Government's methods



Picket of the Sri Lanka embassy in Tokyo, organised by the Ceylon Solidarity Campaign in Japan

have failed. Virtually no strikers heeded the ultimatum. Of the 17,000 on strike only 16 returned to work; nine of these were well-known LSSP stooges and three subsequently walked out again because of the unity of the majority and the now obvious fiction that the strike was petering out.

'LEFTS' IN CRISIS

The LSSP (of which the Minister of Finance is a member) has played a strike-breaking role since the time of the UNP regime which preceded the coalition government. In the present strike it has issued a public call to its members in the Union to blackleg. The refusal of many rank and file members of the LSSP to obey this call, however, is a further sign of the deep internal crisis which has increasingly afflicted the party since the Government first launched the wave of repression at the end of 1970.

The Moscow-oriented Communist Party is in a similar state: Peter Keuneman was ousted at the recent Congress from the position of General Secretary because of his indefensible role in the coalition. When the Criminal Justice Commissions Act was presented last April, four C.P. members voted against it and only one with the Government. Keuneman was conveniently out of the country at the time.

DEADLOCK

The most recent news concerning the bank strike is that the Ministry of Finance refuses to negotiate before a return to work, while the Union insists that its members will not return before negotiations and a satisfactory settlement have been reached. Deadlock then, with Minister of Finance N. M. Perera having escaped to the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Conference in London. But here too he is likely to be hard pressed, with unpalatable forecasts and directives awaiting him from his major creditors, the IMF and the World Bank. The effects of these can only lead to further and more bitter clashes between the Government and the organised working class, particularly as the delayed repercussions of last year's currency devaluations begin to be felt.

A second major strike is also unresolved - that of technical workers in the Ministry of Irrigation, Power and Highways led by the Joint Front of Technical Officers' Trade Unions, which has been going on resolutely since 1 August. This too is having a very

severe effect on the working of the Government's economic and social policies, despite the Ministry's assurances to the contrary. One of the capitalists' favourite tactics, it seems, is to suddenly inaugurate, out of the blue, a new union: the pretext here, for setting up a new Technical Officers' Union, has been the celebration of the long political and trade union career of a certain well-known traitor to the working class. Such a social and political reason for a real generous act are, however, patently clear to the strikers.

SOLIDARITY

The significance of these tactics is also clear to other unions, whose support for the strikes shows further the failure of the Government's attempts to isolate, intimidate and demoralise the strikers. The Central Bank Employees Union, for example, has now federated with the Ceylon BEU and decided to bring out all its members on strike with the rest. Support has also come from the Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU), whose Secretary, Bala Tampoe, is a leading member of the LSSP (Revolutionary), Ceylonese section of the Fourth International. At its 12th Delegates' Conference, on 3 September, the CMU passed a long resolution "to continue its struggle against the repressive policies of the capitalist regime", attacking every single major action of the Government.

The resolution also declared that: "This Delegates' Conference of the Ceylon Mercantile Union expresses its solidarity with and salutes the courageous decision of the Ceylon Bank Employees Union to refuse to submit to the threats of the Government in its struggle for the proper settlement of its long outstanding demands". An almost identical paragraph followed referring to the strike of the technical officers.

EXPLOSIVE SITUATION

The police have now been put on the alert, especially near picket points, railway stations and bus stands, and told to look out for "troublemakers". The situation is clearly explosive, and with the coming Hunger Strike on 18 October, sponsored by the Human and Democratic Rights Organisation and five leading trade union organisations, the repressive apparatus of the Government will undoubtedly be stretched near to breaking point in the coming few weeks.

ANTI-INTERNMENT LEAGUE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Saturday/Sunday, 7/8 October at North London Polytechnic, Holloway Road, N.7.

Further details from: John Gray, Basement Flat, 139 Holland Road, London W.14. (01-603 3085)

ALSO SOCIAL: 8 p.m. Saturday, 8 October, at North London Poly. All welcome.



INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP

(British Section of the Fourth International)
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VICTORY THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

It was quite obvious (see *The Red Mole*, 51) that George Smith and Co. would fight for acceptance of the last offer. There has never been a clearer sell-out. One week after the acceptance of the 26 month, four stage deal, drivers employed by building companies have won a straight £6 in a deal ending next June.

Most militants agree that just a little longer would have finished the employers. The better deal was given to drivers because the employers could not afford any further stoppages. The drivers partly reaped the benefit of the eleven week strike by the builders.

EMPLOYERS CLAMP DOWN

Now the dust has settled, it is time to look at some of the lessons of the strike. We have to answer the questions being asked by militants. Is the T&GWU (which voted against the deal) a better union than UCATT? What happened to 'Charter'? How do we fight the bureaucrats?

These questions are more important than ever. Since the return to work the employers' attitude has been shown in various small ways. There has been no easing up on the lump - the signs are that the employers will try to increase lump labour. With this in mind steward Charlie Kelly was sacked from the Fulham Hospital site by Higgs and Hill. On other sites in London there have been attempts to cut bonus rates. "Flexibility" has been introduced for dumper drivers at the Cubitts World's End site. Following the return to work the employers will be trying in a number of ways to break up solidarity shown during the strike.

THE BUREAUCRATS

Many workers relied on the promise that any deal would go back to the membership before acceptance. But acceptance of such a deal is always a question of the line-up of forces.

The reason why the first deal was rejected after Smith and Co. had tried to accept it was because the rank and file were organised well enough to keep the pressure on the regional officials. In the latter part of the strike, with the numbers out around 300,000, the problems at the base of the strike were increased. Militants had their attention totally turned to the problems of picketing, social security, etc. This gave the bureaucrats the necessary room to manoeuvre.

REGIONAL SETTLEMENTS

But what really paved the way for the deal was the wave of regional settlements. By laying stress on this form of dealing, the bureaucrats successfully shifted attention away from the need for a nationally organised stoppage. By allowing these settlements, not only did they throw the responsibility back to the regions; they also increased the biggest problem that faces building workers in struggle, the problem of organisation. The

strength of the dispute lay in the fact that it was nationally organised. Militants could use their base in certain regions to bolster up other sites and regions.

WHY THE SELL OUT?

Basically Smith and Co. saw in the national movement of rank and file building workers a threat to themselves as much as to the employers. The strike, for instance, laid the basis for a big struggle against the lump and disorganisation of the industry; but to lead such a struggle would require an idea of the employing class completely different from that of Smith. His position means that he sees his role as *conciliating* between worker and employer.

In the case of the building industry this is more extreme than in other cases. From 1947 the building unions were company unions. They were not prepared to take up any of the basic problems of the industry. Settlements, based on the disorganisation of the workers, were never fought.

UCATT has the same spots as the old ASW. What brought it into strike action was not the wish to break up the cosy chats with the employers, but pressure from two sides. Firstly, the T&GWU was threatening to move in a big way. A more militant face was required to offset this. Secondly, the small but growing Charter group looked as though it was going to heave out the old guard and replace it with a left face.

THE T&GWU

The T&G did not vote for the last offer, or the previous one. It also provided higher strike pay for part of the strike. Many workers will therefore see joining the T&G as answering the need for greater militancy.

But it is clear why the T&G took the line it did. It was making a show of militancy in order to recruit. If it had really been interested in continuing the struggle, it would have supported the demand to pull out key sections of the T&G in solidarity. Even by keeping out the scaffolders (mostly organised by the T&G) a total stoppage could have continued. The total acceptance of the UCATT position shows how far their "militancy" is real.

BASIC QUESTIONS

The key question in the building trade is the organisation of the industry. This was shown during the course of the dispute. The failure of the rank and file militants to organise on a national basis throughout the strike made the job so much easier for the bureaucracy. This failure, of Charter, is underlined by the return to work. Again it was on an isolated regional basis that opposition to the deal occurred. The lesson here is that militancy is never enough. Only a national organisation of the rank and file, based on a clear line on questions like decasualisation, could have prevented a sell out. That line up of forces would have taken care of the retreat on the full demand.

The paper *Charter* never appeared during the strike - Why? Here was an organisation, newspaper, finances and speakers all supposedly at the beck and call of the rank and file. Yet it organised nothing during the strike.

The answer to this problem lies in the line the Communist Party leadership is taking in industry, as shown particularly by the *Morning Star's* coverage of the dispute. On the morning of the final talks, the *Star's* line was to trust the bureaucracy - "Press speculation about an end to the dispute today is groundless". The next day, after UCATT had accepted the offer and militants everywhere were looking for a lead, the *Star's* 'We say' column had nothing to say; and on the Saturday it implicitly accepted that no action could be taken to challenge the bureaucracy's decision. This was followed on Tuesday, 19 September, by the outrageously loaded comment that Merseyside building workers would decide "whether to stay out or to return as they came out, in unity". (our emphasis).

The *Morning Star* took this line because the main aim for Charter, as far as the CP is concerned, is to lever themselves into the bureaucracy of UCATT and the T&G. Lou Lewis and Co. put all their efforts behind the left bureaucrats during the strike. Now we have a settlement, Charter will simply be turned into the necessary election machine to squeeze the CP into power. It will then be wound up as it exists now.

RANK AND FILE ORGANISATION

But the real object of rank and file organisation is not to change the faces of the bureaucrats. Its object is to fight the bureaucracy, by keeping the workers independently organised. Charter should make initiatives for a struggle to end the lump, and prepare national actions to support that struggle. That's the best way to "put pressure on the bureaucracy".

Organisation and demands which out across the ability of the employers and the desire of the union leaders to keep struggle at a local level are required. A big chance was lost to give a lead to the whole working class - on the issue of the shorter working week, for instance. That demand would not only have drawn together building workers but would also have had a deep impact in the rest of the working class.

WHERE TO START

It is clear that we must begin a struggle within Charter to change its programme and build it into a real struggle organisation. Local organisations of militants outside Charter unfortunately don't meet the problem of the trade. By simply organising locally, the key question of the national organisation of workers in the trade cannot be taken up. A responsibility rests on the regional Action Committees to stay formed and make links with Committees in other areas. The fight has to start now.

pushing the Jewish communities of these countries to the right, as champions of international 'law and order'. In the process it has acquired some strange co-thinkers, such as the French Fascists of 'Ordre Nouveau', who also congratulated the German authorities on their firmness and called for an all-out war on 'red terrorism'.

DANGER

This Zionist-inspired transformation of world Jewry into a right-wing pressure group on imperialism has potentially dangerous consequences for western Jewish communities: they become possible victims of any major crisis in Israel's relationship with one or more imperialist power, and can be used as a weapon against the anti-Zionist left. Direct action by Zionist extremists against revolutionary militants is already a widespread phenomenon in the USA and certain countries of Western Europe, and it is now to be supplemented by 'legal' and constitutional attacks under the pretext of state protection for Jews against the 'anti-Semites of both Right and Left'. In France, the Jewish Students' Front (not, it is true, the main Jewish student organisation in France) is clamouring for Government dissolution of all the revolutionary-socialist groups and: anti-Semitism is demagogically equated with anti-Zionism as emotional blackmail.

SINISTER

This accelerated drift to the right is more and more finding its logical expression in the growth of the neo-fascist Herut (whose predecessors collaborated with Mussolini), and its various offshoots, including the sinister Jewish 'Defence' League, and has as its counter-part the squeezing out of all liberal or radical elements inside the institutions of the Jewish community.

At a time when in Britain the National Front and other fascist organisations are experiencing a new lease of life through the Ugandan Asian agitation, the Jewish press has hardly mentioned the problem, let alone sought to mobilise alongside the left to crush the Fascist threat. Indeed, 'socialist' Zionists of Hashomer Hatzair refused to underwrite the recent left-wing demonstration against the Monday Club's rally at Central Hall, on the grounds that the participating organisations (IMG, IS, etc) were anti-Zionist! These great defenders of Jewish rights (especially in the Soviet Union and the Arab world) from the 'right-wing' Herut to the 'left-wing' Mapam pour their energies into organising against 'Arab Terror' and cannot find time off from these propaganda stunts to defend the Ugandan Asians against Colin 'Hitler was Right' Jordan and the genuine anti-semites.

The Zionist movement, no matter how 'leftist' the phraseology of some of its representatives may be, was never and can never be on the side of the socialist revolution. Those who refuse to fight racist reaction in Israel cannot do so here, and the only consoling thought is that there are others to do battle.

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IMG REPLY TO WITCH HUNT

The Munich attack carried out by the Black September group has been used as a pretext for a massive international 'anti-terror campaign' against the revolutionary and socialist movements.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

At the same time, a number of bourgeois journals have seen fit to use the occasion for an attack on the only strongly organised international revolutionary force, the Fourth International. On 18 September *Newsweek* carried an article asserting that "according to some European specialists, the founding of the Trotskyist Fourth International in Brussels two years ago represented the most ambitious current effort to set terrorism firmly into a multinational frame". Apart from this 'specialist's' gross historical inaccuracies - the Fourth International was founded as long ago as 1938 - the allegation is a vicious lie. But the *Economist* (23 - 29 September) goes further: "The Trotskyist Fourth International with its headquarters in Brussels, is said to have helped with transport and supplies and to have co-ordinated the complex operations that flew Japanese terrorists from the Red Army Fraction around Europe and supplied them with the Czech weapons they used to mow down passengers at Lydda airport in May." In the face of this witch-hunt we re-affirm

our political support for the struggle of the Palestinian masses against Zionism and imperialism, and declare our intention to contribute what we can to the strengthening of those forces, in the Arab world and in Israel, which are struggling for a socialist revolution in the area. Within this perspective we support all actions, armed or not, which reinforce the mass struggle, at the given stage of its development.

Actions such as those of the Black September group and the PFLP - and most especially the Lod massacre which by its blind violence constituted a considerable disservice to the Palestinian cause - do not in our view bring this goal any nearer. Nor do these actions strengthen the struggle of the masses. Though we solidarise with such groups in the face of imperialism, we do not support their tactics.

TRADITIONAL POSITION

In this we are simply re-affirming the traditional position of revolutionary Marxism on acts of terror, a position which has nothing in common with the disgusting hypocrisy of *Newsweek* and the *Economist*. Despite these gentlemen's fantasies, we consider that there are more efficient ways of pursuing the struggle against bourgeois rule in Europe than through arms smuggling for actions like those at Lod airport or Munich.



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