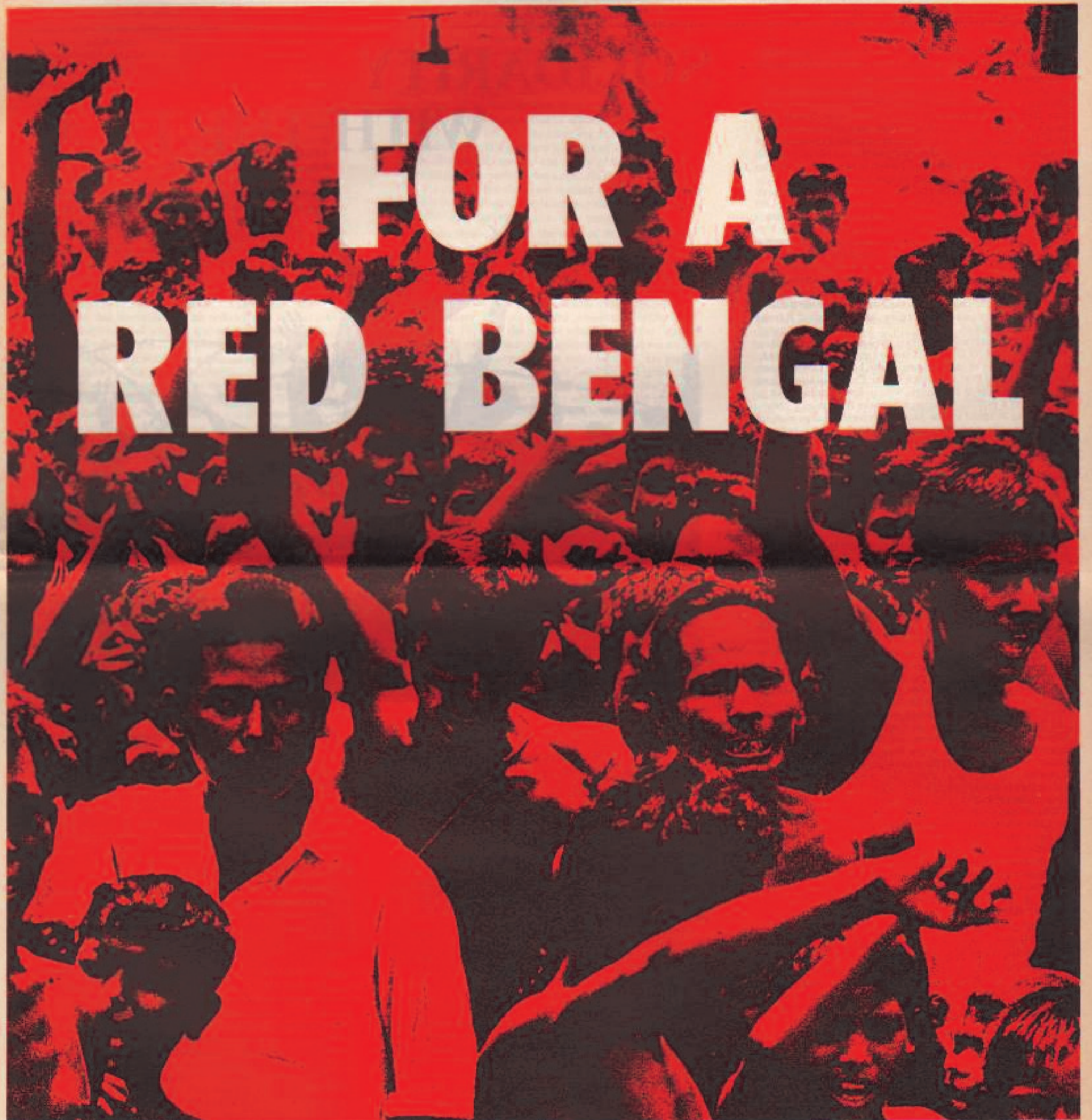


No. 28 15th September 1971 Price: 7½p.

The Red Mole



Inside: Programme of Bengali NLF

IRELAND: Solidarity with the IRA

White Terror in Bolivia

Ernest Mandel The Dollar Crisis

COMBAT REDUNDANCIES: Plesseys/Storeys/BAC/GEC/TUC Congress

The Red Mole

Number 28, 15 September 1971

The manoeuvring around the issue of the Heath-Lynch talks is a reflection of the desperate crisis in which British imperialism and its Irish agents find themselves.

The present situation can only be understood in terms of the overall aims of British imperialism. Requiring to restructure their relationships with the Irish bourgeois, North and South, they have in the last ten years been attempting to draw the Free State into some form of stable federation (formal or implicit) in which they could take advantage of Ireland's cheap agriculture and labour in the EEC. It was this which gave them the spur to apply pressure to the O'Neil government to "liberalise" the Six County regime. This upset the precarious balance of the artificial six county state, fragmented the Unionist bloc, and led to the last three years of constant crisis. On the one hand the oppressed Catholic minority gained confidence, and pressed for greater concessions, on the other hand the plebeian elements in the former Unionist monolith, seeing their economic interests threatened by having to give Catholics an equal place in the queues for jobs and houses, and bewildered by the challenge to their reactionary mystical ideology, reacted against the regime, and threatened it from a right-wing position.

The contradictions set in train exploded in August '69. Barriades went up and the Stormont government tottered. It was saved by the intervention of the Labour Government, who, frightened that the attack on the Catholics would lead to a mass upsurge in the South, sent in British troops and indulged in a political campaign to make it seem as if they were going to speed up the pace of "reform". Large sections of the minority, under the tutelage of their leaders, believed that the role of the troops was to protect them from a pogrom.

TEMPORARY STABILITY

The strategy of British imperialism from then on has been to try to get some kind of temporary stability from which they could have another stab at achieving a long-term solution to the Irish problem. Every attempt has failed to attain even a small measure of stability, and the contradictions have been developing in geometrical progression. In order to lessen the prospects of armed conflict, the British Army began trying to disarm the Catholics. This increasingly alienated the Catholics from the Army, and in July '70 the Falls curfew and arms raid destroyed the last shred of their illusions. This in turn laid the basis for the resurgence of the IRA as the armed vanguard of the Catholics' resistance.

INTERMENT

Internment was introduced as the result of an attempt to strengthen the Faulkner regime by making concessions to the extreme right of the Unionist Party, it seems fairly clear that the decision to intern was a concession to make the banning of the Apprentice Boys' walk palatable to the Unionist right. The indications are that it was introduced against the advice of the Army brass; a leading Six County journalist speaking on UTV just before its introduction reported that Tuzo and other Army commanders did not think that it would assist the situation. Having decided to intern, imperialism had to use the Six County state machine, so that if there were any plans to make internment apply to some of the UVF thugs they were effectively sabotaged.

Internment sparked off a mass upsurge, the like of which the British and Six County governments had not bargained for. Without some assistance from outside factors they cannot hope to get some kind of reintegration of the minority into the state, and return to some kind of precarious balance.

LYNCH AND HEATH

It is this which lies behind Heath's offer of tripartite talks to Lynch (just a week or two after he had told Lynch that events in the North of Ireland were none of his business). If by some miracle he could get a basis for agreement with Lynch, the Free State Premier might be able to pull some chestnuts out of the fire for him. Lynch is only too willing to help out, provided the Southern bourgeoisie can get something out of it, but he has certain difficulties, namely the reaction to internment in the South.

FIANNA FAIL

To grasp Lynch's problem, it is necessary to understand something about Fianna Fail. This party, which was described by Sean Lemass in 1928 as a "slightly constitutional party", is of course completely bourgeois; however its roots are in that section of the Irish bourgeoisie which desired to use the Irish national struggle to squeeze the largest possible concessions out of British imperialism, and to achieve the largest possible measure of economic and political freedom of action for Irish capitalism. Fianna Fail was created as a split from Sinn Fein, it entered the Dail, and under De Valera's leadership became a mass party whose strength lay in Dev's bonapartist skill in balancing between conflicting interests, and drawing behind Fianna Fail not only the support of an important section of the Free State capitalist class, but sections of the working class, the small farmers and the petit bourgeoisie.

Its ability to do this derived from its attachment to the Republican tradition, and its demagogic claim to carry on the tradition of those who resisted the sellout in 1921. Its support to this day relies heavily on those traditions. In

SOLIDARITY WITH THE I.R.A.



fact the success of Fianna Fail in containing the resistance of the Irish people to the partition of Ireland stems from its ability to divert that Republican tradition. This has important consequences for the present policy of Fianna Fail, the events in the North are day by day washing away its base of support as the depredations against the nationalist minority in the North increase. The recent Arms scandal, involving Messrs. Blaney, Haughey and Boland, was the result of a split between the Lynch wing, which wanted to refrain from doing anything which would make it more difficult for British imperialism, and those who desired to take advantage of British imperialism's crisis to screw bigger concessions for the southern bourgeoisie. Lynch was able to defeat them within Fianna Fail, but their "New Republican Party" has been growing day by day, with cumann after cumann of Fianna Fail seceding.

In addition to his problems within the southern bourgeoisie and Fianna Fail, Lynch has to face a growing concern about the North amongst the workers in the South, which surpasses anything yet seen since partition. Nearly every trade union branch in the Free State has passed a resolution against internment, as has nearly every unit of the FCA (Free State Territorial Army, which is very much larger in proportion to the population than its British counterpart). An indication of the depths to which society has been stirred was the recent demonstration in Dublin of deaf mutes in solidarity with the deaf mute shot dead by British soldiers.

Clearly the possibility of Lynch being able to get a deal from Heath which will reintegrate Fianna Fail's base of support, and at the same time keep the Protestant extremists happy, is so slim as to be negligible. This explains Lynch's foot-shuffling over tripartite talks, and his earlier attacks on the British government.

IMPERIALISM'S DIRECTION

But if negotiations with Lynch fail, what will British imperialism do? The evidence is overwhelmingly in favour of the view that they will seek to return the North to its old base of support, i.e. complete repression of the Catholics, and reintegration of the Unionist bloc. During the fighting which followed internment, the British Army gave free rein to the UVF, allowing them to attack Catholic areas, and in some cases giving them covering fire while they softened up areas, prior to a British Army attack. This represents more than a military tactic, it indicates the whole direction in which British imperialism's strategy is going.

It is true that Wilson's proposals present a viable alternative strategy for British imperialism, more subtle in conception than Heath's naked repression. But it seems unlikely that the Tories will go for this, since it would seem like a climbdown and would encourage the Catholics to press their demands further. Even if this strategy were to be implemented by a new Labour government, it could only at best ameliorate the situation temporarily, and would lead the Labour government full circle back to the same situation, and to the same tactics as the Tories.

ARMED STRUGGLE THE KEY

If the situation is returned to the old order and the Catholics are defeated, the whole development of a revolutionary struggle in Ireland will be set back. It was the existence of the stalemate over the Northern question which froze Irish politics for fifty years; there is a danger that they could be recast in that reactionary mould once more.

It is for this reason that we raise the slogan "Victory to the IRA"; the whole future of the struggle in Ireland depends on whether or not the volunteers of the Official and Provisional IRA can resist British imperialism, and can prevent them from imposing their strategy on the North. It is the armed resistance to the British Army which is the key to the development of the struggle. If it fails, British imperialism will smash the possibility of any independent political action by the nationalist minority. This would prevent the development of any leadership emerging which was superior to the present leadership of the IRA in ability to develop a correct revolutionary strategy.

For this reason it is necessary for British revolutionaries to put support for the IRA in the forefront of their agitation, and not to succumb to the pressure of the bourgeois press and British "public opinion". We must resolutely expose the lies about the situation in Ireland, we must seek to filter the truth through to the British working class, and try to mobilise the largest numbers possible in demonstrations, pickets, etc. against the brutal policies of the Tory government towards Ireland, and in support of the IRA.

—Bob Purdie

Trial of Rouge

For over a hundred years Marxists have defined the police as a band of armed men in the service of the capitalist class. This autumn, *Rouge*, weekly paper of the Communist League, French section of the Fourth International, goes on trial for having demonstrated this simple truth to too many people. But on trial is more than *Rouge* or any other revolutionary paper. It is the freedom of the press that is on trial in France, and British revolutionaries must draw the lessons from the struggle.

Charles Michaloux, editor of *Rouge*, is indicted on five counts for "injuries and defamation of the police and public administration". The five articles concerned are all accounts of police brutality towards demonstrators or innocent bystanders, of police collusion with the fascist thugs of the New Order, of false evidence given by police, etc.

The trial is part of a planned attack of Marcellin, Minister of the Interior, against the revolutionary press—the trials of the Maoist papers, *L'Idiot International* and *La Cause du Peuple*, the arrest of Sartre, the beating of the journalist Jaubert, etc. The immediate object in attacking *Rouge* is clear: Marcellin hopes for a fine large enough to prevent the paper from appearing. The stakes are high, for the Communist League is the largest and most important revolutionary Marxist group in France.

The League have set up a special subscription of support for *Rouge*, as well as collecting hundreds of names of French notables condemning "the gradual installation of a police state in France" and offering to witness at the trial in *Rouge's* defence. More importantly, the League intends to use the trial to accuse the accusers, to denounce "the repression that Marcellin and his police direct against revolutionary militants and workers and against a press which they want to totally control". The postponement of the trial until this autumn is a big victory because the trial can become a major issue when the universities open.

British revolutionaries should be aware of the possible repercussions of this trial, and an unfree French press, in Britain. The OZ trial is no joke, but rather a premonition of worse to come. In particular, the section of the Industrial Relations Bill that outlaws press support of unofficial strikes could, if enforced, prevent any coverage of most industrial struggles—or at the least could prevent revolutionary papers from taking sides!

Neither freedom of the press nor other bourgeois freedoms are above the overall relations of class forces. When bourgeois society finds it difficult to maintain law and order and the economic and political climate deteriorates, the ruling class does not hesitate to sacrifice even the oldest and "most cherished" of her historic gains. The attempted suppression of the Pentagon papers in the U.S., the OZ trial, the trial of *Rouge*—militants would be unforgivably short-sighted to think that "it can't happen here".

Readers of *The Red Mole* willing to give their signatures and/or their money for the defence of *Rouge* should contact the following address:

ROUGE DEFENCE,
182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

Crisis in Race Relations Industry

The capitalist strategy towards black workers is based on two principle and complementary components—repression and the race relations industry. The first is typified in the blatant racialism of the Immigration Bill and in police brutality. It is underpinned by press build-ups for muscular Aryan heroes like P.C. Pulley of Notting Hill and with orgasmic thriller stories about the hunt for illegal immigrants. The second strand is the race relations industry organised around the Race Relations Board, the Community Relations Commission and the Institute of Race Relations. These two components, like twin bookends, balance each other in confining and attempting to control the Black communities. To counterbalance repression and pure force, the Race Relations Industry attempts to integrate the Blacks into capitalist society, to emasculate and buy over sections of the Black leadership and to channel the response of the Blacks to racism into reformism. The militancy of the working class economic offensive and the growing political awareness of the Blacks has disturbed the equilibrium between the hard and the soft cop. It is the soft cop of the Race Relations Industry who is showing the strain. The Newham Community Relations Officer, Jerry Westall, got into trouble when he reported Maudling to the Race Relations Board for publishing the Immigration Bill. He was finally sacked for alleging that the National Front was attacking Blacks in Stepney. A further crisis occurred in the industry when Robin Jenkins was sacked for criticising the Institute of Race Relations in a paper delivered to the British Sociological Association. The paper and an analysis of the response to it have been published as a pamphlet, *The Production of Knowledge at the Institute of Race Relations*.

The most striking thing in the pamphlet is the list of council members of the IRR and their interests. Out of twenty council members, only seven are social scientists. They are easily outweighed by the eight members who have business interests in Africa—more particularly South Africa. There are four members who belong to the Africa Private Enterprise Group, including the organiser of APEG. Corporate subscribers to the IRR include Barclays Bank, Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa Ltd., Pilkingtons and the Rhodes Trust. Oppenheimer sits on the council representing De Beers and the Rand Corporation.

The money to finance the IRR comes from these companies as well as from the Ford Foundation and the Gulbenkian Trust which is controlled by the Portuguese Government.

The IRR has for the past six years carried out research into race relations in Britain. So far the major work to emerge from the IRR has been a bulky tome called *Colour and Citizenship* by Rose and Deakin. Jenkins argues that this study and the others like it are not scientific works but the manufacturing of bourgeois ideology. Deakin explicitly attacks Marxism (or "nihilism" as he prefers to call it) and states that "the present difficulties can be resolved without compromising either the cultural integrity of our society or the values that animate it." The other major assumption is that British society is dominated by a surge towards equality which is steadily eroding differences in wealth. Of course, there are certain preconditions for the sustaining of this happy state of affairs, as Deakin goes on to point out: "First, for the economy to work effectively in the short run, it must have a degree of slack, made up partly of physical capacity and partly of human capacity." After stating this well-known scientific fact, he continues: "To the extent that this slack is made up of immigrants, it will not be made up of the home population." With liberal "friends" like this, the Blacks don't need enemies.

Jenkins then deals with the work of the IRR on prejudice. Deakin has dealt with this topic. He starts off by explaining that in Britain there is an "ethic of fairness and embedded in our culture and system of law". This extraordinary proposition is then bolstered up with an arbitrary and dishonest division of the research sample into four types—tolerant, tolerant-inclined, prejudiced inclined and prejudiced. Those in the sample who felt that the "authorities should refuse housing to coloured tenants even if they had been on the waiting list the required time" are placed in the category "tolerant inclined". By blatant tricks like this and more refined conjuring with bivariate analyses and spurious correlations, we are left with a rump of 10% who are prejudiced. This small minority are obviously irrational deviants with "undermined personalities". By a creative leap imperialist ideology, bad housing, unemployment, the need of neo-capitalism for a sub-proletariat, etc. are declared irrelevancies. The way has been cleared for a real attack on racism by means of factor analysis on the breastfeeding/undermined personalities syndrome.

Robin Jenkins does not merely accuse the IRR of producing bourgeois ideological rubbish. He sees an important role for the IRR in acting as a watchdog and spy on the Blacks, so that capitalism can more effectively manipulate them. Jenkins ends his pamphlet with the following advice: "... Immigrant communities will have to form their own organisations to protect their own interests. In order to do this they will have to wrap their communities in a protective secrecy that makes them inaccessible to manipulation and control. When researchers for the IRR come knocking on their doors for information they will be well advised to tell them to fuck off."

—Julian Atkinson

UCS: YCL-SL Debate

Those who called for the UCS work-in to become a sit-in strike, for the extension of the struggle outside the yards, and for the necessity of a General Strike, had a "patronising, paternalistic, and contemptuous approach to the working class," said Young Communist League speakers at a debate with the Spartacus League in London on Friday 3rd September.

THE Y.C.L. CASE: CAPITULATION TO REFORMISM

Tony McNally and Brian Filling based this on the contention that the consciousness of the working class is reformist and that in McNally's words, "We move behind the working class." The demands which the Trotskyists were putting forward would lead to the isolation of the UCS workers and would alienate the support of the trade union bureaucracy. Brian Filling saw this last as particularly important, since in his view the reactionary nature of the bureaucracy had nothing to do with their social position but was simply a political reflection of the reformism of the working class.

The YCL's other main contention was that "the yards can be made viable within the framework of capitalism." A General Strike might conceivably be on the cards eventually, but the struggle could be won before then. The answer lay in forcing the Government to change its policy—for this reason Brian Filling attacked *The Red Mole's* Clydeside broadsheet for its emphasis on the options open to the working class rather than on the demands that should be made to the ruling class.

THE SPARTACUS LEAGUE REPLY

In reply, Dave Bailey and Alan Freeman of the Spartacus League pointed out the essentially euphoric approach of the YCL speakers, which contained no real analysis of the situation. One had to start by looking at UCS in the context of the general crisis of British capitalism and examining the Tory strategy in this light. In the context of the decline of the British economy (and particularly such industries as shipbuilding) in face of increased competition in the world market, and the resultant need for the ruling class to restore its profits by smashing the militancy of the working class and cutting their real wages, it is clear that the yards cannot be viable under capitalism—and to claim that the problem is one of management, that the workers could run the yards at a profit, is a highly fallacious argument which creates

The SL comrades dealt at some length with the Tory strategy, which he saw as being two-pronged. First, they are quite content to allow the work-in to continue for the moment, because although it is having a big propaganda effect on the working class it otherwise runs directly parallel to the interests of the liquidator and the bosses—who must be delighted at the massive increases in productivity since the work-in started! The Tories realise that what can only be a protest action is being presented by the C.P. as a strategy; the stewards are now having to devote all their energies to keeping the work-in going because they have no alternative strategy to offer the workers. The UCS leaders refuse to take any action which would involve *actions* against the ruling class, such as a sit-in strike, because they still look to that class for a solution. Thus they open up the way for demoralisation among the workers (which can already be seen in the numbers volunteering for redundancies), followed by negotiations, followed by a sell-out.

Bailey also analysed the Tories' use of the trade union bureaucracy in the struggle, noting how it is Feather and McGarvey rather than the UCS workers who are now doing most of the negotiating with the Government. The lack of any long-term strategy had allowed the locus of power to shift away from the workers. He pointed to Trotsky's analysis of how the union bureaucracy is used by the ruling class. The Communist Party, because it regards the union bureaucracy as a stepping-stone into the Left wing of Social Democracy, leaves the way open for them to take over the initiative from the mass of the working class. The task of revolutionary Marxists must always be to pose to the working class what is necessary to win their struggle—because otherwise they will be defeated *without knowing why* and will have no basis for continuing the struggle by learning from past defeats.

The debate was undoubtedly a success in providing a real clarification for Spartacus League members of the difference between a revolutionary and a reformist approach to politics. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for YCL members since hardly any turned up to the meeting. A precondition for any such further meetings must be the attendance of rank-and-file members of *both* organisations, which can only be ensured by adequate internal and external publicity by the YCL.

—John Marston

BAC Redundancies

For some time now, the British Aircraft Corporation (BAC) has been in trouble. Its commercial planes, designed and built in the 1960s, are only being sold at a trickle in the world market. This is due to both fierce American competition and the deepening crisis of British capitalism. While BAC 111s are still being constructed, the VC10 is no longer being built. In this situation it was only Concorde that could save BAC's commercial division, which consists of Filton (Bristol) and Weybridge. The latter town has already experienced redundancies and today resembles more and more a ghost town. The future of Filton is wedded firmly to that of the Concorde. The survival of Concorde depends on how long the Tories think it is politically useful, but they are also determined that as little money as possible is spent on an unprofitable project. That is why they have demanded that the BAC commercial division sack 1,200 men. BAC is so deeply committed to the Concorde project that it has no plans at the moment for any future aircraft. There is only vague talk of a "short take-off" commercial plane.

REDUNDANCIES AND THE UNIONS

On Sept. 1st BAC announced 1,200 redundancies in its commercial division, to come into effect by the end of October. 557 men are to be made redundant at Filton, out of a total of 7,000. The majority of these are white-collar staff workers.

The unions at Filton have reacted to this announcement by initiating a campaign of lightning strikes and demonstrations. Already there have been three walk-outs, one leading to 1,000 workers besieging the Engineering Employers' Association offices where the bosses were meeting the unions. The object of the campaign is twofold. First to fight the redundancies themselves and secondly to force the bosses to recognise the joint works-staff redundancy committee made up of shop stewards from each department, which was given an overwhelming vote of confidence by a mass meeting of about 3,000 workers the day after redundancies were announced. There has also been an overtime ban since the end of July when the unions were first told that BAC was in trouble.

NO REAL CLARITY ON HOW TO FIGHT REDUNDANCIES

But the redundancy committee has not yet taken a clear stand on the redundancies—the committee has been instructed to seek ways of avoiding sackings or demanding more generous compensation payments. It was left to individual militants, including a DATA shopsteward, to stress that redundancies are not negotiable and that the committee must fight redundancies uncompromisingly. The setting up of a joint works-staff redundancy committee is a step forward in the fight, especially as the company needs to use the old divide and rule tactic to push these redundancies through.

However there are problems. Less than 50% of the staff are unionised and it has to be involved in the fight against these redundancies as they are undoubtedly only the first step before further sackings which will definitely be announced in the near future. Already the overtime ban is hitting the Concorde programme. It must be strengthened by workshoring, introducing a shorter working week, etc. The struggle itself must be deepened by involving all 7,000 workers at Filton, through regular mass meetings exercising democratic control over the redundancy committee.

—Andy Metcalfe,



The Plessey Occupation

At time of writing (September 9th) the struggle against redundancy at the Plessey electronics factory in Alexandria (Dumbartonshire) had reached a crucial stage. The 200 workers who had occupied the giant plant since September 3rd were warned by the management, "If you don't allow our maintenance workers to come in we will take strong action." The warning came after the workers had refused to allow the management to bring in outsiders to maintain machinery. They said they would oil and clean the machinery themselves. However they insisted that the firm's security forces should come into the plant.

Mr. Edward McLafferty, the convenor of the shop stewards, explained why: "This was to safeguard ourselves against allegations of machines being damaged by our men. But the management refused to allow this." The demand for the management's men to be allowed into the factory came at a meeting on September 8th, between the shop stewards and representatives of the firm. The convenor added, "The management again told us that we were trespassing, and warned us that they would take strong action if we refused to let their workmen into the factory."

MANAGEMENT'S THREAT COUNTERED ... "CONFRONTATION"

A mass meeting today considered the ultimatum and the workers responded to the management's threat by starting a campaign to enlist support from former employees to assist them in the occupation. Announcing the workers' rejection of the ultimatum, Mr. McLafferty said, "Any maintenance work carried out inside the factory will be done by us ... this could lead to a confrontation."

The struggle against the closure started in earnest on Friday, September 3rd, when the last of the 700-strong work-force received their pay-off notices. Shop stewards put into operation their threat to occupy. A meeting next day of 200 workers unanimously decided that traffic entering or leaving the factory would have to get permission from pickets. They also agreed to continue to control the gates and to refuse to let the company move the machinery out.

A management spokesman denied that there were any immediate plans to move machinery out. However, one Dr. Ian Martin from an outfit calling itself the 600 Group Metal Company claimed that the machinery was his personal property. He had the audacity to ask the men's cooperation in removing it.

Shop stewards from other factories in the area, including the nearby Burroughs computer workers, have organised support for the pickets. The workers have received monetary support from local residents, including old age pensioners, and local traders have been supplying food. Friends and relatives have brought blankets and sleeping bags for the occupiers. It has been estimated that the complete closure of the plant would lead to a 15% rate of unemployment in the area. The main argument of the workers is that it is government policy and the rationalisation plans of the Plessey management which are responsible for the proposed closure. They claim that Plessey has sub-contracted enough work to keep the Alexandria factory in production for an indefinite period. Instead, the management prefers to transfer this work to Plessey's four Iford factories—a typical example of the government-encouraged concept of concentrating production regardless of social consequences.

PROFITS BEFORE JOBS

The factory used to be the Royal Navy Torpedo works. It was bought by Plessey for what leading Scottish newspapers have described as "a bargain price", after the failure of the Mark 24 torpedo.

the creation of 1,000 jobs at least. However, the workers are convinced that Plessey never had any intention of developing production there. All evidence indicates that the firm saw instead an easy opportunity to buy modern equipment on the cheap.

The Alexandria shop stewards have contacted Plessey workers in other parts of the country. Shop stewards at the Iford factories declared any machinery from Alexandria black. At the giant Plessey works in Beeston, Nottingham, shop stewards have passed a resolution also declaring the machinery black. This resolution is to be circulated to all Plessey workers and calls for a national campaign of solidarity with the Alexandria occupiers. There is to be a combine meeting of shop stewards to consider this campaign. Nottingham executive of the TGWU has instructed its members in road haulage not to take equipment from Alexandria—the resolution will be circulated to other branches of the union.

POLITICAL FIGHT AGAINST REDUNDANCIES

Although overshadowed by the UCS struggle, the fight by Plessey workers is an extremely important one and is in many ways on a higher political level. Some idea of the workers' attitude is given by the huge banner they have put round the entrance to the works which reads "Under New Management!" They have not been so gentlemanly as representatives of the UCS workers—for instance they have insisted upon the right of pickets to search those management and staff cars which have been allowed in and out of the works. Their slogans have been much more political when taking part in demonstrations; a fact that has brought them into conflict with the UCS stewards who wanted to "keep politics out of the fight against redundancies." In general, they have done more to spread the struggle rather than freeze solidarity action at the level of collecting money.

The Plessey struggle takes place against a background of mounting redundancies and short-time working in the West of Scotland engineering industry. One of the latest announcements affects 50 men out of a total workforce of 250 at the A. P. Newall division of GKN at Possilpark, Glasgow. On Monday, September 6, about 30 men at the Cumbernauld factory of Rubery Owen & Co. were put on short-time working. Cumbernauld, with an unemployment rate of over 10%, has already been severely hit by creeping redundancies at Burroughs Machines Ltd. (cf. THE RED MOLE, 27) and further sackings are in the offing.

Speaking to the GLASGOW HERALD (sep. 6) Mr Alex Ferry, Glasgow district secretary of the AUEW commented: "A company in Glasgow advertised recently for two time-served fitters. They got 340 applications. There are already well over 1,000 skilled engineering workers on our books out of work and unable to get a job."

THE NEED FOR SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP

Developments like the Plessey struggle—whatever their final outcome—are very much to be welcomed. Although the UCS struggle has been frozen at the level of the "work-in", it has suggested a new form of combatting redundancies. Workers have responded to planned closures of plants by the tactic of occupation in a number of cases. The big danger, however, is that these struggles will face defeat through bad leadership and lack of a national strategy. No isolated sections of workers, no matter how militant and heroic, can defeat the bosses backed by the capitalist state in such struggles. Collections for UCS are good but infinitely more important is a political campaign to win the organised strength of the labour movement in the fight against redundancies. The Plessey struggle could be won if the strength of giant unions like the AUEW and TGWU was used. However, such a development would either force the employers to climb down or a social struggle of far-reaching consequences would be

unions are scared of this prospect, which is why they divert the struggle into harmless channels, such as Sunday demonstrations.

On another front, the struggle against the consequences of unemployment is being waged by Claimants' Unions. They are playing an extremely important role in assisting the unemployed to get their full social security entitlement and by acting as a focus for pressuring the trade-union movement to take on its responsibility for organising the unemployed. Revolutionary socialists, notably militants of the IMG and the Spartacus League, are doing an essential job in assisting the formation of Claimants' Unions in towns like Clydebank, Cumbernauld, Edinburgh and Falkirk. This activity assists the wider struggle of mobilising the labour movement in a general fight against unemployment.

Pat Jordan

Women on Strike at Cleator Moor

URGENT ... INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE

Workers at Brannans Ltd., Cleator Moor, Cumberland, the majority of whom are women, have been on strike for 14 weeks over a dispute caused by management ...

On Thursday 3rd June, AEUW members withdrew their labour at the factory after management had selected certain workers to go on monthly staff conditions while continuing to work with the tools of the trade alongside other workers doing the same work who had not received the same consideration. Management have refused to discuss with Union representatives the position of workers who are put on staff. They have also ignored letters from our Union Official requesting meetings, to try to end this dispute.

We are all of the opinion that this dispute is ultimately an attempt to end union negotiating rights in Brannans and it took a long time to get the union established in this factory ...

About eighteen months ago some of our members were diagnosed with mercury poisoning and the Factory Inspectorate gave Brannans three months to bring the factory up to a set standard of safety. The Union is fighting these cases. Both management and strikers recognise that without an active Union these sorts of things will continue to exist. We are determined to force the management to capitulate.

We picket the factory from morning until night thus preventing about 99% of the vehicles entering the factory, otherwise, only "blacklegs" and "scab labour" get in. In addition, we have contacted the Unions of firms that deliver to and from Brannans in order to get goods blocked. Strikers have been prevented from claiming social security unless they declare themselves unemployed, by management telling social security that production in the factory is normal. Therefore, our only source of income is strike pay. The press have refused to publicise our case, only that of Mr. Brannan. ... The strike has been long and there is no sign of an end to it. So we desperately need people to know what's going on, to help with publicising it, and offering their solidarity with us.

Please send messages of moral and financial support to:—

SISTER MURIEL HILLON,
SHOP STEWARD,
34 GREYSTONE PLACE,
CLEATOR MOOR,
CUMBERLAND.

N.B. After two weeks the strikers all received letters from management stating that if they failed to return to work they would be considered to have left employment at the factory.

Lancaster: The Storeys Dispute

APPEAL TO ALL TRADE UNIONISTS!

The strike at Storeys, Lancaster, described in detail in the last issue, is now entering its twelfth week. The management are adopting a hard line, and making no concessions.

At the end of the tenth week, the Strike Committee decided to test out the management by making a compromise offer which would let the management off the hook, if they wanted, without conceding the principle involved. They formally sent a letter stating that, while they considered that Mike had acted strictly in accordance with Union procedure, they were prepared to agree that Mike had been suspended without pay during the period of the strike, as long as he could then return to his job and convenorship. Discussions as to the cause of the strike could then take place.

A reply soon came from management flatly rejecting this offer, and saying that even if the strike was settled, workers would only be re-employed "as soon as work was available". In these circumstances, the mass strike meeting

voted to stay out.

It is with regret that we must report the continued lack of solidarity shown by 6/102 Branch in this dispute. In spite of the fact that 19 members of their own Union are on official strike, they are continuing to operate black machines, even when these break down and are repaired by foremen. The leadership of this branch is a disgrace to the whole trade union movement; the management refers to them in letters as "ours", and has issued letters to all workers putting its view stating that this was done in full consultation with the officials of the T&G Branch! Fortunately the rest of the Lancaster Trade Union Movement of is a different stamp. The Lancaster Trades Council has now joined the Trades Union Defence Committee in supporting the strike, and their two banners are on the picket line. 6/131 Branch T&G, the equivalent of 6/102 in the other big factory in the town, Lansik, have collected more than £150 for the strike fund, and other T&G Branches have given generous donations, as have the Post Office workers, remembering the money the Storeys craft trades collected for them when they were out earlier this year.

Another development is the solidarity with strikers at the Cleator Moor factory of Brannans, near Whitehaven, who are in their seventeenth week of dispute. A group of Storeys workers spent the day picketing at Cleator Moor, and the Brannans strikers are joining our picket line next week.

All this has not won the dispute. There are two areas in which trade unionists can help:

1. Blacking. If supplies of fuel oil, D.A.P. (a chemical used in production), or Corvic, an additive, could be stopped, the factory would have to close in a couple of days. We call on all Trade Unionists to black any products to or from Storeys, Lancaster.

2. Money. We must have cash to continue the strike. Representatives of the strike committee are already travelling the country appealing for funds. We call upon all Trade Unionists to take collections in their place of work. The issue is simple—an official strike caused by the sacking of a Convenor carrying out his normal duties—a basic union principle is attacked. Send collections to the STRIKE FUND TREASURER, JACK PEEL, 61 CLARENCE STREET, LANCASTER.

—F. Marlindale, Chairman Strike Committee

—M. Leuthwaite, Convenor

—J. Peel, Treasurer Strike Committee

LOCK OUT AT MINTERS, BLACK-PRINCE ROAD, S.E.11 OFFICE.

GIVE US YOUR SUPPORT

The labourers on Stage 4 of the above site have been locked out since August 11th 1971 after a dispute over the bonus rates. After going home on the 10th August and after clocking out one hour early before the normal time, the men found that when they reported for work the next day they were sacked.

Since then Minters have brought in lump labour, paying them £7 each per day to do the lads' work, hoping to break their spirit. The T&GWU has made the dispute official and are blocking lorries on the job. We ask fellow building workers and all trade unionists to help us defeat Minters and the lump labourers, steelfixers, bricklayers who have moved onto the site.

This is intended to smash T.U. organisation and is part of an overall plan to smash our organisation in London.

HELP US TO DEFEAT THE LUMP HELP US TO MAINTAIN T.U. ORGANISATION HELP US ON THE PICKET

And by giving us moral support, financial support. Our fight is the fight of every building worker in London. All donations or help or information to:

22 EDWARD HOUSE, NEWBURN STREET,
LONDON S.E.11.

Russian copy of *The Revolution Betrayed*: facsimile of the original typed by Natalia Sedova and corrected in pencil by Leon Trotsky. Limited print of 300 copies. Price US\$20. Order from Red Books, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The photographs of Ireland in the last issue were published by courtesy of the Irish weekly, This Week. The cartoon was published by courtesy of the Irish paper Hibernia.

The Struggle Against Redundancies

G.E.C. Semi-Conductors Ltd: Interview With A Militant

INTRODUCTION

In Witham, Essex, an area characterised industrially and politically by its lack of militancy, an intense struggle is being conducted at GEC Semi-Conductors Ltd, which could have important implications.

A firm which has been "caught in the takeover/merger game", it has gone in the last five years from the Micro-Electronics Division of Marconi Co. Ltd. to Marconi Micro-Electronics Ltd. to Marconi Elliott Micro-Electronics Ltd. to its present GEC Semi-Conductors Ltd. A confidential management letter to the unions, dated 15th March and just after 110 redundancies, that has fallen into our hands, stated that "the Company's plan is to maintain a micro-electronics activity at Witham and Glenrothes, partly because market conditions might improve in time, but also as an insurance against the risk that the systems capability of the GEC might be jeopardised if the semi-conductor business was closed." In spite of this, the closure of the factory was announced on July 9th (and also, later, the closure of the Glenrothes plant).

In a factory where only 160 of the 330 workers are organised into unions (AEUW, DATA, ASTMS, and a handful in the ETU) the response has been a very militant one, and is increasing in militancy as the struggle develops. The development of this militancy set against this background of passivity, and all the ensuing contradictions, are excellently illustrated in the following interview with Robin Mallett, Secretary of the Unions Joint Committee inside the factory.

—Can you give a history of the dispute?

In March of this year we had a redundancy situation where the management threw out 25% of the staff which amounted to about 440 at the time. From this we had what is termed the "Boy Scout" Agreement which was actually to minimise redundancy for the future—no recruitment, no overtime, etc. We were still haggling about that, in fact, when on 9th July this closure was thrust upon us. This took us a bit aback because we had just been put into a new group—GEC Electrical Components Ltd. The management came in and made a feasibility study (so they said), found that we couldn't make a profit, that we were a liability, and decided to shut us down with the Glenrothes factory. After the proposed closure we haggled about the need to stay in the market. We tried all the Establishment paths—up to Parliament, M.P.s, National Joint Consultative Council with Jack Scamp on the GEC side and us on our side. Everything was held off by the Company pending all these approaches which culminated in a joint Management-Union approach on August 5th to Corfield, Minister for Aero-Space, for Government support. This wasn't forthcoming and so the Company called us in again and said they had decided to implement the closure.

Again, we've had no attempts to shut the place down yet, no issuing of notices, no movement of equipment. But whilst we were arguing about the closure itself, the emphasis has swung over the last couple of weeks to a fight to get everybody a job. We all want to work, obviously, and having seen what we've seen, preferably outside of the GEC. So we have elected an Employment Committee (made up of one representative from each of the four unions, the Personnel Manager, and a man from the DEP). The Company claimed that although they were closing the place down, that there were plenty of jobs in the area and people would be all right. We didn't actually call the Company liars, but we weren't far short of it. And so we set up this committee to vet all the jobs the Company "claimed" to be in existence, to establish whether the jobs were genuine or whether they were, in fact, sham offers.

—Were these jobs in Witham?

Well, they were all over the place. The Company said that we had to be prepared to travel—"one doesn't find jobs on a rural basis anymore"—and, in fact, they were coming up with offers of jobs in South Africa and New Zealand!

Anyway, we've subsequently had the DEP man in. I'm afraid he got rather a rough ride, to say the least. He claimed that there were umpteen jobs, here, there and everywhere. It appears to us that they have endeavoured to scrape up anything they could find, that no one else would take. And some of the jobs they've come up with just aren't worth the paper they're written on quite frankly ...

... Anyway, talking about these employment prospects, provided it worked out satisfactorily, we were quite prepared to talk about the orderly closure of the factory and the terms on which people would go out the door. We had a Works Conference about two weeks ago where we reached verbal agreement on practically all the points relating to payments, length of notice, etc., etc. We differed on two basic points. These were firstly the retention bonus for those who were remaining to run the place down. The Company were sympathetic to the idea, and agreed to it in principle, but wanted to talk about the amount we asked—1½ weeks per month of service. We also asked that people should be paid an *ex gratia* payment when they leave, and regardless of whether they work their notice out or not, to be paid this payment for the statutory four weeks' notice plus the supplementary notice we negotiated, which can amount up to fourteen weeks' pay maximum. The Company said they didn't see much prospect of agreeing to that, but that they'd go away and think about it.

We had a Works Conference last week which we thought would simply be to discuss these two points, whereupon we'd have an agreement. The Company, in fact, tabled a completely fresh document. (They said they'd "tidied up" our March agreement, but they came back not only tidying it up but completely rewriting it!) So we told them that this was a load of rubbish and to get it off the table. This they



Scottish workers demonstrate against the Plessey houses. With massive redundancies taking place throughout the country, a generalised counter-strategy is desperately needed.

refused to do, so in fact we tabled the "failure to agree" to go to a local conference.

In view of the tightening attitude of the Company, the picket duties which we had been undertaking—up until now they have simply been to stop the plant from being dismantled from the factory—have been intensified and now we stop not only anything that's going out but anything that's going in, too. The Royal Mail's not coming in, the Company minibuses are not coming in, British Rail won't come in, and in fact, we turned back a gas lorry last Friday (though that was subsequently smuggled in through the back gates by the Company). We are now picketing all the gates, not just the main one, and that's just about the state at the present time.

—What about widening the struggle, contacts with other unions, and contacts with Glenrothes?

Well, Glenrothes are following the dispute along the same lines as we are, although they are emphasising the high unemployment rate in Scotland as an added point. Though we are in contact with them, they are, in fact, about two weeks behind us, still following the Establishment paths.

As far as other establishments go, we have had a demonstration in Witham which involved members from other firms, particularly DATA people from Marconi in Chelmsford, and there was a delegation from as far afield as Coventry.

In respect of DATA, we had a National Combine meeting four weeks ago in London for the southern half of Britain, and GEC, AEI and EE companies together have decided to have a day of protest, provisionally fixed for the 15th September. This will take the form of a mass rally in London, with national speakers.

ASTMS are endeavouring to get a National Combine and they also put out a call a while back for national action against GEC.

—What you're saying, then, is that there is a real need to extend the struggle beyond the gates of GEC, Witham?

Very definitely. We've made the point several times, that while we stand divided plant by plant, GEC will pick them off. They are in fact picking quite a few off, although we are widely scattered so there is difficulty in getting action between the plants. In fact, the DATA members from Chelmsford coming on the march was the first time another site has come to the aid of a GEC site being closed. So although it's a bit late in the day, we hope that it will build up over the next period.

We are also in touch with other unions. On the national scale, we are in fact sending off a letter tonight to Jack Jones, Doughty, Hugh Scanlon and Clive Jenkins at the TUC in Blackpool, asking for more national action and the backing of imports of foreign materials. On the local side, we have the Trades Council, through which we had delegations from other factories in the area on the march. They are, of course, supporting us financially through the Trades Council (to reimburse wages lost through picket duties).

Moreover, we are in touch with the UPW to black the Company's mail, and nearly all the lorries are turning back through contact with the TGWU.

—That does have implications, though, if the management decide to take the machinery out of the factory.

Well, first, the section responsible for dismantling the plant for shipping will point-blank refuse to touch it. And anyway, if we get wind of them trying to move the stuff out of the factory—we don't believe they will yet—then we'll start getting really stonny; we're thinking in terms of barricading the gates with cars, chaining the gates together with padlocks, and this sort of thing.

—Has there been any suggestion of an occupation of the factory?

It's been thought of. In fact, the occupation of the factory would be to keep the management out. What we'd rather see is the management coming in and doing what they're supposed to be doing—going out and getting orders—so that we can carry on working. There are not concrete plans yet to occupy the factory though it is a consideration.

—What relationship do you see between Witham and the national situation?

Well, of course, it's not only happening at GEC anyway. I mean, you've got BAC, which is cutting back drastically. And they're not the only people going out into the streets, of course.

It's a large reflection of the attitude of the Government with the "lame duck" idea that's come up; it's a simple excuse for off-loading people. Whereas in the past, and particularly when we were part of the Marconi company, the Company had a paternal respect for its obligations to its employees. Now you've got people coming in, like GEC, they're chopping out people. They're quite free to do it,

given the "lame duck" principle. I mean the whole of GEC is profitable—they made a net profit last year of £38m.—and they could quite easily carry the less profitable sections. The government are, as far as we're concerned, just giving a *carte blanche* to everybody just to chop out people without any recrimination against them, so this is why we don't expect any support from them anyway.

—What sort of impact will the closure have on Witham itself?

Well, we've done some studies on unemployment figures, and we have, from the DEP quoted a figure of 8,177 working people. If we are added to the dole queue, this would raise the total unemployment figure to 6.7%. However, if you take away the number of people who don't work in the town—the large commuter section—and you add the people who commute into the town, the unemployment figures would rise to 13.6%—well above the national average, and well above, in fact, the figure for Northern Ireland ...

—Which, of course, challenges the whole principle of the right to work in an area of your choice ...

... Of course, of course. We've asked what is their idea of reasonable travelling distance. The DEP are very lax, taking no account of whether you've got a car or have to use public transport. As far as the Company are concerned, they talked in terms of a factory at Wembley, which would mean travelling over 80 miles a day.

People have moved into this town to live and work within a couple of miles. A number of people in this establishment bought houses cheaply which are subject to a resale clause of 5 years. The people have only been in them 2½ to 3 years at most. They are tied to these houses and they can only sell them back at the price they paid for them, in which case they'll be substantially out of pocket.

On top of that, the loss of buying power in the town would be substantial. We did in fact put a circular round to the shop-keepers during the demonstration, explaining the loss of purchasing power, and the fact that it's no good for them to be too snug, cos they'll lose out anyway.

—What solution do you see both for Witham in particular and Britain as a whole?

As far as Witham is concerned, we would like to see more industry moving into the town. We have a fast-expanding population, but quite where people are going to work we don't know. We've maintained that people coming into the town swells the unemployment queue and thus the lower it keeps the wage rates.

One company, for instance, have brought in people from London who came to jobs which aren't all that they're cracked up to be. They're forced to change jobs, or go on the dole queue, and the more times you do that, the bigger the pool the employers have to call upon, which, in turn, keeps the wages down and creates a climate of industrial quiet. What in fact we'd like to see is a planned expansion of the town.

We'd also like to see some larger firms coming into the town, both from the fact that they can afford to pay higher wage rates, and of course, they will have the resources to withstand any financial trouble they get into.

—The moving-in of large firms to the area depends, of course, on the national situation; and generally, on the fact that larger employers are laying-off thousands of people too.

This is certainly true. It's one thing to bring larger employers into the area, but you've got to change the political climate at the same time.

—What about the general tendency of British capital to try to reduce the labour force and make industry more capital intensive?

This is quite true. GEC, in fact, increased their profit last year, yet the labour force went down. This has happened in successive years. Gone are the times when a company would use its own capital to support itself when it hit hard times, and give security to its employees. The emphasis now is simply on *capital* profitability, getting as much as they can for as little as they have to fork out for it.

—Are your proposals in conflict with this Tory government and the last Labour government?

Quite frankly, we're somewhat dismayed by the similarity of policies. A change of government, in fact, seems of no real consequence. The country seems to be run not so much on political lines as on economic lines. Money talks, I'm afraid ... Every time a government goes into town, out come the economic "whizzkids". Even if a government does go in with wonderful ideals they are very soon curtailed ... With the two major parties we've got now, I don't see much chance of changing the present situation.

Interviewer: Jonathan Silberman

By ERNEST MANDEL

BRUSSELS, Aug. 24 — The July issue of *Quatrième Internationale* carried an editorial dated July 5, 1971, on the worsening crisis of imperialism. The following sentences are of particular interest:

"The capitalists will thus follow a different tack. Their response [to a recession that threatens to become general] will be concentrated in two areas. They will try to increase their foreign markets and to boost the rate of profit at the expense of the working class.

"Increasing international markets means expanding East-West trade, with the U.S. joining in the game (relaxing embargoes against the USSR, resuming exports to China). Likewise, it means stepped-up penetration of the markets of semicolonial countries and a new sharpening of interimperialist competition. The attempt to raise the rate of profit at the expense of the working class involves trying to limit or abolish the only substantial right the workers have under the capitalist system, the right of collective bargaining. The means for this are 'incomes policies,' which virtually all tendencies in the international bourgeoisie have begun to demand."

And further on:

"... in order to strengthen the dollar, American imperialism will combine increased protectionism with a slowdown in real capital outflows and a new effort to retool American industry. . . ."

Six weeks later, these forecasts were borne out by the decisions Nixon announced to the world August 15.

The Marxist analysis of the class nature of the American state, of the fundamental nature of the capitalist system, has been confirmed once again. The American bourgeoisie defends its class interests—not an ideal of freedom. This defense is mounted today not only against the states that have broken out of the imperialist system and against the colonial revolution that threatens to take several more countries along the same road.

It is directed against what is historically the most redoubtable enemy of Wall Street—the American proletariat. It is aimed at shaking up Wall Street's most precious "allies," that is, its most efficient competitors—Japan, Western Germany. "Freedom," including the famous free trade, is swept aside, as is always the case when the system founded on private property, that is, competition and anarchy, is shaken by a serious crisis.

Disintegration of the international monetary system

For three and a half years we have been witnessing the slow death agony of the international monetary system founded at Bretton Woods under the banner of supremacy of the dollar. This system sought to escape from the dilemma that has confronted the capitalist economy since the beginning of its historic crisis of decline marked by the first world war: either maintenance of the gold standard with more and more catastrophic crises of overproduction; or abandonment of the gold standard and a retreat toward economic nationalism, protectionism, and inconvertible currencies, which signifies not less disastrous consequences for capitalist international trade.

The solution consisted of basing capitalist currencies both on gold and on the dollar, of maintaining stable rates of exchange, and of installing flexible rules, tolerating in reality a permanent inflation, above all when a crisis of overproduction impended, in order to avoid a new 1929.

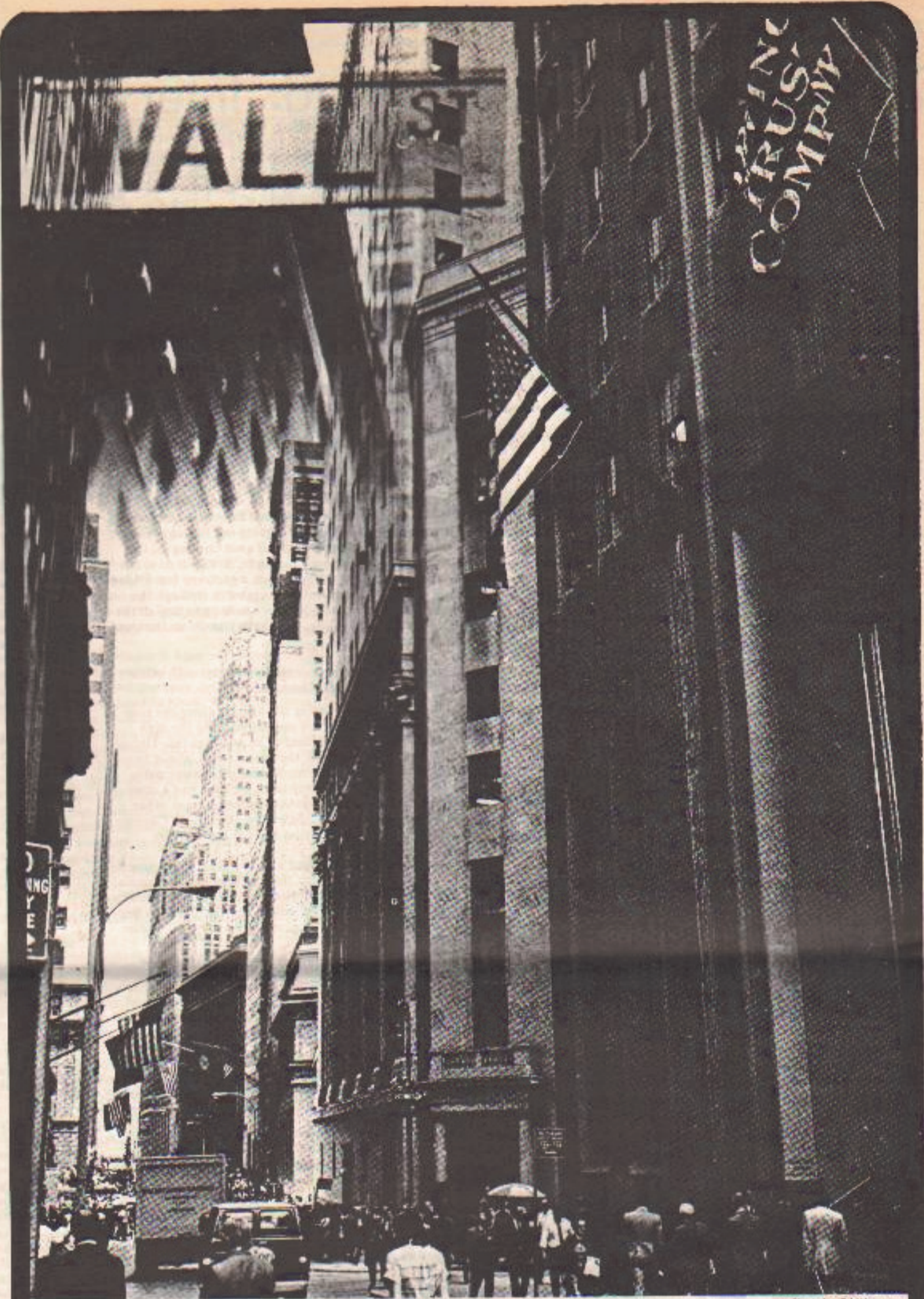


Photo by Ed Weaver

The downfall of the dollar

So long as the inflation remained moderate, and the dollar lost its purchasing power at a slower rate than the currencies of the other important imperialist powers, the system functioned to the satisfaction of all the imperialists.

Already at that time, it is true, the arrangement signified a more and more ruinous indebtedness for the semicolonial countries, the big losers at Bretton Woods. But that the "great" should exploit the "small" is the most natural of all things in the capitalist world.

No imperialist complained about the

deficit in the U.S. balance of payments in the fifties—and with reason! Without this deficit, the system invented at Bretton Woods would not have been able to function. The capitalist expansion would have died for lack of dollars and gold, that is, of means of international payment.

Things began to turn sour not because of inflation of the dollar—that had been going on uninterruptedly for thirty years. Things began to turn sour when the decline in buying power of the dollar became greater than that of other currencies, when the rest of the world's holdings in dollars ex-

panded out of all proportion to the rapidly diminishing stock of gold held by the U.S.

From then on it was clear that devaluation of the dollar would occur sooner or later. The international bourgeoisie—including a good part of big business in the U.S., whether through the multinational companies directly or through go-betweens—began to ready themselves for this contingency. In plain language, this is called speculating on devaluation of the dollar. And in a market economy, when many capitalists ready themselves for a contingency, they precipi-

The inconvertibility of the dollar into gold—a consequence of the disproportion between dollar holdings in the hands of foreigners and the gold reserve at Fort Knox, which shrank to the "minimum strategic reserve" of \$10 billion—did not begin on August 15, 1971. It has been the reality since the end of the "gold pool" (end of 1968).

From that time on, the central banks of the big imperialist powers have in reality stopped exchanging dollars for gold. What was a provisional mutual undertaking has now become a definitive rule because of Nixon's unilateral decision.

The real change announced August 15 was thus not the inconvertibility of the dollar, already in force for three years. The real change was the factual devaluation of the dollar, not in relation to gold but in relation to the other currencies of the imperialist world.

Depreciation of the dollar

Nixon's decision to let the dollar "float" signifies in reality a decision to depreciate the dollar in relation to other currencies. Because once supply and demand is permitted to operate freely on the exchange market, this outcome is inevitable in view of the current state of inflation of the U.S. dollar in relation to the currencies of the principal competitors of the United States.

The irony of history is that in thundering against the "international speculators," Nixon gave in to them all along the line. It was exactly this depreciation that they were prepared for. In affirming that he was out to defend the stability of the dollar, Nixon did exactly the contrary. He acknowledged *urbi et orbi*¹ that the dollar has been devaluated. Double talk comes natu-

ate. The Gaullists, who have spouted for a long time against the Yankees for buying "our" factories, are decidedly inconsistent in their ideas. Yesterday's complaints are forgotten in exchange for the new complaints. Today, what is involved above all is to protect "our" foreign markets and to sell "our" goods. If not, unemployment will rise in France and along with it the threat of a new May 1968 at the door. . .

The different reactions of the various imperialist powers is tied in with their particular interests and their respective levels of power. The West German capitalists, who are the strongest, do not fear a new minor revaluation of the deutsche mark (an inevitable consequence of floating exchange). The British, who are the weakest, are seeking to profit from the confusion and carry out a discreet new devaluation of the pound. The Italians, the most threatened socially, wish above all to avoid any change in the lira.

As for the French capitalists, who benefited from the effects of the devaluation of the franc during the West German boom, they would like to keep their cake while eating it. Their "two-tier exchange" means that French exports would profit from a lower exchange rate for the franc, while the movement of French capital would profit from the lower exchange rate of the dollar.

Such a system, possible in a small country for a short time, quickly becomes impractical in a more important imperialist power. It opens the way to all kinds of speculation, gambling on the stock market, illicit trading and outright frauds (but perhaps that is why the new Société du Dix Décembre, which was already up to

explain crises essentially by these phenomena, was mistaking the appearance for the reality. This observation remains as valid as ever.

When the dollar is depreciated, when the international monetary system set up at Bretton Woods goes down, this is above all not because of wicked speculators, of too imprudent creditors, or too prudent bankers (especially in other countries!). It is not because money is "badly managed" or because the advice of Professor Rueff has not been followed, or because one has not gone back to the exalted philosophy of the French peasants and kept one's savings in a sock, or hidden in a washing machine, in the form of gold coins. It is because the economic system as a whole is sick.

The fundamental cause of the inflation is the indebtedness of governments, businesses, and consumers. This indebtedness has been mushrooming since 1940 (that of the governments since 1914). Without this indebtedness and this permanent inflation, expansion, full employment, economic growth have become impossible in a capitalist system in decline. The armaments economy is the basis of state indebtedness. Abnormally swollen credit is the basis of private indebtedness. For thirty years, neo-capitalist "prosperity" has ridden on an ocean of credit. Sooner or later waves of inflation were bound to engulf the ship. The collapse of the dollar has shown that the "stabilizers," constructed with such pain, were no longer able to resist the smashing of these ever more powerful waves.

Capitalist prosperity depends on two conditions—a rising rate of profit and an expanding market. The logic of capitalism is such that these conditions coincide only at certain moments. When they coincide temporarily, this in itself creates the conditions for their subsequent separation. The two coincide momentarily during the course of each economic cycle and periodically on a more general and durable scale. Since 1966, we have entered a long period in which the coinciding of the two is being undermined more and more.

To emerge from the recession that has been hitting the American economy for the past two years, Nixon requested Congress to give a tax credit on investments and to repeal an excise tax on automobiles. The industrialists and bankers, as well as not a few "liberal" politicians, applauded. What's good for profits is good for the United States. Who would dare think otherwise in the paradise of "free enterprise"?

'Merry-go-round has only begun'

Right-wing trade-union figures like George Meany protested under pressure from the ranks. What about the freeze on dividends and undistributed profits as a counterweight to the freeze on wages? Where are the guarantees against rises in prices? Where is the compensation for past losses in buying power already sustained by the wage workers?

These protests signify that the American workers are going to battle harder for their standard of living, threatened by inflation, taxes, the consequences of the war in Vietnam, and the repercussions that can be counted on as the American bosses seek to answer international competition. They signify longer and harder strikes. But not only that. They involve above all a new contraction of the domestic American market (the reductions in public expenditures and the increased cost of imported products both serve to reduce overall buying power already under full retraction).

How is unemployment to be wiped out under these conditions? Moreover, don't the bosses at bottom want to maintain unemployment in order to hold down wages? But under these

conditions, how can the economy be genuinely started up again (and, in passing, assure Nixon's reelection next year)?

The European capitalists are not without guile. They point their fingers at American protectionism. They have become the attorneys of free trade. But at the least economic shock, they too will come out foursquare for sacred self-interest. They will defend their foreign outlets by devaluations one after the other (French franc, pound sterling) or by stabilization measures (deutsche mark) which will end up by provoking unemployment either at home or among neighboring countries.

With Wall Street playing some of its trump cards, the reaction in the Common Market was *every man for himself* to such a degree that the European bourgeoisie could not lay out any collective defense against American protectionism. Big business may well end up by compelling its politicians to act in the sense of closer European "solidarity" out of fear that Uncle Sam will export his unemployment to the old continent. But how to divide the risks, the losses, and the profits of such solidarity? This is the subject of the current bargaining.

Under these conditions, it is excluded that the inflation will stop. A recession that threatens to become general, increasing unemployment, excess capacity hitting a half dozen key industries cannot be combined with a halt to inflation except at the price of a new 1929, a price that no imperialist power is ready to pay. But persistent inflation joined to exacerbated international competition signifies an erosion of the international monetary system that can no longer be averted. This means that an inter-imperialist agreement on a sufficient new international reserve money is impossible. And that makes certain the threat that the growth of international trade will be slowed down. The conclusion is accentuation of the reversal of the 1945-65 expansionist tendency.

The violent perturbation of the dollar means more than devaluation of a symbol and a monetary system. The international capitalist system as a whole has emerged from a long cycle of expansion to begin a long cycle of much slower growth and many more crises.

In reality, since the German recession of 1966-67, the international capitalist economy has not had a single year of general prosperity. There has not been a single year without a recession or monetary crisis somewhere. The merry-go-round has only begun. The long cycles last on an average twenty to twenty-five years.

If the workers so desire, if they provide themselves with a revolutionary leadership that is up to the height of the historic task, this cycle can give rise to the victory of socialism in the West. If their struggles end in defeats because of lack of an adequate leadership, then capitalism will seek to resolve its structural crisis on their flesh and bones, as it did during the thirties and forties. The crisis that has begun is thus both a promise and a warning.

1. "To the city (Rome) and to the world." The words with which the pope formerly accompanied benedictions pronounced on the Catholic world during certain solemn church festivals.



Ernest Mandel

Nixon's 'price freeze' is a fraud

These price exemptions directly affecting the cost of living have been approved by the Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) since Nixon's Aug. 15 "Stabilization Order."

1. Consumer items on which prices can go up by any amount:

- All unprocessed food, packaged or unpackaged, such as eggs, fresh fish, uncut chicken, fresh fruits and vegetables
- All imported goods
- All interest rates
- State and local taxes

2. Consumer items for which the OEP has approved price increases that had been announced but not put into effect before Aug. 15:

- Insurance premiums on the majority of casualty and liability policies on homes, automobiles and other property
- School tuition

In addition, prices car dealers may charge for new '72 models can be higher than the discount prices prevailing for new '71 models in the 30 days prior to Aug. 15. However, the '72 model prices are not supposed to exceed '71 prices charged last fall.

rally to the American bourgeois politicians just as it does to the gangsters of the star-spangled republic.

In European capitalist circles—beginning with the Gaullists in France—the devaluation of the dollar is being denounced as a serious blow against trade for Europe and for Japan. It is certain that Nixon's immediate aim is protectionist in nature. It is designed to help American exports and make imports to the United States more difficult.

But these same circles forget that in the capitalist system, money is not only a means of exchange but a means of payment. Dollars serve not only for world trade; they also serve for the export of capital. What American capitalism gains in the "commodities" column, it loses in the "capital" column. From now on, American capitalism will need more dollars to buy a factory in Europe. And a German or Japanese capitalist will be able to buy a factory in the United States with fewer deutsche marks and yen.

That is why American imperialism long resisted the temptation to devalu-

ate. The Gaullists, who have spouted for a long time against the Yankees for buying "our" factories, are decidedly inconsistent in their ideas. Yesterday's complaints are forgotten in exchange for the new complaints. Today, what is involved above all is to protect "our" foreign markets and to sell "our" goods. If not, unemployment will rise in France and along with it the threat of a new May 1968 at the door. . .

its neck in the affair of les Halles and the Garantie Foncière, plunged into the new situation with delight; these gentlemen thieves have long knives, particularly when they are inside the government!). Just who is to compel an exporter to repatriate his deutsche marks in a "commodities" column when he can obtain a larger sum of francs in a "capital" column? Just who is to check up on fictitious imports designed to obtain deutsche marks at a good price to be resold at a higher rate of the "free market"?

The fact that after twenty years of expanding international capitalist trade—which, it should be noted, had only by 1965 brought per capita exports back up to the level of 1913—complete anarchy, insecurity, and disorder again reign says a lot about the insoluble historic crisis shaking the system that survives in the West, thanks to the traditional labor leaders!

Behind the monetary screen

Marx liked to repeat that monetary phenomena were only reflections of the economic life, and whoever sought to



Labour History

Flint Sit-Down (part 1)

In 1935 a new direction for American labour unions was long overdue. The only union at the time that was capable of leading in this new direction, the American Federation of Labour, was unwilling to do so. Ever since the founding of the AFL in 1886, its leaders had a policy of organising only skilled workers into craft unions. Organising workers into craft unions tended to keep them divided and also, since only skilled workers were allowed in the craft unions, the much larger number of unskilled workers remained unorganised.

The attitude that the leaders of the AFL took towards unskilled workers was expressed by one of them who said, "We do not want to charter the riffraff or good-for-nothings, or those for whom we cannot make wages or conditions, unless we are compelled to do so by other organisations offering to charter them under any condition." This attitude was reinforced by the fact that the top bureaucrats of the AFL were secure in their positions of power and they intended to keep it that way. They felt that they would be unable to control a mass of unskilled workers organised in industrial unions. In fact, the "leaders" became so separated from the rank and file, and so impressed with their own importance that they placed their own personal interests above those of the workers whose interests they were supposedly defending.

Obviously if the policies of an organisation aren't in the best interests of the members of that organisation, then the leaders who set the policy have to change it to fit the needs of the members or they're going to find their organisation falling apart around them.

A.F.L. OUT OF DATE

There is another very important reason why the AFL's craft unionism had become outmoded. At the time the AFL was founded, skilled labour still played an important part in production. But by the time the depression hit, mass production on a gigantic scale was being carried out by large corporations. Very little skill is needed to master most of the skills in a factory, so the number of skilled workers involved in production decreased. When the AFL made a half-hearted attempt to organise factory workers, they tried to do so through the narrow concept of craft unionism. Instead of organising all the workers in a particular industry into one industrial union, the AFL wanted to divide them, even though they worked in the same factory, among all the different craft unions which claimed jurisdiction over the type of labour that the worker was involved in. The development and change of the forces and methods to produce things in America had made the AFL's craft unionism obsolete. It was time for a big change.

In 1935 a big change came in the form of a giant upsurge of industrial unionism which swept the labour movement. By this time not all of the AFL leaders were committed to craft unionism. A group of these leaders, led by John L. Lewis, realised the need for a new type of union, the industrial union. Lewis saw that the steel workers organised in a strong industrial union would greatly strengthen his own United Mine Workers Union. He also saw workers in steel, auto and other basic industries clamouring to be organised. He sensed the militant mood of American workers shown by the number of strikes fought out to a decisive finish. Workers were determined to win their demands even if they had to fight company thugs and spies, the courts, the police and the National Guard. Which, of course, they did. John L. Lewis saw that the workers were fighting mad, that they wanted to be organised, that the time was definitely right for industrial unions.

At the 1935 convention of the AFL a minority resolution proposing the organisation of industrial unions in the basic industries was presented. The resolution was defeated by John L. Lewis and a few other labour leaders went ahead with their plan to organise the unorganised. They formed the Committee for Industrial Organisation but remained in the AFL. They were threatened, suspended, and finally expelled from the AFL in 1936. After they were completely separated from the AFL the name of the organisation was changed to the Congress of Industrial Organisations (CIO).

Lewis intended to start his organisational drive in the steel industry. Organised labour in the steel factories would directly affect his own United Mine Workers. But an event took place in

the auto industry, an event which changed Lewis's plans and had a spectacular influence on the subsequent development of the CIO.

C.I.O. IN AUTO

When the CIO was formed the auto workers already had their own industrial union. The United Auto Workers (UAW) had started as a federal local of the AFL. But the UAW was built with a democratic structure so the rank-and-file at that time had a lot of say in their union. And what they said was that they had no desire to be dominated by the AFL leaders who advocated narrow craft unionism and who would rather "cooperate" with the capitalists than defend the interests of the workers. The auto workers saw no reason why they should be divided into craft unions or why they should cooperate with their bosses on their bosses' terms. But how could the workers get the huge corporations such as General Motors, U.S. Steel, Goodyear, and other monopoly giants, to cooperate with the workers on the workers' terms? By joining with their fellow workers in a militant and united STRIKE. Just what the bosses and bureaucratic labour "leaders" fear most. Naturally the strike played a huge part in the development of the CIO. The corporation bosses fought industrial unionism in their factories with all the considerable means of power at their disposal. The workers fought back with the strike. But in the organising of the CIO, a very special kind of strike was used. This was the sit-down strike, used with great success throughout the CIO organising drive. The sit-down strike had a number of advantages over the traditional form of strike. It was impossible for scabs to operate the factory because the strikers would occupy the factory and guard the machinery. This in turn heightened the workers' morale since they knew that nothing could be produced while they were sitting on the machinery. It was harder to oust the strikers from an occupied factory to break up a regular outside picket line. The bosses were reluctant to use strike breaking violence against the strikers since they could at any time destroy millions of dollars worth of company machinery.

The sit-down strike did have a number of advantages and when the United Auto Workers went out on strike against the giant General Motors they needed all the advantages they could get. They were fighting the largest manufacturing corporation in the world, and this corporation, G.M., wielded just as much power in 1936 as it does in 1970. The great UAW sit-down strike against G.M., centred in Flint, Michigan, turned out to be the decisive strike in the CIO organising drive. It can be said that the UAW made the greatest contribution to the organisation of the CIO and to the success of industrial unionism because it took the initiative of organising the workers in the auto industry (in spite of the plans of the official leaders of the CIO) and because its struggle against G.M. was won. In the Flint sit-down, the UAW had shown that militancy and solidarity among the workers could overcome just about everything the corporations could throw against them. Another reason for the importance of the Flint sit-down strike was that it determined whether or not an industrial union could exist in the auto industry. G.M. was the key to organising the UAW among all the corporations of the auto industry because G.M. was the largest and most powerful auto producing corporation and it was the first to be organised by the UAW. In one part of the G.M. empire, Flint, the open shop had to be abolished and the closed shop established if success was to come in the rest of the organising campaign. It was in Flint that most of the bodies for all G.M. cars were manufactured as well as all the engines for G.M.'s biggest money-maker, Chevrolet. Also, Flint was thoroughly controlled by G.M. It was probably the most completely controlled company town in the country. G.M. controlled everybody from the dogcatcher to the judges.

G.M. was the largest corporation in the world. By 1936 it had gained the reputation of being the "world's greatest money maker". In that year its net profit was 225 million dollars; its two top officers, Alfred Sloan and William Knudson, were paid 375,000 dollars each in 1935. Its seventh vice-president was paid 190,000 dollars. The condition of the G.M. leaders was completely opposite to that of the auto workers. In 1935 the government declared that 1,600 dollars was the minimum income on

which a family of four could live decently. The average auto worker made 900 dollars. Most of them lived in fearful insecurity since the foremen could fire almost at will. There were layoffs every year without unemployment insurance. But the worst part was the production speed-up. When working so hard and so fast that by the end of the shift they could hardly stand up, the auto workers were more than ready to be organised.

SHUT HER DOWN

In June 1936, the young UAW, affiliated with the CIO, sent an organiser into Flint, the heart of G.M. territory. When he arrived in Flint there were only 100 union members in the city and most of these were company spies. The organiser, Wyndham Mortimer, was starting from scratch. But with a lot of hard work and good reputation (most of the auto workers had quit the AFL, which had suspended the UAW and CIO) the UAW was slowly but surely growing. There were several work stoppages in the Flint plants and by November the men were ready to strike. On November 12th, two men were fired from the Fisher Body No. 1 plant for resisting a speed-up. The UAW members organised a committee to meet the plant superintendent and demanded that the men be rehired. The super gave in and rehired the men. This greatly enhanced the UAW's reputation and workers were signing up by the hundreds. Walkouts and work-stoppages were occurring in UAW locals throughout the country. But UAW leaders felt that the time wasn't right for a struggle with G.M. on the national level. Not until the key Fisher Body plants in Cleveland and Flint, where three-quarters of G.M.'s dies and chassis were produced, and the Chevrolet No. 4, where all of the Chevy engines were produced, were ready to strike. On December 17th, UAW president Homer Martin requested national collective bargaining in a telegram to G.M. management. G.M. refused, saying it would bargain only on a plant by plant basis. The first strike occurred in Cleveland at Fisher Body, but the union didn't have the strength to maintain a sit-down strike. Two days later the action shifted to Flint. On December 30th, the night shift came on and found that the company was moving dies to other plants in order to decrease the importance of the Fisher Body No. 1. That was all the provocation the workers needed to "shut her down". They immediately began to set up their defences to secure the plant against attack. The great Flint sit-down strike was on.

DEMANDS

At the same time as the Fisher Body No. 1 sit-down, the workers of Fisher Body No. 2 struck. This effectively halted all G.M. body production. By January 1st, all Chevy and Buick assembly plants were closed. On January 3rd, a national conference of 300 met in Flint to draw up a set of demands. Sole bargaining power for the UAW, reinstatement of all workers fired for union membership or activity, seniority to govern layoffs, new wage minimums, a 30-hour, 5-day week with time and a half for overtime, abolition of piece work, and a slowing down of the assembly line.

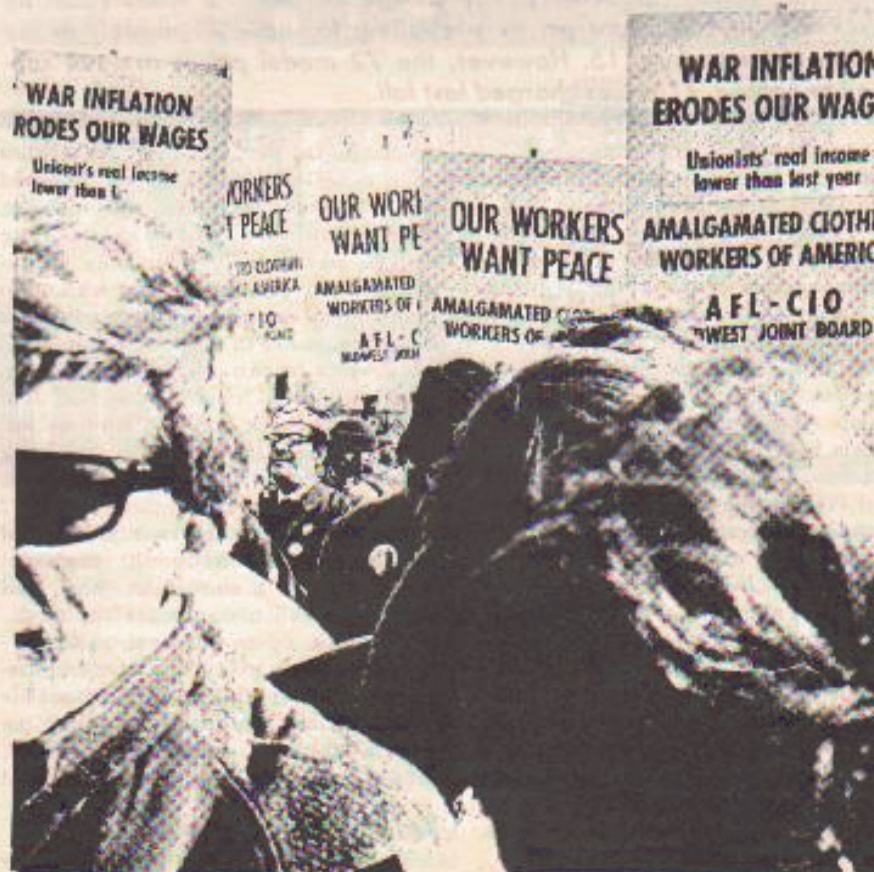
STRIKERS ORGANISE

It didn't take long for the workers inside Fisher No. 1 to organise an extremely efficient strike apparatus. After securing the plant a mass meeting was held and a committee of stewards and 5-man strategy team was elected. The committees were organised: food, police, information, sanitation, health, safety, "kangaroo court", entertainment, education, and athletics. Twelve hundred workers stayed inside the plant while the rest left to perform outside tasks. On the inside every worker had a specific job for 6 hours a day. They were on duty for 3 hours and off nine, on for 3 and off 9 in each 24-hour period. The plant was kept spotlessly clean and care was taken with the handling of all plant property. The strikers used car cushions for mattresses and car floors for beds. There was recreation such as calisthenics, music from radios and phonographs, ping pong, checkers, cards, and the workers even had their own 12-piece band. There was a post office, daily visits by strikers' families, and labour classes in the history of the labour movement held daily.

The organisation outside the plant was just as important as that inside. Committees for food preparation, publicity, welfare and relief, picketing and defence were organised. Because of the great organisation of the strike both inside and out the workers felt that they had built an impregnable fortress against attack. The first wasn't long in coming.

[Flint Sit-down, Part 2, in next issue]

This article has been reproduced from a back issue of an excellent American GI paper, *The Next Step*.



As the state of American capital deteriorates, demonstrations such as the one above against inflation will continue to grow. It is therefore important to recall, as we do in this LABOUR HISTORY article, that the American working class has a militant past.

White Terror in Bolivia and the Beginning of Civil War

In the short history of Bolivia since its independence from Spain there have been getting on for 200 coups. It is the regular way in which governments are changed. Many of these coups had a classic "clean" outline, sudden changes of government with little popular involvement or bloodshed. But the fascist takeover that has just occurred and is consolidating itself, the white terror that is being unleashed and the civil war that is to follow have a scale and significance different from an ordinary coup. Whilst the right has carried out a coup, it has had mass popular resistance and it has involved civilian fascist groups as well as the bulk of the army. Starting in the right wing stronghold of Santa Cruz, on the frontier with Brazil, the fighting rapidly spread to other cities and finally to La Paz where the government was overthrown after bloody street fighting. Because both the coup and resistance to it has involved—on both sides, although to very unequal extents—civilian groups, the future struggle will be widely based involving all classes and groups.

It is a continuation of the coup aborted last October when the army tried to replace General Ovando with General Miranda. On that occasion it failed owing to the mass mobilisation which produced the compromise of General Torres, a "left-wing" reformist military solution which has been steadily losing ground to the workers and peasants, who have spent these last months developing their political organisations, in part through the *Asamblea Popular* (Popular Assembly), and beginning the process of arming themselves, forming peasants' and workers' militias, and preparing for the coup.

NO SURPRISE

For no one was taken by surprise in Bolivia. The right has simply been waiting for the best time to strike. In June at the opening of the *Asamblea Popular* a state of emergency was called, by both workers' organisations and the Government. But the right did not act. The sophisticated right, some Americans, may have hoped that a military reformist solution, more or less of the Peruvian type, would prove an alternative to the imposition of a ferocious Brazilian style repression. But the Bolivian revolution has been too far advanced and has followed its course independently of Torres, undercutting his position, making him an increasingly passive agent. It was clear to the right that it could wait no longer: the degree of organisation of the workers, the formation of armed units, would soon have produced for them an irretrievable situation.

The right acted because it had to. In addition there were real signs of disaffection in the army, including the formation of revolutionary soldiers' groups. It was reported in Chile that a group of junior officers had formed an organisation that they described as a people's army. The right, already in a position where part of the army supported Torres, faced the prospect of a left wing current in its ranks. An indication of the speed with which events were moving in Bolivia can be gained from the fact that in July, when we were in La Paz, this new development was not at all apparent; it was outside the scheme of the revolutionary left and constitutes an unexpected development. But by August, accounts of soldiers' revolts and manifestoes were beginning to appear and may have provided the immediate impetus for the actions of the right. It is conceivable that this is a product of a recent campaign undertaken by the ELN (National Liberation Army—formed by Che Guevara). Directed at patriotic and anti-imperialist soldiers, ELN pamphlets produced a class analysis of the army and appealed for support for revolutionary struggle.

THE FIGHTING

Fighting in La Paz, Oruro and Santa Cruz has been fierce. Oruro was taken by the fascists who were then threatened by miners marching in from the big mines which surround Oruro. Peasants and other miners marched to La Paz. Radio stations were lost and retaken. The battle waged by the students', peasants' and workers' armed groups has been heroic, against uneven odds. Many were armed with old weapons, relics of the Chaco war. Holed up in the University of San Andres, students suffered the combined onslaught of tanks, Mustang fighter bombers and infantry. Eventually they were massacred, many of them unarmed and wounded. Near the end, when La Paz appeared to be the only town in which the army remained loyal to Torres, army units swung across to the right, leaving only a single regiment in La Paz led by Major Ruben Sanchez, and the armed students, workers and peasants, to face the combined might of a modern army and air force.

Torres, perhaps to the surprise of some, threw in his lot with the workers and called for mass mobilisation and for the workers to "turn their factories into trenches". He made a speech from the balcony of the Palace, only hours before tanks took over the city centre, promising the mass audience that he was with them and that united they would win. His eloquence was greeted with cries of "Arms, arms!" He promised to arm the workers; the extent to which this took place is unclear. By now his own forces had dwindled. There are accounts of 2,500 arms being handed out and a radio in the hands of the revolutionaries called on students and workers to go to the Miraflores barracks, which the left was trying to storm, in order that arms could be distributed. But



Torres



BANZER AFTER TAKEOVER

what arms were actually handed out, if any, were too little and too late. For reasons on which it is only possible to speculate, Roque Teran, Commander in Chief of the Army, who was actually captured by the revolutionary forces, was later released (in exchange, perhaps, for a promise that Torres could seek refuge in the Peruvian Embassy). This contrasted with the behaviour of the right who were already shooting their prisoners, students', peasants' and workers' leaders. When the end came, Torres took refuge in the Peruvian Embassy. Nothing is known of Major Sanchez. Sanchez, like Arguedas (the ex-Minister in the Cabinet which ordered the murder of Che and who is now in Cuba having been responsible for saving the diary, hands and death mask of Che) represents the crisis of the Bolivian bourgeoisie. He fought fiercely against the guerrilla, to the extent that Che commented on his military valour; he was captured by the guerrilla and later released, having, some say, come under the spell of Che.*

THE EXTREME RIGHT IS NOW IN POWER

There is no doubt that this military regime is fascist and will unleash a terrible repression. It is not, as often in the past, a mere change of military dictatorships. It is the coming to power of the extreme right, the Falangists and the most right wing elements in the MNR (Revolutionary Nationalist Movement). It is succoured by, and will ape, the Brazilian gorillas. It will only be able to govern by terror, by thousands of arrests and possibly the physical liquidation of workers', peasants' and students' leaders. Government will, however, not be easy, not so easy as in Brazil. The consciousness of the masses, their combativity, preclude anything but civil war.

But the right has won this battle. The coup was successful quite simply because the armed workers' organisations which were being formed were insufficiently developed, inadequately armed and still essentially embryonic. The Government, backed by the Communist Party, was unable to agree to the arming of the workers before the coup because to have done so would have meant bringing on the revolution, deepening the processes at work and going beyond the stage of compromise represented by Torres. Instead Torres opted for a policy of pacifying the right and the left—an impossible balancing act given the strength of the workers' movement. Although the *Asamblea Popular* had voted for the formation of militias in June and the COB (Bolivian TUC) repeatedly called for militias, the discussion on their actual organisation was tragically and fatally delayed—partial responsibility for which lies with the C.P.'s opposition to any discussion of the question in the Popular Assembly, coupled with the tactical support it received from the POR (Lora) with its metaphysical "one-day, some-day the workers will rise and find the means" thesis. Their belief in the future of revolution by insurrection meant leaving the workers defenceless today. Or it would have done had the workers listened. It was a recipe for inactivity.

THE POPULAR ASSEMBLY

But the *Asamblea Popular* had resolved on the formation of militias and there is no doubt that peasants, workers and students were actively engaged in this process. Although Torres' period of rule afforded many opportunities for the left to organise legally, structure itself and recruit, several groups also saw the need not to emerge totally from clandestinity and they participated partially or very indirectly in the *Asamblea Popular*. These were the ELN, the POR (of Hugo Gonzales Moscoso—Bolivian section of the Fourth International) and the pro-Chinese group of Oscar Zamora. They concentrated on their military development. The POR, whilst making successful use of the opportunities for legal work, maintained its clandestine organisation and worked both to prepare a Revolutionary People's Army and to actually carry out the COB and Popular Assembly policy of establishing workers' and peasants' militia.

But even apart from the direct activities of political groups, the workers and peasants themselves were arming. In July we went to the Altiplano with revolutionary students engaged in Marxist education and carrying out assistance with irrigation and other projects in a peasant community. Arms were taken and the students trained themselves for the coming fight. At the same time, the peasants wanted guns, and they made arrangements to buy guns which the students would procure in the town.

We went to the mining town of Huanuni and met the comrade responsible for organising the Huanuni workers' army, which will have marched on Oruro to fight the fascists. The Bolivian tin miners have learnt the lesson of previous massacres. Experts in the skilled task of fighting with lighted sticks of dynamite, they have traded explosives confiscated from the mines for rifles obtained in La Paz.

This is what forced the right to act. It did so while it was still possible, as the revolutionary left knew it would be,

for it to occupy the main towns in 48 hours. But it cannot pacify the country.

Revolutionary workers', peasants' and students' organisations have reached a stage of organisation and consciousness that means that the long struggle is just beginning. Though the movement may be decapitated by the repression, the resistance will be fierce. It will be multifarious. There will be no immediate debate on the priorities of urban or rural guerrilla, of peasant armies or workers' militias. The struggle will take place in the town and in the selva and on the altiplano. All methods will be used because the struggle will be waged by different groups throughout the country, fighting as they can, developing small armies and sabotage groups, engaging in commando operations and holding areas of the country. No one expects a quick victory. Armed organisations still have to develop, to test themselves in struggle. The long war has begun.

ARMED STRUGGLE IS THE ONLY ROAD

Above all, this Bolivian experience shows that the key goal of the revolutionary movements is to develop their own army, to destroy the bourgeois army. Whether this strategy is applied in the conditions that will prevail now under a repressive regime or whether it is applied in the context of short-lived electoral openings elsewhere, there can be no short cut. The revolutionary army, developed from small beginnings, has ultimately to destroy the bourgeois army, the ultimate strength and expression of capitalism and imperialism. In all Latin American countries, the development of this army, side by side with the development, to the extent that conditions permit it, of mass revolutionary organisations, committed to the armed struggle, is necessary for the victory of the revolution.

The implications of events in Bolivia have a wider significance extending to all other Latin American countries, in particular for Chile and Peru, potentially for Uruguay, and possibly for Argentina if the detente with right wing Peronism appears. It represents a strengthening of a gorilla position. It shows that liberal or military reformist regimes will give way to blind repression under the successful advance of the workers' movement. Chile, though separated by its northern desert and the Cordillera, has now effectively got the Brazilian gorillas for neighbours. In addition, the problems facing the revolutionary left in Chile are those that existed in Bolivia. Despite its "democratic" traditions, the Chilean bourgeoisie and its army remains intact. In Chile the awareness of the left of the need to prepare to fight is cloudy and preparations appear to be minimal. In Uruguay, the possibility of the *Frente Amplio* (Broad Front, similar to Popular Unity in Chile) winning the elections later this year poses precisely the same problems and the Bolivian experience shows the need for the Tupamaros to develop to the point of destroying the Uruguayan army, even though this could signal a Brazilian invasion. In Argentina, with a more remote possibility of elections and a detente with official Peronism, the Trotskyist and Peronist armed forces will again confront the need to smash the bourgeois state, whatever temporary, "democratic" openings may be granted or won. In Peru, the so-called left military regime, essentially similar to the Torres government, can look forward to the same fate if its reforms travel beyond a certain point or if the workers' movement undergoes an upsurge.

The Bolivian experience destroys the illusion that there is a peaceful road. It destroys the illusion yet again for those who still need to have this illusion destroyed. And it shows the need to struggle now, independently of the current complexion of the government, and to continue until final victory. It shows that if mass organisations and revolutionary parties merely have a policy of growing and waiting for the day when they can take power by mass insurrection and uprising, the right will not wait idly by.

Teresa Hayter
Bob Gregory,
writing from Havana

August 1971

*POSTSCRIPT: Sanchez is now in Peru. Extracts from an interview with him, in which he analyses the reasons for the defeat of the revolutionary forces, and criticises Torres, will appear in a future issue of the *Mole*.

BENGAL

PROJECTED PROGRAMME FOR THE NLF

Pursuant to the recent historic call and the directive of Maulana Bhasani, the leader of the oppressed people, to unitedly carry forward the liberation struggle, the representatives of the National Awami Party (under the leadership of Maulana Bhasani), Communist Revolutionaries' East Bengal Coordination Committee, the Communist Party of East Bengal (under the leadership of Deben Sikdar), the Shramik Krishak Karmee Sangha, the Communist Party of Bangladesh (Hatlar), the Purba Bangla Krishak Samity, the Purba Bangla Shramik Federation, Bangladesh Shramik Federation, (East Pakistan Shramik Federation), and the East Bengal Revolutionary Students' Union and other political and mass organisations met in a conference and formed the "Bangladesh National Liberation Struggle Coordination Committee", and having unanimously adopted the following declaration, place it before the people of Bangladesh.

CALL FOR FORMATION OF NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT

In the context of the present situation in Bangladesh we feel that the people of Bangladesh should unitedly march on to struggle. It is the sacred duty of every political party and group, mass organisation, class organisation and individual citizen, to unitedly participate in the liberation struggle maintaining cohesion and understanding between themselves, and with a vow to free the motherland from bondage. For this is the struggle of the whole nation, of the entire people. It is impossible to come out victorious in a fight against the marauding armed forces well-equipped with modern weapons, without the participation of the entire people. It is from this basic realisation that Maulana Bhasani, the leader of the oppressed people, gave his call and directive in pursuance of which, representatives of several political parties, groups, individuals, mass organisations and class organisations assembled together on 1st June 1971 and formed Bangladesh National Liberation Struggle Coordination Committee. The immediate objective of this Coordination Committee is to take the liberation struggle forward to success on the basis of a definite programme and line of action keeping close contact and maintaining full coordination with Bangladesh Government and all the forces engaged in the liberation struggle. We believe that a well-knit and united national liberation front formed through the cooperation of all parties, opinions and individuals is necessary for the success of the national liberation struggle of Bangladesh. It is for this reason that we, on behalf of this Coordination Committee, appeal to all freedom-loving political parties including the Awami League, groups, mass organisations, class-based organisations and patriotic individuals to form such a National Liberation Front.

ULTIMATE AIM AND OBJECTIVE

The ultimate aim and objective of this Coordination Committee is to free Bangladesh from the clutches of the marauding bandits and to establish on its soil a free, happy, decent, democratic social system—anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-monopoly capital in character—where peasants will be really free from the centuries-old exploitation and oppression of the landlords and usurers, where his rights over land will be established; where the worker will have the guarantee to live like a human being along with his wife, sons, daughters and other members of his family; where the curse of unemployment will not be there; where the student will have a universal, democratic system of education based on science; where for the intellectual there will be the fullest opportunity to develop his creative genius; where every citizen will have complete independence in political, cultural and religious matters. In this society will be established the freedom and dignity of women. Under this system taking recourse to advanced agricultural methods and development of industry, a self-reliant economy and prosperous country will be built. In short, for the entire people there will be a minimum guarantee of food, clothing, housing, education, medical facilities and other basic needs of life. This will be a Bangladesh for the workers, peasants, toiling people, middle-classes and the patriotic section of the bourgeois—a people's Bangladesh.

IMMEDIATE TASKS

The immediate tasks of the Coordination Committee in the course of achieving the objectives mentioned before, would be to resist and annihilate the Pakistani marauding forces. This task of ours is great and arduous. Whereas the marauder forces are militarily strong and the people on the other hand do not possess arms, the Coordination Committee believes that it would be necessary to advance through a protracted process by employing guerrilla tactics of war—of consolidating our own strength while gradually weakening the enemy. On the other hand, the Coordination Committee is firmly convinced that the people are sure to be victorious in this war because the marauding forces are alien, barbarous and numerically insignificant in comparison to the 75 million people of Bangladesh. This Coordination Committee further believes that the success of a war depends upon the fullest utilisation of the strength and resources of the whole people. This liberation struggle, too, will have to be waged depending on the people's own strength and not by depending on any foreign power. We shall have to embark on guerrilla war keeping in view the objective of organising a people's army from amongst the people. Peasants who form the majority of the people will be the mainstay of the people's army. The overflanked and vast countryside of Bangladesh

will be the operating base for armed guerrilla warfare. This guerrilla war will be conducted in close contact and coordination with the Mukti Fauj (Liberation Force) of Bangladesh.

Therefore the Coordination Committee places the following tasks of the present stage of the national liberation struggle for its fulfilment before the people:

1. In every village of Bangladesh an all-party People's Liberation Council with the representative participation of various sections of the people should be formed which would take over political, social, administrative and all other responsibilities of villages, organise and direct Village Protection Forces and administer justice through constitution of People's Courts.
2. All payment of taxes and repayment of loans and interest to the Military Administration of Pakistan should be completely stopped.
3. Foodgrains hoarded in excess of actual need for making excess profits would be confiscated by the People's Liberation Council of the village for sale among the poor people.
4. People's Liberation Councils of the villages would completely put an end to the oppression of the usury system affecting the poor people of the villages.
5. (a) People's Liberation Councils of the villages will severely punish those cooperating with, aiding or acting as agents of the Pakistani ruling clique in any way and will confiscate all their properties and distribute them among the poor and landless peasants.
(b) In mutual understanding with landlords (jotedars) who support the National Liberation Struggle, measures will be taken in order to ease the former exploitation by the landlord over the poor and landless peasants and agricultural labourers.
6. People's Liberation Councils of the villages will look after all the properties of those citizens of Bangladesh who were compelled to leave the country.
7. A self-reliant, self-sufficient economy will have to be built up in the rural areas through proper arrangements for distribution, sale and purchase, increased production and development of cottage industries on the basis of "mutual aid and mutual cooperation".
8. In the sphere of education and culture, national image will be imbued to the complete exclusion of the current modes of education and influence of corrupt culture.
9. (a) Small guerrilla squads should be organised in the villages with peasants, workers, students and other militant youths to liquidate isolated enemies and replenish their armoury with arms snatched from the enemy as and when its scope and opportunity arises.
(b) All communications and supply lines should be damaged and disrupted in order to make it difficult for the marauding forces to have free movement, to secure supply of arms and ammunitions and to collect and distribute stores and provisions and make it impossible for them to continue administration and exploitation unhindered.
(c) In order to gain the confidence and love of the people, guerrillas should respect the people, help the people and protect the people.
(d) Side by side with the discharge of their military responsibilities, guerrilla squads should carry on political propaganda campaigns among the people in support of national liberation struggle.
(e) Those people willingly rendering help to or cooperating with the Pakistan Government and the Pakistani forces or their agents in any way—politically, economically or militarily—should be treated as national enemies, and after thorough investigation they should either be liquidated or punished in any other manner on the basis of collective decision.
10. Stringent measures should be taken against those who carry on campaigns, overtly or covertly to undermine the morale of the people.
11. Sternest measures should be taken through People's Liberation Councils of the villages to punish those engaged in dabchity, hoodlumism and other anti-social activities taking advantage of the plight of the people.
12. Severe punishment should be meted out to those who indulge in any communal activities, provocations or propaganda in order to divide and disrupt the liberation struggle.
13. In towns and urban areas guerrilla activities based on "hit-and-run" tactics should be carried on to disrupt the enemy and keep them constantly engaged in the spell of disturbance.
14. Connections with the administrative and all other systems of the military rulers should be severed by all sections of the people.
15. This Coordination Committee gives the clarion call to the working class of Bangladesh to follow up their tradition of struggle and continue the present deadlock in the economy now under the control of the ruling clique.

OUR DECLARATION

In this situation, beset in a juncture of life and death, inspired by our conscience to do our duties to dear motherland and the people, Bangladesh National Liberation Struggle Coordination Committee places the following

declaration with conviction before the people of Bangladesh as also to all freedom-loving people of the world:

* This Coordination Committee declares its firm resolve to establish an "Independent, Sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh" resisting and defeating the planned campaign to completely destroy the Bengalee people through genocide, loot, arson, rape of women and forcing out the citizens en masse from Bangladesh, carried out by the marauders of the fascist military junta of Pakistan, who are the lackeys of imperialism, feudalism and monopoly and big capitalists.

* This Coordination Committee takes the solemn pledge to unitedly carry forward to success the armed national liberation struggle now going on in Bangladesh and declares its oneness with those who are participating in this national liberation struggle with unfathomable courage and sacrifice and sends them its warm revolutionary greetings.

* This Coordination Committee takes the vow to defeat all internal and foreign conspiracies aimed at compromise and clearly declares that this struggle shall not cease till the marauding forces are wiped out from the soil of Bangladesh. The people of Bangladesh have shed and are shedding their blood for every inch of land and for real national freedom and they shall continue to do so in the future, too.

* This Coordination Committee pays its deep respect to those who have been martyred and expresses sympathy for those who have been humiliated, tortured and lost their dear ones and all belongings in the national liberation struggle of Bangladesh. This Committee declares its resolve for carrying on the struggle to securely rehabilitate in an atmosphere of freedom and independence those people who were forced to leave the country after having had to suffer tremendous torture.

* This Coordination Committee sends its revolutionary greetings to the workers, peasants, students, youth of Bangladesh, the members of the Bengal Regiment, E.P.R., Police, Ansars, Mujahids and all those volunteers who, inspired by patriotism, have been taking part in the national liberation struggle.

* This Coordination Committee expresses its heartfelt gratitude to the Indian people, particularly the people of West Bengal, Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya for the help and cooperation they extended to the national liberation struggle and to the homeless evacuees of Bangladesh.

* This Coordination Committee calls upon the Sindhi, Baluchi, Pathan and Punjabi people, especially to their workers, peasants and the toiling masses, to build up a strong mass movement against genocide committed by the fascist military junta of Pakistan in Bangladesh and in support of the liberation struggle of Bangladesh.

* This Coordination Committee appeals to all freedom-loving people, all democratic and Socialist States of the world, to extend all-out help to the national liberation struggle of Bangladesh. We have inexhaustible human resources; all we need are weapons, money, provisions, medical supplies and moral support.

* This Coordination Committee declares its decision to carry on unitedly the national liberation struggle forward to success by maintaining contact and coordination with the Government of Bangladesh and all the forces engaged in the National Liberation Struggle.

* This Coordination Committee sends its clarion call to all political parties including the Awami League, class and mass organisations as well as to all patriotic people of Bangladesh irrespective of their religion, creed, language and community to unitedly fight and uproot the ruling clique of Pakistan from the soil of Bangladesh through a people's war by forming a "NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT". This Committee is firmly convinced that the National Liberation struggle being the struggle of the entire people can only be taken forward to a final decisive victory by a well-consolidated and united National Liberation Front capable of fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the entire people.

FIGHTING PEOPLE OF BANGLADESH!

A death-defying war—the war of independence—is going on in the whole of Bangladesh. We all have become part of this death-defying war to do away with the insults suffered by a humiliated people, to free the subject motherland from bondage. There is no respite, no stopping of this war till Bangladesh is independent. Come, let us pounce with arms upon the bandits who have killed our fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, who have defiled the chastity of our mothers and sisters; let us turn to the enemies with burning revenge and hatred and decimate them to take revenge for our blood. Ours is a just war, our victory is inevitable. The defeat of the marauding Pakistani forces is inescapable. Independence is sure to dawn on Bangladesh.

**LONG LIVE THE INDEPENDENT SOVEREIGN PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH!**

**LONG LIVE PEOPLE'S ARMED REVOLUTIONARY
STRUGGLE!**

—Bangladesh National Liberation
Struggle Coordination
Committee.

June 1, 1971

molehills



THE 1971 T.U.C. CONGRESS: A SMELL OF UNREALITY

It was ironic that this year's TUC Congress which was called upon to deal with the challenge thrown in its face by the Tory government should be chaired by a well-known scab bureaucrat, Lord Cooper (of Pilkington fame and the GMWU). The Industrial Relations Bill, rising unemployment, proposed wage freezes, found the TUC leadership totally unprepared and unwilling to challenge the Tory government. Certainly the Scanlon/Jones/Daly combination provided a scenario where brave words were thrown around quite brazenly. Conference passed a resolution "instructing" unions to de-register, but rejected by a large majority a call to expel unions that refused to do precisely that. The 1972 Congress could deal with such cases and in the meantime the T&GWU leaders attitude implied that they would not go out on a limb and deregistration to be successful had to be universally applied. The debate on deregistration provided the peak of the conference and once that was over and the AUEW and the T&GWU had obtained the expected majority, the TUC virtually packed up and went to sleep. More trade union bureaucrats could be seen outside the conference hall than inside when unemployment was being discussed, and even the Common Market "debate" took place before a half-empty and half-asleep chamber.

This attitude typifies both the impotency of the TUC and the refusal of the so-called "left" trade union leaders to even attempt to offer a strategy for fighting redundancies and unemployment. With unemployment in Scotland running at 6% of its work force, what is needed is a firm resolve on the part of the trade union movement to mount a vigorous campaign against the Tory government by a series of well-planned strikes, demonstrations, etc. But the refusal, nay the fear, of using industrial action against a capitalist government colours the policy of the TUC and its components. With a few exceptions the trade unions have refused to discuss seriously the question of unemployment as simply a bad spot on its conscience which can be cleaned by simply organising a few demonstrations. As reported elsewhere in this issue of *The Red Mole*, the methods to which workers are resorting in the fight against redundancies are a sore reminder to the TUC and more importantly to the two major unions of the levels which rank-and-file militancy can reach. This militancy, despite lack of a clear and coordinated leadership, shows no sign of ebbing and is bound to have an effect on the trade union officials. Thus the next TUC Congress could in fact be quite important as the abysmal record of the TUC on the Industrial Relations Act and unemployment could lay the basis for a split inside the TUC itself. The condition of British capitalism is far too critical for the TUC to be able to get away with doing nothing while the Tories are carrying out a vicious attack not only on the rights of trade unionism, but on the living standards of the working class as a whole.

We will discuss future developments in the TUC in some detail in future issues of *The Red Mole*, but there can be little doubt that a split in the TUC and the emergence of a continental trade union structure would vastly improve the chances of revolutionary forces being able to develop inside the trade unions.



THE SPARTACUS LEAGUE

I am interested in getting more information about the Spartacus League.

NAME

ADDRESS

OCCUPATION

Send to: The Spartacus League, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

REPRESSION IN WALES

August 21st saw another protest meeting organised by the militant Welsh pressure group, *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* (the Welsh Language Society), this time on the steps of the Welsh Office building in Cardiff. The occasion was the end of a 200-mile marathon walk from Bangor, Caernarfonshire, designed to publicise the second-class status of the Welsh language in broadcasting.

500 people took part in the last stages of the walk from Pontypridd, and a petition in favour of a reorganisation of radio and TV in Wales was signed by 10,000 along the route, as well as several thousand in other areas. The Society proposes a Welsh Broadcasting Authority to replace BBC and ITA in Wales, with separate TV and radio channels in the two languages, thus ensuring fair play for Welsh-speaking and English-speaking communities alike.

The refusal of Christopher Chataway, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, to give serious consideration to their plans has already led to direct action by the Society, and more is promised. Early in July five TV masts were simultaneously occupied by groups of protesters, although programmes were not interrupted. Three Society members are at present on remand at Risley, near Manchester, awaiting trial on charges arising out of an incident at Granada Television studios when extensive damage to equipment took place.

One of the three involved is Ffifed Ffrancis, Secretary of the Society, who is already under a suspended sentence of twelve months imposed after he and six others were convicted of conspiring to remove English-only road signs. When an application for bail was made in the present case, the prosecuting counsel retorted that to grant bail would be "like releasing prisoners of war". As yet no date for the trial has been set.

Welsh Office officials were not available to accept the 10,000-name petition at the Cardiff meeting, but had detailed the caretaker of the building to do so. Referring to this, Society Chairman Dafydd Iwan raised a cheer when he stated that the meeting were glad to do business with the caretaker, because they were closer to him than to anyone else who worked in the building.

—Keith Bush, Cardiff.

**Of special interest at the August 21st demo was one of the few speeches in English delivered by John Owen. He declared that nothing could be obtained from the Welsh Office and that our only hope lay with the Welsh workers. He referred to Ffifed Ffrancis as being "in a foreign prison, in a foreign land" and it was for people like him that "we must carry the fight forward—Forward to the Welsh Revolution."*

TECHNICIANS CONFERENCE SHOWS DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE FIGHT

On Saturday August 11th the recall conference of the AUEW (T&S), previously DATA, unanimously reaffirmed its decision to deregister now that the Industrial Relations Act is law. The firm stand taken is to be welcomed, as must be the determination to make every other union follow their lead. The Act was described by George Doughty (General Secretary) and Mike Cooley (President) as a piece of anti-working class legislation which must be seen and fought in political terms. The Act was a piece of calculated planning by the Tory Government necessary to further subordinate the working class and its organisations in this period of crisis within capitalism, with continual inflation and unemployment. Also for the Tories to enter the Common Market it was necessary to get rid of the previously liberal code of Industrial Relations and fall in line with the present members of the Common Market. The delegates had no illusions as to whom the Act was directed at. They realised it was not the Scanlons or the Joneses but them, the militants on the shop floor.

The initial consequence of de-registration for the AUEW (T&S) as a union with just over 100,000 members will result in a loss of £30,000 a year in tax relief. The reaction of conference to this was that as a union there could be no ambiguity, that the Act had to be opposed in totality, and that there must be a continued determination to force the labour movement to continue the industrial action of March 1st and 18th. The above, if it is to be carried through to its logical conclusion, must be for militants in the labour movement to continue the struggle for a "General Strike" which will bring down the Tories and make it clear that the British working class will not be trampled on. That we are unwilling to accept once again the "Jarrow Marches", that we will accept no more productivity deals or redundancies, that we demand the "right to a job."

It was also made clear at the conference that with the defeat of the Tories, no Labour Government with the illusion of bringing in another *In Place of Strife* and continuing the present attack on the working class through social service cuts, etc., would be acceptable. One of the last delegates to speak stated quite clearly that the fight against the Industrial Relations Act and the system which introduces such legislation could only be successful if a revolutionary leadership worthy of the British working class was built. We in the International Marxist Group, Spartacus League and *The Red Mole* support these sentiments wholeheartedly.

—Alan Rae
AUEW (T&S)

The POR, Bolivian section of the Fourth International, which had warned the Bolivian masses again and again about the incoming reactionary army coup, fought in the front ranks of the vanguard which tried to stop the army's onslaught, arms in hands. In La Paz, at least four POR militants were killed in the battle, among them Tomas Chambi, member of the Central Committee of the POR, and peasant leader of the party.

Comrade Chambi, who had already been imprisoned under the Barrientos-Ovando dictatorship, led a column of poor peasants who joined in the armed struggle against the reactionary army coup. When his body was recovered by the masses, they found in his pocket a small note in his handwriting, which read as follows: "I am a militant of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario. My party has taught me courage and to struggle for a just cause. Forward, for national liberation, the final victory will be ours!"

The Fourth International will keep alive the memory of comrade Tomas Chambi and of all our other Bolivian comrades who gave their lives in the struggle against the bourgeois army, for the building of a people's army, for the building of a workers' and peasants' government in Bolivia.

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DESIGN: Dave Edmunds
DISTRIBUTION: Debbie Dodge

Published by *Relgeoren* for *The Red Mole*,
182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.
01-837 6954, 01-278 2616.

Printed by F.I. Litho Ltd. (T.U.),
182 Pentonville Road, London N.1. 01-837 9987

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IRELAND: Differences Between the Reformists and Ourselves.

SLL

The "Workers Press" and the IRA

The last issue of *The Red Mole* declared that Ireland was the acid test for British socialists. This is true. It is the most important test which the British revolutionary left has faced since the Second World War. In general that test has been miserably failed. It is in the context of this failure that we will now examine the role of the *Workers Press*, daily organ of the Socialist Labour League.

We have mentioned previously the role of the bourgeois press; their distortions of the facts and crass propaganda have known no bounds. The two left-wing daily papers, *The Morning Star* and the *Workers Press*, could have played an important role in exposing the facts. Neither of them have done this. There have been a few scattered reports, it is true, but no determined effort to counter the propaganda. It is not even necessary for them to send correspondents to Ireland (although this would be an obvious responsibility for a serious paper): a great deal of material can be obtained simply by monitoring the Irish bourgeois newspapers. The article from the *Irish Times* reproduced in the last *Mole* is a good example of this. What's the matter, comrades of the *Workers Press*, is your membership of the Press Association in danger or something?

And then, when the *Workers Press* attacks the IMG and the *Red Mole*, we cannot pass over their role in silence.

A LIE

According to the *Workers Press* of 8th September 1971, "... the so-called International Marxist Group and the 'state capitalists' of the International Socialists welcomed the arrival of British troops as a way of defending the Catholic workers." This is a direct lie, the editor of the *Workers Press* knows that it is a lie, and we challenge him to furnish one shred of proof that it is not a lie. By linking the IMG with IS, he hopes to cover his tracks a bit, but anyone who examines the facts will know that the position of IMG on this issue was totally at variance with that of IS.

On the mass demonstration which took place in London the day after the troops went in, we issued a leaflet headed "Withdraw British Troops Immediately"; in *International* of May 1969 we had called for the left to "oppose by all means possible the sending of British troops to Northern Ireland, and the withdrawal of those already there" (this proves that our withdrawal demand antedates that of the SLL which claims to have been the "first"); in *International* of September 1969, Pat Jordan, discussing the role of this slogan, and the difficulties raised by the opposition to it of the Civil Rights Movement, and the mass of its supporters amongst the Irish community in Britain, stressed that "... it is extremely short-sighted to think in terms of the British troops 'protecting' that minority. Inevitably as the national struggle develops, these troops will be used against the Irish people." While conceding the difficulties of using this as a mobilising slogan while the people involved in the struggle were opposed to it, he stressed, "But for revolutionaries it is essential to include the demand in all their

statements on the situation. This is the only way that they can struggle for a correct line on the question; they have, moreover, the job of helping to clarify the problems in Ireland itself. For the Civil Rights movement to confine itself to demands for the disarming of the B Specials (by whom?), etc., is to doom it to a reformist trap." How can these statements be presented as "welcoming" the intervention of British troops? Mr. Michael Banda, you are a liar in the tradition of Stalin and Vyshinsky.

S.L.L. REFORMISM

The purpose of this baseless slander is to lend cover to the reformist role of the SLL in relation to the Irish struggle. The attack is a lead into the allegation that our support for the IRA is "impressionist"; in fact it is the *Workers Press* which is impressionist. In the same editorial they state that the "terror" of the Provisionals is being used as a "weapon, to drive the Protestants behind the Craig-Paisley amalgam, and the Catholics reluctantly behind the IRA, ... it serves to drive a wedge between the Irish workers both Catholic and Protestant." In their editorial on 4th September 1971 they state that "... no socialist can tolerate or defend the indiscriminate bombings of the IRA."

PROVISIONAL "TERROR"?

The talk about Provisionals' "terror" is totally impressionist. A balanced analysis of the actions of the Provos, will show clearly that the main core of their attacks have been directed against the forces of British imperialism, and that their targets have been far from "indiscriminate". It is true that some actions, like the bombing of the Mountainview Tavern and the attack on the Electricity Board were very foolish (although the press refused to print the fact that they gave sufficient warning to clear the building, but the authorities chose to search it first). At the same time we should be very much aware of the role of the British press which has been deliberately covering up the significance of the various bombing attacks; a good example of this is the way in which a series of explosions in the last few months have been described as being directed against "schools" or "warehouses" or, in one instance, a "butcher's shop in Unity Flats". People familiar with Belfast recognised many of these as being British Army billets. In other words, a large number of targets were military, but were presented as civilian. Not bothering to make an analysis of these facts, the *Workers Press* goes along with the bourgeois press propaganda about "indiscriminate bombings". Of course they make the ritual genuflections before the altar of "defending the IRA against British imperialism", but join the rabble screaming abuse at them.

MEANINGLESS BANALITIES

Worse than their slander of the IRA is their complete inability to put forward any viable alternative policy for the

Irish workers. Their policy was admirably summed up in their Sept. 4th editorial: "Neither terror nor civil disobedience, but the mobilisation of the British and Irish workers in a common struggle to expropriate capitalism and set up the socialist dictatorship of Irish and British workers. That is the only road forward." The counterposing of these meaningless banalities to the complex problems confronting Irish revolutionaries is the essence of the SLL's method, and is the root of their reformism on the Irish question. From time to time the banalities receive the hint of a concrete demand, as in the editorial of Sept. 7th. "The task of British and Irish Marxists is not to separate the social and national question—as the revisionists do—but to integrate them in a common struggle of British and Irish workers to drive imperialism out of Ireland. The first major step is to make the Tory government resign." How precisely do the British workers help to drive imperialism out of Ireland? No suggestions from the SLL; but they do suggest that until they have thought that one out, the Irish workers should fall in behind the SLL's pet scheme, and make the British government resign. For the Irish revolutionaries to adopt this would be the height of folly: a) they should make it clear that a Labour government would maintain the same imperialist oppression of Ireland as the Tories, and even if they tried would not be able to let up on the repression; and b) they should be against any British government having anything to do with Ireland, as a matter of principle.

FACTS

When the SLL talk about a common struggle with the British workers, and unity of Catholic and Protestant workers, they totally ignore two important facts.

1. The British workers as yet are not prepared to force the withdrawal of imperialism from Ireland; and
2. The Protestant workers as yet, far from being prepared to unite with their Catholic brothers, are being polarised against them and are being more and more hegemonised by Paisley & Co. For the Catholic workers to submit to the level of these workers is to ask them to surrender and go back to their old situation. If, on the contrary, they press ahead with their struggle, topple the Stormont regime, and make it impossible for imperialism to keep a grip on the Six Counties, the mass of the Twenty-Six County working class will come with them, despite the attempts of Lynch to smash opposition. This struggle will only be culminated by the Irish workers taking power into their own hands; for them to do this, leaders with greater revolutionary understanding than the present IRA leadership will have to emerge. But the road to that possibility runs through the present struggle of the IRA. Only Irish revolutionaries who are part of that struggle will be capable of taking it further, and only British revolutionaries who support that struggle fulfil their responsibility to the Irish workers and to the British working class.

—Bob Purdie

I.S.

"INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM", the LABOUR COMMITTEE AGAINST INTERNMENT and the ANTI-INTERNMENT LEAGUE

Anyone who has read *Socialist Worker* recently will be aware of the existence of a body calling itself the Labour Committee Against Internment, and they will be aware that its aims are completely reformist and do not even include the unconditional release of all internees (they call for "Release of all internees or right of trial for all not released"), which shows a touching faith in Orange police state justice). *Socialist Worker* readers can also hardly fail to be aware that the driving force behind this campaign is the International Socialism group itself, which has issued instructions to all its branches

through the paper to collect signatures in support of the campaign from local M.P.s, trade union officials, etc. and which provides the London address for the Labour Committee.

What *Socialist Worker* readers may not be aware of is the existence of another London-based organisation called the Anti-Internment League, which is campaigning on the principled demands of "immediate release of all internees" and "immediate withdrawal of all British troops"

These are demands which I.S. claims to support, and indeed one I.S. member is on the committee of this organisation. Is it not, then, strange that this organisation never receives a mention in *Socialist Worker* while columns and columns of each issue of the paper are devoted to the ultra-reformist demands of the Labour Committee Against Internment?

"JUSTIFICATION"

I.S. members produce two "justifications" for this policy: firstly, that "socialists in the North" asked for such a body to be set up; and secondly, that the Labour Committee was established as a "credible" organisation much more rapidly than the Anti-Internment League. But revolutionaries do not base their activities on such appeals, but on class politics. We do not act as a "Red Cross" organisation—that can be left to the liberals. Revolutionaries are distinguished from liberals precisely by the fact that instead of throwing up their hands in horror, they seek to give a political explanation of events and show what is necessary for the struggle to develop towards the eventual overthrow of capitalism.

IS LIBERALISM DEAD?

But instead of raising the class issues, I.S. concentrate on the Labour Committee, providing a Left cover for Labour M.P.s and only helping to mystify the working class about the real nature of the struggle of the Irish people against British imperialism. It is revealing to compare their approach with that of Marx, who wrote, "I have done my best to bring about this demonstration of the English workers in favour of Fenianism" and stressed the right of the Irish to "Self-government and independence from England". John Palmer said at the first Labour Committee meeting that the reaction to internment had shown that British liberalism was dead. Unfortunately it isn't. It still lives on inside I.S. and the Labour Committee.

I.S. members will, of course, argue that although they support the Labour Committee they also put forward their own position on Ireland. True. But we judge organisations by what they do, not simply by what they say. The reason why the Labour Committee is a more "credible" organisation than the Anti-Internment League is precisely because, whatever their rhetoric, I.S. have devoted almost all their resources to the former, instead of giving serious

support to the attempt to build a united front in Britain in support of the Irish struggle.

The establishment of and backing given to the Labour Committee by I.S. marks a further drastic step in the rightward evolution of this group. It indicates, as Lenin said when writing on the Irish struggle in 1914, "the worst sort of opportunism, a neglect of their duties as democrats and socialists, and a concession to English reaction and the English bourgeoisie." It is a subjective approach which bases itself on an unprincipled capitulation to the most backward and chauvinist tendencies of the British working class, rather than on a Marxist analysis of the relationship of classes and the necessity of showing that every blow struck by the Irish people against British imperialism is a blow which weakens the British bourgeoisie and so advances the interests of the working class in this country. I.S. members would do well to consider Lenin's characterisation of every revolutionary who fails to raise these issues as "a scoundrel and an imperialist". The choice in the Irish struggle today is a simple one, and by their setting up of the Labour Committee, I.S. have shown that they put their own petty organisational interests before the interests of the struggle in Ireland.

—John Marston