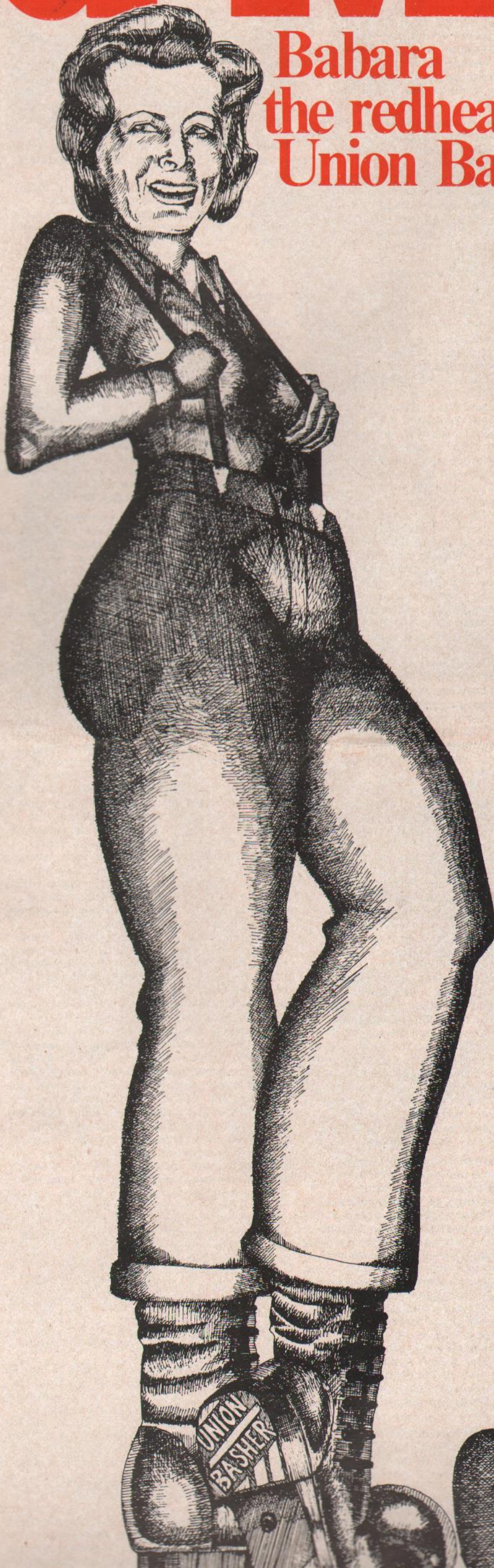


The

# Red Mole

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Babara  
the redhead  
Union Basher



*I'm going to get up and fight back!*

is devoted to developing both theory and revolutionary practice. of the frustrations and impotencies of the their origin in an empirical approach revolutionary practice. Without the deep-going processes which political events it is very easy to lose one's . A glance at the revolutionary gives many examples of extremely and well-meaning comrades who arrived at the weirdest of conclusions of a lack of perspective. A examination Parliamentary Labour Party membership by side with revolutionary journals of fifteen years ago is a sobering exercise. many of the "ultra-lefts" of yesteryear of entry into the Common Market more arms to Israel today.

Day is a good time for reflection on problems. It became—in the "great" days Second International—the occasion for democrats and "lefts" of all hues to salve consciences by making revolutionary . Next day they went back to their and promptly forgot their fine words. is still maintained today: it is a sight to see pot-bellied Labour aldermen marching behind red flags.

Day cabinet ministers will their left phraseology in a last-ditch rally militants to work for their in the coming general election. They will the hope of a Tory attack on the trade to scare their listeners into forgetting the attack on the workers.

is plenty of evidence that this talk will already doing so) confuse and disorient the revolutionary left. The first to remember is that the Tories will attack unions not because they are "bad" but because the crisis of British compels them to do so. Likewise a government, because it has rejected the solution to Britain's ills, will also be to attack the trade unions. Indeed, it is clear that the policies of Labour and will differ very little in

to help to understand why this is so, Red offers the following theses as a to discussion. Once a real and deep is achieved about the crisis of imperialism, socialists will be more to work out a strategy for its

the crisis of British capitalism is part of a crisis of capitalism. Since about the of the century, capitalism has been able to take mankind forward. This is a explanation for the twentieth century a period of war, revolutions, slumps and

the crisis of British imperialism has no solution or even hope of . The relative and absolute decline of imperialism has been one of the political processes of the twentieth . British imperialism commenced the century with an empire upon which "sun never set"—today, direct colonialism to off-shore islands like the and historic accidents like Gibraltar.

imperialism had an almost neo-colonialist through huge investments, with of Latin America, the Middle East and many countries in Europe—today United and, to an increasing extent, newer nations like Germany and Japan have replaced Britain in this field. The British ruled the seas and the British airforce were amongst the strongest in the —today British military power has to such an extent that the sending of a thousand troops to Northern Ireland threw

however, it would be a mistake to think that imperialism is dead or on the point of —only the British working class will put an end to "perfidious Albion". Through neo-imperialist forms of exploitation huge tribute is extracted from former colonies and other -developed countries. When the relation- of forces is favourable, British imperialism show its decayed and gnarled teeth: the civil war, the invasion of Anguilla show the character. But Suez was its final fling in to hold back the wheel of history by force on a massive scale. The drastic and decline is shown by its reaction to the events in Libya. The latter was one of imperialism's few successes in the and World War, in fact the country is a of British imperialism. Yet the new was able to order Britain out of the bases scarcely a murmur from Whitehall.

imperialism's economic, political and institutions were built on the basis of its dominant position—hence their archaic features. Now the basis for these has almost completely eroded, they thrown into a deep structural crisis in themselves to the new situation. British , long protected by imperial preferences, has to fight for markets against more opponents; it has been ill-equipped to because of the chronic under-investment by investors' preference for higher yields Empire. The City no longer finds itself in currency, commodity and transactions. The balance of payments is less and less shielded by investment

the Tory Party, once the great champion of "Jolly Old British Empire" and social , now tries to posture as a modern party with a mildly reformist policy. Labour Party, once the party of reform, is incapable of carrying out the mildest , since coming to power it has made the poorer and breaks the record with

mentary seats, and compelled to tolerate an extremely radical youth organisation—a far cry from the days when its leader, Lloyd George, was the most intelligent representative of British imperialism at the height of its power.

None of these parties has an answer to the crisis—principally because there is none—and all are thrown into a crisis just trying to find a policy to ameliorate the position. The two principal reasons for the crisis are both aspects of the development of the world revolutionary process. Britain's decline vis-a-vis the colonial revolution, other imperialisms and the workers states; and the changed relationship of forces between employers and workers in Britain itself. About the first factor, British imperialism, its institutions and parties can do nothing except react as the process develops. It will, furthermore, be difficult to change the relationship of forces between the working class and the bourgeoisie in Britain in the present world context.

4. The latest attempt to solve this crisis (or at least ameliorate it)—the Wilson Labour Government—has been an almost complete failure. Its sole major "success"—that of temporarily improving the balance of payments position—has been achieved mainly by attacking the living standards of the British people through monetary policies (especially the devaluation of the pound). However, the social function which the capitalist class hoped Labour would fulfil—that of instituting an incomes policy, thus incorporating the unions almost entirely into neo-capitalist "planning", has been foiled by the resistance of the workers. The Labour Government has also failed in its attempts to change decisively the relationship of forces between the working class and employers in particular key industries—docks, motor cars, printing, etc. In this sense, the struggle against the anti-trade union legislation, conducted under the leadership of the CP and certain sectors of the "left" trade union bureaucracy, was a partial success. However, because it was conducted under the leadership of these people, there are greater dangers that a variant of the incomes policy—that of incorporating productivity bargaining into all wage bargaining—will have some success.

The other, though much less important "success" of the Labour Government—that of helping to accelerate the rate of monopolisation of British industry—is one of the clearest indications of the class politics of the Wilson Government. However, even this "success" has an obverse side: the bringing together of workers in larger units and huge international and national monopolies creates the objective basis for a development of class consciousness. A corollary of the increasing trend towards monopolisation has been more and more combine shop stewards committees and working relations between different groups of trade unionists in particular industries. One of the results of all this has been the parity committee which, despite the disgusting behaviour of people like Scanlon, has been able to wring huge wage increases out of the employers. So even here the Labour Government's policies have reaped a very different harvest from the one it thought it was sowing.

5. The next possible attempt to solve the crisis of British imperialism—a "modern" Tory Government—seems no more likely to succeed. So much so that sections of bourgeois opinion are by no means certain that they want the Tories to win the next election. The position of the *Economist* is typical of this trend. However, the *Economist* does not tell the whole tale: a possible variant of trying to solve the immediate problems of British imperialism would be to try to carry out a massive cut in the standard of living of the British people by huge cuts in social services. There would, of course, be less resistance to this form of reducing living standards than to the equivalent cut in wages. However, even this solution would have its dialectic: the long-term effects of cutting social services would give rise to a deeper and more directly social opposition to capitalism. The Tory Government, because of its traditions and composition, would have less difficulty than a Labour Government in carrying out this kind of operation. It could even mobilise a great deal of "public support" by a massive campaign against "scroungers". However, there is no body of opinion in Britain which really thinks that the Tories have the answer to Britain's crisis.

6. Thus we have a perspective of continuous crisis—economic, social and political—with no bourgeois leadership capable of presenting a decisive policy for solving it in the immediate future. The usual solution in such a situation—a Labour Government—has been tried and found wanting. At present no bourgeois leadership (or its agencies) seems likely to want (or capable of) an outright confrontation with the working class. Some tendencies automatically assume that the Tories will begin an immediate attack on the trade unions, if returned in the next election. The Tories would, of course, feel more confident than Wilson does now, but they seem too astute to light-mindedly begin a process which will rapidly result in mass struggles against them. We can never rule out the possibility of the enemy making a mistake, but on balance it seems unlikely that the Tories will assist us in this respect.

7. This crisis will almost certainly be intensified by a number of factors: renewed balance of payments difficulties because of the U.S. recession (one of Britain's best export markets) and expected big increases in imports to rebuild stocks of raw materials which have been excessively run down in the last period; also there is likely to be a cost push inflationary pressure which effects prices of exports; — structural problems which will be worsened by any slow-down in the economy: regional

the leaderships of the traditional workers' organisations—both right and "left"—have always come to the rescue of capitalism, when it has faced them, by diverting and heading off struggles. However, there are a number of indications that these leaderships are less and less able to do this in this period:

1) the inability of the Labour Government to impose an incomes policy and the fact that it had to withdraw the penal clauses.

2) the inability of the right-wing trade union leaders to stop militant struggles against the Labour Government and employers; strike figures are eloquent testimony to this.

3) the decline in the grip of the Communist Party over militants which has acted as a second line of defence for the trade union bureaucrats in demobilising workers' struggles. The importance of the Communist Party's influence and role is shown by the way it controlled the one-day strikes last year. On the other hand, the recent miners' strike showed that its former dominant position in this field has declined and that the process is continuing. The CP was unable to stop its members from calling for the resignation of its nominee for NUM secretary, Lawrence Daly.

4) the fact that the young people of today have contempt for the leaderships of the traditional workers' organisations. There is no indication that young trade unionists take the leaders of their organisations (right or "left") seriously. In another sphere we can note that the membership of the LPYS and YCL has drastically declined since the rise of the youth vanguard.

But it would be a mistake to think that the social democrats and Stalinists have lost completely their ability to disarm the working class. At this point in time the stage is ripe for another variant of the social role of the bureaucracy of the workers' organisations: that of "left" social democracy in opposition making loud noises against an overtly anti-working class Tory Government. But there are big limits to the viability of such a manoeuvre: at the present stage, anything likely to trigger off mass actions by the working class presents the possibility of uncontrolled and unstoppable struggles breaking out. Labour in opposition would have to be careful how fiercely it criticised the Tories!

9. The combination of a semi-permanent crisis with the inability of any bourgeois leadership to solve it, and the fact that the leaderships of the traditional workers' organisations are less and less able to disarm the workers and youth, means we can look forward to a whole period of political, economic, industrial and social struggles, leading in some cases to explosions. It would be rash to predict the certainty of a "May" in Britain in the coming year or so, but certainly we have to do all in our power to be prepared for really stormy struggles which can break out very suddenly and be violent.

This is not to say that the level of working class consciousness has transcended an "economist" outlook. Whilst, on the one hand, there is a tremendous accumulated discontent, on the other there has been, amongst older workers especially, a decline in the level of consciousness. This is due to the treachery of the Labour Party leadership and the failure of a mass left to appear. However, the key thing is that more and more sections of workers are prepared to struggle. The task of the vanguard is to use these struggles to develop socialist consciousness amongst more and more layers of workers; hence the importance of inserting transitional demands into these struggles which always raise the question of workers' power.

This state of continuous crisis, with upsurges and even explosions, can continue for a protracted period but not indefinitely. Sooner or later a shift one way or the other will have to come. There will be a growing tendency in the ruling class to look for a solution via the creation of some kind of "strong state". An obvious example would be a Tory Government, with a huge majority and strong Powellite tendencies to give itself a mass base, which would pledge itself to "deal with the unions and the trouble-makers". Another possible model would be a coalition government brought into existence after some severe crisis. However, the "strong state" will not be brought into existence unless the working class has suffered big defeats.

A workers' solution to the present crisis would require a conscious leadership. None of the existing organisations is anything like approaching this and there is no sign of such a leadership arising "spontaneously" from the present struggles. In fact, it is only the strength of the workers' organisations and the worldwide favourable relationship of forces which has prevented big defeats from being inflicted on the working class in the period since the Second World War. Lack of a leadership, even a most primitive kind, has prevented the working class from gaining anything like it could from the present favourable conjunctural circumstances. Sooner or later, unless a leadership is built, defeats will be inflicted upon the working class and the way will be open for an evolution to the right in British politics.

Thus we have at most a few years to help to create a conscious leadership, largely from our own efforts. The alternative is clearly a decisive defeat for the working class and a period of reaction. In the longer term one can say that in the next few decades (maybe only one or two) we must create a conscious leadership in the advanced capitalist countries, capable of winning the struggle for power, or the likely alternative is disaster for mankind (say through a nuclear war).

10. If the bourgeoisie has a crisis of leadership, one can say that the workers' movement is in a worse state. The strategy of "Labour to Power" held by many left groups was premised upon the assumption that a period of Labour Govern-

because of the impotence of reformist schemes in a period of capitalist crisis and the consequent confusion and demobilisation. The behaviour of sectors of the left was an important contributing factor: part of the traditional (ex-Bevanite) left joined Wilson in attacking the working class (Barbara Castle is now chief advocate of the incomes policy), another part limited itself to impotent gestures, whilst evolving to the right just one pace to the left of Wilson (Paul Rose now castigates the Government for capitulating to the Libyans by withdrawing from the bases) and SLL chose to pull out of the Labour Party immediately after Wilson was elected (although it must be noted that its policy had been galloping in that direction for two or three years). The betrayals of the Labour Government and the impotence of the major left forces to oppose its rightward evolution had far-reaching effects in demoralising for a period whole layers of Labour Party and trade union activists. Thus the left wing of the Labour Party was weakened by the Labour Government and many thousands of activists were either demoralised or virtually depoliticised (although carrying on their trade union activities).

11. The situation of the left would be extremely gloomy if it were not for the coming onto the scene of a new force: the youth vanguard.

Before going on, it must be said that this youth vanguard in Britain is small and backward in comparison with other countries. The recent resurgence of student struggle and the inevitability of a huge crisis in all fields of education indicate that this youth vanguard will grow and develop in the next few years. It is also a question of what we do to help this growth and development.

The youth vanguard has come into existence with the following characteristics:

(a) it has emerged quite outside the framework of the traditional workers' organisations;

(b) it has been inspired by the Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions in particular and anti-imperialist struggles in general;

(c) it tends to be anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, anti-Stalinist, and is contemptuous of reform;

(d) it tends to equate organisation with bureaucracy;

(e) it has been unable to create any stable organisation of its own; and

(f) it is very internationalist-oriented and longs for unity with the working class.

Its full potentiality in Britain was shown by the size of the October 27th 1968 demonstration. Of the 100,000 on that demonstration a big majority were youth and various samples collected indicate that about two-thirds of the participants were for the overthrow of capitalism. With all this in mind, it is not surprising that nearly all the increase in size of the left groups has come from this milieu.

12. In addition to the new youth vanguard other likely reinforcements exist for the revolutionary potential of the British working class. These are:

(a) the black workers, who are overwhelmingly young proletarians and who are completely alienated from all the traditional parties of British capitalism;

(b) women workers, who are becoming more and more unionised and conscious of the double exploitation they suffer. The conscious factor is very important and the influence of the growing women's liberation movement is likely to be explosive among the young. Housewives, who will directly face the consequences of growing inflation, are likely to be drawn in too. The Government's "Equal Pay" law, even assuming it is not shelved after the general election, has all kinds of anomalies and will even worsen the position of some women. Its application and the expectations that it has aroused will help to strengthen militancy rather than damp it down providing there is some kind of leadership—even an economist one.

(c) newly unionised sectors. It is one of the many contradictions of modern capitalism that previously conservative sections of the working class—public employees, administrative staff, etc., can become very militant very quickly. Such sectors tend to fall behind in the wage race precisely because of their previous lack of militancy. Not having a history of struggle, they are not held back by leaders with a former "left" prestige. Lastly, as neo-capitalism is forced to rationalise more and more, these sections feel the pressures of the speed-up, etc. This not only creates general discontent—it "proletarianises" them by knocking out of their heads their former ideas of higher social status.

(d) the Irish immigrant population. The problem of Northern Ireland has no acceptable solution in foreseeable circumstances. The sending of troops, the granting of niggling reforms and lack of leadership enabled the Government to temporarily dampen down last year's struggles. But the relative stability has already broken down. If a real mass campaign could be developed in this country—even something as modest as the VSC in its best days—a really explosive situation would develop. The Irish in this country, who in their large majority support the oppressed Catholics, are bound by a million strands to the situation in Ireland. The situation in the Republic, already very volatile, is likely to be stirred up by a recession and developments in the nationalist movement. The Irish in this country are mainly workers in industry, building, etc. and tend already to be more militant than their English counter-parts.

All the above sections, together with the young workers and students, share two common characteristics: they will be relatively harder hit by a recession and they are more volatile in crisis situations. Their specific weight in the coming struggles will, therefore, be much greater than their numerical proportion would indicate.

# Productivity Deals: How not to fight them

*The Employers' Offensive: Productivity Deals and How to Fight Them.* Tony Cliff, Pluto Press, 6/-.

"Productivity bargaining" is by no means a recent development as such. It has been a constant feature of pay settlements in industry for some time now. However, there is undoubtedly a major difference between what is a perennial problem for management (squeezing more surplus value out of its work force) and their determined attempt, mediated and centralised through the State (DEP) to tie all wage claims to "productivity deals" which, as the CBI Vice-President admits, signify "...a new way of work (or life) for a new wage structure".<sup>(1)</sup>

The difference can indeed be measured by what Mr. Runge so euphemistically calls a "new way...of life". The only way employers can increase productivity is by undermining those traditional work practices which concretely represent the control of workers over the job and which "stand in the way of" efficiency. The Wilson Government has only too willingly supplied the spearhead in this operation, often whipping even "reluctant" and "soft" employers into line.<sup>(2)</sup> MDW in the car and engineering industry, OMO in public transport, Devlin on the docks and O & M in the offices cut right across those limited measures of power which the shop-floor has won in struggle over the years—rights to mutually decide wages and conditions, safeguards against redundancy and work intensification, etc.

Running right through productivity deals is an implicit attack on such power, on the extent of participation in decision-making which is concretised in the shop steward. By increasing the primacy of management in the factory or garage, which is the natural result of MDW, "labour mobility" or those "penalty clauses" like those introduced at Fords, the role of the steward is rendered more and more superfluous, as Cliff points out.<sup>(3)</sup> In other words, because they attempt to restore "managerial prerogative"<sup>(4)</sup> at the expense of shop-floor control, productivity deals represent a political problem. In this sense they cannot be divorced from the general strategy of the ruling class which has tried through the Incomes Policy and anti-trade union legislation (which culminated in the TUC's "Programme for Action") to equally undermine the strength of the labour movement, particularly at grass-roots level.

## LEADERSHIP

If these deals have had some measure of success in their implementation to date—and Cliff correctly estimates about 6 million workers are now operating them in some form or another—it is not only because of the "soft-soap" techniques of management who are very adept at luring rank-and-file negotiators into the productivity trap by means of huge wage carrots.

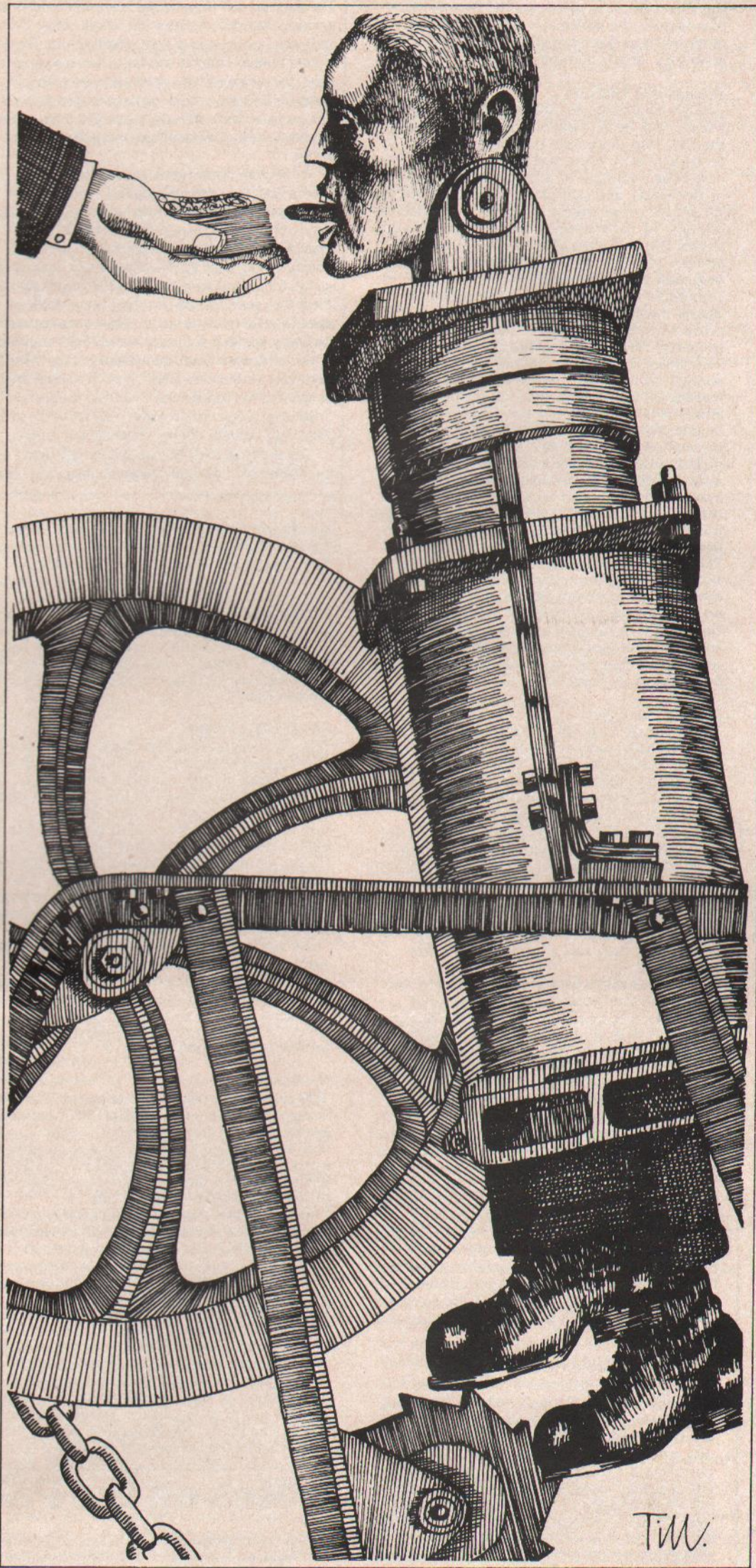
It is primarily due to the level of consciousness of a whole strata of trade unionists who, rising to leading positions during boom-time conditions, are often quite unable to grasp the long-term strategic harm of such deals. This is primarily the reason why even the "lefts" in the union hierarchy have embraced them so willingly—Scanlon helping the introduction of MDW in the car and engineering industry and Jack Jones pushing containerisation on the docks and OMO in transport. Captivated with the idea of a "high-wage economy" (i.e. *lacking an alternative socialist policy*), their aim is reduced to getting the best they can out of such deals with certain "reservations" and "qualifications". It is an identical attitude they showed in the struggle against "In Place of Strife" which, because they accepted the Government's premise that militants had to be disciplined, ended in the TUC compromise.

The struggle against productivity deals is not then merely an industrial one concerned with wages and conditions: because such deals are an integral part of an offensive strategy by the ruling class to destroy the independence and power of the shop-floor, it is a political one which is inseparable from the fight inside the trade unions to create an alternative socialist leadership.

## CLIFF'S PREMISES

Cliff is quite clear on the strategic importance of these deals by seeing them as a deliberate and well-planned attempt to "shift the balance of forces in industry significantly in its (the employers') favour".<sup>(5)</sup> His concept of combatting them also correctly pivots around the question of power, or, as he himself asks, "...how far can we improve our control over the situation, maintain and advance the level of organisation inside the factory and limit the management's power to dictate to the workers?"<sup>(6)</sup>

But "control" is an ambiguous word: it depends very concretely on how you evoke an awareness of it and what political forms such an awareness takes. In Cliff's approach, it nowhere extends beyond a syndicalist concept which sees the struggle for "power" confined to the shop-floor. His starting point, despite affirmations to the contrary, is not "how to help forge through our intervention and propaganda an alternative political leadership" but "how can we get the best deal possible within a given situation". The two approaches are not mutually exclusive—but they are



resistance to any form of productivity deal, the logic of his position is to be drawn into the deal in order not to become "isolated" from the rank and file—a logic which actually incurs his criticism of those who stand out, warn and explain what productivity deals really mean:

"The alternative of maintaining an inflexible attitude of rejection of any productivity deal can lead to a catastrophic division between the stewards and their membership which will be eagerly exploited by the employer and may lead...to the acceptance of a far worse deal than was necessary."<sup>(6)</sup>

This is, of course, the logic of syndicalism because it starts within the employers' terms of reference that only through productivity deals can wage claims be granted. He surrenders a principle without firing a single shot and all that remains, as we shall see, is to make tactical gains within these confines.

## BEST DEAL POSSIBLE

It is not as if the image Cliff presents—of a money-hungry rank and file pressuring its leaders to talk "package deals"—is correct. In the case of the London busmen's productivity deal in '67 and the engineers' in '68, the exact reverse was the case—it was the union leadership, particularly the officials, who had to

But even if the rank and file are tempted by the "carrot"—which is mainly because no consistent struggle has been waged to explain to them the implications of such deals—it is important to stand firm against the concept that workers, through an attack on their control, should shoulder the responsibility of the Government's rationalisation plans. It is not a question of numbers—although the minority such a fight will win to begin with will be a majority after the workers have tasted the deal in practice—it is a question of trying to enlarge the political consciousness of the workers through such deals. Cliff's whole approach blurs over this aspect: such comments as "the girl who starts by saying No gets a higher price for her virtue than the girl who talks money at the onset"<sup>(7)</sup> panders to the syndicalist leanings of many stewards today and presupposes, of course, that the "virtue" will be sold.

## PRINCIPLE?

It is very important to understand the big psychological step implied in moving from rejection of a deal to acceptance. It means demonstrating before the membership that you are willing to sell conditions for cash. From that point on, any objections you might raise on the concrete implementation of it are

the best you can out of such a deal within a framework imposed by the employers. Cliff himself admits this is his aim when he writes

"We must always remember [!] to start opposing the Productivity Deal and then later if necessary, retreat to a position where we try and get the best out of the deal we can."

The point is that by accepting the principle of this type of bargaining, the differences that remain will appear to the rank and file as secondary issues. This is precisely where management is so astute. The implication of a productivity deal (i.e. redundancy etc.) can, as Cliff correctly states, "so early on be seen the shop floor".<sup>(8)</sup> They cannot be seen because all management wants is a commitment to a principle which will be concretised in many further stages and which commits the men to a pattern of bargaining which accepts the premise that conditions can be sold for cash. As Donovan clearly states in his report:

"In productivity bargaining, the signature marks the end of the negotiating stage: and beginning of the implementation."<sup>(9)</sup>

## "SAFEGUARDS"

It is because of this that Cliff's main strategy of fighting the deal from "within"—is so dangerous. It blurs over the qualitative step which acceptance of the deal means—but, more than that, it puts forward a pattern of demands which are by no means unacceptable to management. Cliff's pivotal demand is that of "mutuality". Recognising the fact that productivity deals hit at the power of the shop floor, his answer is to assert, through this demand, the control already won through past struggles. As he himself puts it:

"Whether it be mobility of labour, job evaluation, overtime or safety, the demand for mutuality strikes a dagger at the heart of a productivity deal..."<sup>(10)</sup>

The point is, of course, that this is not true. Why is it, may we ask, does Jack Jones, no less explain his adherence to productivity with precisely this reservation? As he recently said in a speech in Essex: "We don't quibble on the principle of negotiating efficiency deals provided the principle of mutuality is agreed." "Mutuality" is by no means incompatible with management's long-term plans for factory shake-ups—indeed, it is often actively encouraged by them as a means of ensuring the union is implicated as a co-partner in any changes that may later prove unpopular on the shop floor! If Cliff isn't aware of this, may we quote to him the Rootes Coventry Deal (1967), the Lucas CAV deal or the Otis Agreement among many others—particularly the latter which states:

"...the immediate target of the company to reduce time standards through negotiation and mutual agreement by an appropriate amount of six million minutes."

This is not to say such procedures are standard practice in all agreements—it depends on how far the management think they will have to go in making concessions. But they are quite amenable to such demands provided they get across the principle of Measured-Day Work, "labour mobility", O & M, etc. Why in heaven's name does Cliff think they are so keen on losing stewards taking courses in work-study, etc.—some unions like the ETU already provide their own? Precisely because they can then come back and "mutually" agree to management's changes after they have been suitably indoctrinated in management's approach!

## NEGATIVE APPROACH?

Cliff's book is undoubtedly of value for the information it presents concerning the nature and extent of productivity deals. But he fails to suggest, in his strategy for combatting them, an approach which goes beyond the old syndicalist approach of "getting the best you can" out of the deal. The demands formulated by Cliff, precisely because they are tactical manoeuvres within the confines of the Government's strategy, are thus meaningless.

This is not to suggest that a socialist approach to such deals should be, as he terms them, "an empty negative" approach. They should be a clear rejection tied to a series of positive transitional demands which assert not only the power already won at shop-floor level but which seek to extend that power as part of building an alternative socialist leadership. Such a programme is illustrated in *A Socialist Policy for the Trade Unions* which seeks to group around a genuine revolutionary programme all militants and socialists in the labour movement.<sup>(11)</sup>

A. D. Scott

## NOTES

- (1) P. Runge: *The Relations of Productivity to Price and Wage Control*, p.14.
- (2) cf. e.g. Barbara Castle's intervention in the London busmen's productivity negotiations in 1967.
- (3) Chapter 4, "Undermining the shop steward", p.25.
- (4) P.212.
- (5) P.212.
- (6) P.212.
- (7) P.216.
- (8) P.23.
- (9) Donovan Commission, Report No. 39, "Evidence of Esso Petroleum Co. Ltd.", p.212.

# Pakistanis

The myth of racial inferiority has been used to explain and facilitate centuries of imperialist domination and exploitation, and large sections of the working class have been successfully imbued with racist attitudes. Some of the "reasons" given for racialism—immigrants live in overcrowded conditions, are noisy, have wide noses and black skins—could of course just as well be reversed—Englishmen are dull, lifeless, and occasionally violent, they eat boring and disgusting food, have blotchy pink skins... They are no more than rationalisations for a much deeper phenomenon. Similarly with some of the excuses given for attacking Pakistanis: they don't speak English, they don't mix, they don't fight back. Nor is the view that racialism is caused by competition for jobs and housing adequate; the problem of racialism would not automatically disappear with better housing and full employment, any more than the social and material problems of the British people would be solved if the immigrants went away. Racialism has by now become deeply embedded in the consciousness of British people, and has a superstructural life of its own. But it is clear that the ending of capitalist exploitation is a precondition for eradicating the poison of racialism.

Racialism has acquired an additional usefulness for British capitalism, although its explosive dangers are also apparent to the authorities (this is one of the contradictions of their position): it serves to divide the oppressed against themselves, and to divert white workers from the real source of their grievances. Poor housing conditions, bad schools, high taxes, can all be blamed on immigrants; not openly by official Tory and Labour spokesmen, but the task is adequately performed by Powell and his like. The skinheads, as the article below makes clear, have a quite definite class consciousness, and they are prepared to attack the authorities, particularly the police, and property. But they also attack Pakistanis. There is some evidence that their attacks may be organised by fascist elements; meetings in a particular part, it is said, have been infiltrated by agents of the Pakistani community and reported to the police. When the skinheads' violence is channelled in

## ONE MAN WHO WILL FIGHT BACK

—How long have you been living here? What work do you do?

I came to Birmingham three years ago, and have been living in the East End for one and a half years. I work in a tailor's, making ladies' coats.

—How do the attacks on Pakistanis happen?

Sometimes people come and ask the time; if you can't answer, they just punch you. Or they may ask for a cigarette, or matches; when the Pakistani starts to give them, they will take out a knife and say give us money. I have been attacked three times. Once I was going to a coffee shop. A girl came up to me and said, "Do you want me?" I said, "No." Then 15 or 16 white fellows came to beat me. They broke my head. I called for the police; they took me, they didn't charge the white people, only me, and the proprietor of the cafe, and people who were working there, and another Pakistani who was in another room, all Pakistanis; I was charged with fighting, although I said the others had started it. The case hasn't been heard yet.

Another time I was going to a party; I was running; the police stopped me and said I had been fighting; I had not been fighting, I was doing nothing; I was charged and fined £5; my friend who was with me was fined £20.

Another time I was beaten up, I told the police, but they took no notice. I was a member of the Pakistan Welfare Association, but they did nothing for me. I got a lawyer for myself, and paid for him—he is a Pakistani—because my English is bad.

—Up to now you say you haven't fought back. Are you going to fight now?

Now, if anyone attacks me, I shall fight; I have to defend myself. Before I didn't fight with anyone. If I want to stay in this country, I shall have to defend myself. If they come with a knife, we shall take a knife. If they come with a gun, we shall take a gun. If they come with a petrol bomb, we shall take a petrol bomb. If they are going to throw the petrol bomb, we must throw the petrol bomb; otherwise we will die.

—Do you have a way of communicating with your friends if anyone is beaten up?

We get information about people being beaten up by telephone; we have to tell each other if anyone is beaten up.

If it was in my country, I could beat them; but when I can't speak English, it's difficult.

—Do most of the Pakistanis living here agree that you must fight back?

Many of my friends agree; most of my community. We must not be dogs or animals, but men, in this country. Some are scared; they don't speak English; they say this is not my country. I shall be here two or three years, then go home, so it's not worth fighting. Before everyone thought we should not fight; now, if we are beaten, 180 want to fight back, 20 don't want to.

—Do some people not want to fight because they want to have good relations with the police, to rely on the police?

No, the police don't help anyway, we can't rely on them, whatever we do. We must rely on ourselves. We are stronger than English people; because their mothers feed them with their bottles, our mothers feed us from the breast. Now the English will only attack us if they

this direction, it is, whatever the reasons (lack of evidence, the police say; but this has not deterred them from arresting Pakistanis involved), largely ignored.

### Skinheads in Uniform

Attacks on Pakistanis, in the East End and elsewhere, have been going on for some years. In the East End there have been no police prosecutions of white attackers, although there have been a number of arrests and convictions of Pakistanis, and there have been some successful private prosecutions of whites by Pakistani lawyers. As the statement reproduced opposite shows, the police are able to control these attacks, once forced into action by their fear of organised Pakistani patrols. The Pakistani community is convinced that the police are simply unwilling to give them the same protection that they give to whites, or to property. The police force in the East End is 25% under strength, while it is fully up to strength in the West End. And self-defence is considered legitimate from, for example, jewellers in the West End and property owners, but not for Pakistanis whose lives and safety are threatened, since of course successful and organised resistance by Pakistanis to gang attacks would pose serious threats to the system. In addition, it would in fact be surprising if the police, given their authoritarian position and their function in protecting the system, were not racist; some militant Pakistanis have referred to "skinhead-police", skinheads in uniform. The police deliver their own form of summary justice, regularly beating up Pakistanis and other black immigrants whom they arrest on minimal evidence and may afterwards release: hardly necessary to officially reintroduce flogging, as is occasionally proposed by Tories in Parliament.

### "A Few Hooligans"

The death of Tosir Ali, the press headlines, and the skinheads' open statements on television about Paki-bashing (which the police chose to ignore) and publicised statements on the need for Pakistanis self-defence have forced some reaction from the authorities. They have claimed that they are increasing patrols. But their main reaction appears to have been to attempt to reduce the militancy of the Pakistani community: by claiming that the police "are doing their best", and by denying the existence of racialism, both among the police and in the population and the skinhead gangs themselves; it is merely, they say, a question of "a few hooligans".

The authorities have attempted to give the impression that Tosir Ali was murdered by Pakistanis, not by whites. The police issued a statement that skinheads were not involved in the murder of Tosir Ali; in answer to enquiries, they said that they thought it was a matter of private vengeance between Pakistanis, but admitted that they had "no evidence either way". They also picked up a Pakistani named Ryaset Ullah, who had been beaten up on two occasions, had been ignored by the police, and had had his story publicised in the press and on TV; they took him to the police station, kept him about six hours, accused him of murdering Tosir Ali, told him he was "a liar, fucking Moslem" when he denied it, and beat him up; the evidence which apparently allowed them to average themselves for the publicity was that Ullah had taken a suit stained with blood from his beatings-up to the laundry. Other Pakistani "suspects" have been similarly questioned and harassed.

### Clapping and Subservience

On Saturday April 18th a public meeting was called by the quite unrepresentative National Federation of Pakistani Associations. The meeting was intended to undermine the effects of a meeting previously called for Sunday by the militant Pakistani Workers' Union (PWU). The Saturday meeting was filled partly with Pakistanis brought in from Birmingham and West London, some of them, like the officers of the National Federation, restaurant owners with property interests at stake; but it nevertheless drew only about 600 people, compared with over 1,000 on Sunday. It was a manifestation of extreme Uncle Tomism. On the platform were two police officers and Mr. Peter Shore, MP, who had originally been invited to the Sunday meeting, but had chosen to come to the obedient clapping and subservience of Saturday's meeting. The speeches were a series of appeals to Pakistanis not to "take the law into their own hands"; the only speaker who did not make such an appeal was Bishop Trevor Huddleston, who made the point that law and order based on racialism was not law and order.

Shore and the policemen claimed, to clapping, that they were doing all they could. They used the meeting to deny the existence of racialism, or "bad community feeling", as Shore preferred to put it. Shore thought that television had made "a grave error" in exposing the existence and views of the skinhead "Paki bashers". The police stated: "If a Pakistani is assaulted, he is not being singled out by any group as far as we know." The police, they said, would do everything in their power to protect everybody, whether Pakistani, Chinese or English, "white, brown, yellow, pink or blue". But they also attempted to blame the Pakistanis for what was happening. Pakistanis must realise that they were part of British society, and that the police were servants of this society; they didn't understand British laws and they didn't

## WHAT IS A SKINHEAD?

The skinhead cult has emerged from, and appeals to, working class kids who have left school before O-levels and work in labouring or light unskilled jobs. Revolving around football matches and the violence ensuing from them, the skinheads have developed very meticulous standards of dress—mohair suits, expensive shirts, and genuine levis. Their attitudes are simply those of their parents but they translate them more readily into action.

A Pakistani student gave us the following impressions: the skinheads originally defined themselves against the greasers (long hair, motor bikes and dirty). Whereas the greasers have tended to move towards the hippy scene and dropping out of the system, I have heard the skinheads attack trade union leaders for making compromises which eventually affect their pockets, and also the gunner who'll try to squeeze out as much as he can. When a trainee chef at the Savoy said that it costs at least £25 for an evening dinner at his work-place, his mates shouted: "That's more than I live on in a week" and "It's about time we spanked the fuckers one". None of the greaser "Yeah man, you know like man, you know it's a bad scene man, but let's not get uptight about it (man?)"

One skinhead told me that, just as they didn't like the greasers with their oily hands, so they didn't like

standards of proof (except, it appears, when Pakistanis are being prosecuted) and evidence was hard to get. Many of the difficulties between "you and us", they said, came from misunderstanding. Therefore they were appointing a liaison officer. He would "be able to assure you that we have done everything that we could", "help you to understand the laws of the land", "assure you of special interest", welcome you to Tower Hamlets, and offer you "cups of tea".

### Peace-loving People

The Uncle Toms, for their part, assured their "distinguished guests" that the Pakistanis were peace-loving people, appealed for "peace and order", said the police will look after us, and asked the police, the Pakistani High Commission, the government, the press, etc. to make greater efforts on their behalf. Mr. Jo Hunte, Community Relations Officer (black), said we should take our difficulties to "the powers that be", that immigrants had to show the host population they were skilful and useful, people of honour and credit, that only "over my dead body" would violence be used against violence, that he worked in close collaboration with the police, and that nobody could tell him black was derogatory; it just happened he was over-baked. Interruptions from the audience were smothered and profusely apologised for.

### Harassment

This meeting seems to have been the culmination of a series of attempts, by police agents, Uncle Toms and others, to sow confusion among the Pakistani community, and introduce doubts among people previously fairly united on the need to organise their own protection; doubts based on talk of "Communists", extremists, advocates of indiscriminate violence against all whites; the turning of vigilantes into a dirty word. In addition, the police have begun attacks on the embryonic patrols which exist: when seven young Pakistanis went to see what had happened to two Pakistani kids who had been beaten up, they were thrown out of a cafe and two of them were arrested by the police outside, although they had not been involved in any fighting; the police said they had no right to walk around in a group. But when they stopped another group of Pakistanis, searched them and found a penknife, the Pakistanis, for the first time, challenged the right of the police to stop

the Pakistanis with their greasy hair and their greasy ways. Also the greasers are for Vietnam and the Pakistani protest demos so if the greasers like the Paks we don't. The West Indians on the other hand aren't sneaky; they're sort of cool like and produce good music and dancing. Also they dress properly—unlike the Pakistanis.

The skinheads see the police as those who restrain the free flow of enjoyment of football—it becomes "us" and "them". They seem to think that the police are against the West Indians and the skinheads, hence making them common sufferers. But after having sworn at the police they say the usual "But I suppose somebody's got to do it." The Race Relations Act is seen as a weapon in the hands of the Pakistanis to beat the white men with, to get a council house before the whites do, and all the skinheads can do is to beat the Pakistanis so that they go away. Often instances like this typical one are given: "My old man has been living in this dump since he was a child and when he put his name down at the council, the Pakistanis got in before him though they have only been here for a month". When I asked them whether they thought it was the fault of the council for not building more houses, the answer was that the council was afraid of being blackmailed by the Race Relations Board.

them, and the police were reduced to saying that they would take them in the next time they found them "walking around" (a new offence, it appears, in English common law).

The PWU meeting on Sunday was so big that it had to spill over into two halls. At the meeting it was announced that the PWU would organise a demonstration on Sunday May 3rd, to march from Speakers Corner. Appeals were made for Pakistanis to organise themselves in self-defence; the right of all men to protect themselves was asserted. It was pointed out that the East Londoners themselves, not the police, stopped the fascists coming through in Cable Street in the '30s; there was a tradition of anti-fascist struggle in the East End which must be maintained. The Pakistanis would not allow themselves to be massacred like the Jews in Germany; they would fight back. Vigilantes would be formed, not to attack Englishmen, but to patrol. Pakistanis must go out and destroy evil forces, fight for a collapse of their enemies, prove to the racists that there is a limit to their patience. They would not accept that there should be one law for whites, another for blacks. If the state could not protect them, they would protect themselves. Pakistanis must not live as slaves but as human beings.

### Black Solidarity

It is clear that the Pakistani community is emerging from its isolation and relative non-involvement in politics. The events of the last few years, and especially of the last two weeks, have demonstrated to Pakistanis the hollowness of the pretence that the British state upholds and protects the rights of all sections of the community, and that all are equal before the law. Their situation forces them, perhaps more quickly than other sections of the working class, into a consciousness of their oppression and a determination to organise themselves for their own defence and to fight for their rights. The PWU meeting was strongly supported by other sections of the black community, and it was emphasised that they should unite in solidarity against oppression. The black community can thus become one of the most advanced and militant sectors in the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism.

The Red Mole declares its solidarity with the Pakistani Workers' Union demonstration on May 3rd.

Teresa Hayter

## Notes on the Paki action

Why pick on Pakistanis? The answer, now accepted by both aggressor and victim, is that the Pakistanis don't fight back. Most Pakistanis don't fight back. Most Pakistanis see the immediate solution as being along lines of self-defence. The idea of "police protection" has long since become a joke—these East Enders have no illusions about who the police protect. The grim fact is that self-protection constitutes guarding oneself against the skinheads AND the police.\* To this end Pakistanis in the East End have been encouraged by the success of citizens' street patrols in the Euston area where "Paki-bashing" has become rare. Similarly, the knowledge that West Indians are not readily singled out for physical assaults due to their reputation for offering fierce resistance, has convinced the majority of Pakistanis of the urgency of casting off such patronising epithets as "a docile and peace-loving people" (foisted upon them by ex-colonials), and to show that courage the ability to resist acts of terrorism are just as much part of their character.

However, even some of those who subscribe to these views are overwhelmed by the difficulties of organising the 6,000 or so Pakistanis in the area. Personal self-defence techniques are clearly not very applicable to old people, and in any case, a Pakistani is seldom attacked by one or two thugs, but by a pack of them. In such circumstances the best method is that of escape. Vigilante groups would no doubt reduce the attacks, but the police have already threatened to disrupt any such preventative measures. Youths who have dared to defend themselves against their attackers have more often than not been charged with assault. For a young Pakistani lad a steel comb or a blunt penknife found on his person (and arbitrary frisking is not uncommon) carries the risk of being called "offensive weapons".

Militant Pakistanis are of the opinion that while these obstacles have to be faced realistically, it would

action on the part of the community to defend their lives and property. As a West Indian militant put it, "In England your home is your castle; but if you can't defend it, they'll take it away from you."

Opposition to any self-defence whatsoever comes from an unrepresentative but vocal minority, bolstered by MPs, police and the Establishment in general. These puppets of the Establishment reiterate calls for "law and order", wilfully ignoring the question of whose laws they are and what sort of order they uphold—questions that every immigrant and industrial militant, white and black, has to ask himself.

To some extent, this slavish attitude can be explained by the fact that some people are afraid of the consequences of any action, even of a purely defensive kind, believing that the reaction to karate-trained Pakistanis will be increased brutality and violence; that vigilante groups will provoke more organised attacks. Behind all this is the fear of being crushed by the weight and power of the Establishment and the sheer numbers of the white population.

A darker side of the situation is the not infrequent attacks made on Pakistanis by members of other immigrant groups, Cypriots, Turks, Indians and West Indians. This tragic fact, however, illustrates the causal elements of the race situation in Britain: the result of poverty, exploitation and an imperialist ideology which seeks to divide national groups against one another in the interests of the capitalist status quo. In the East End each community competes with the others for poor housing, sweated jobs and illusory status. It is not unknown for exploited people to turn in on themselves. It parallels the case of the exploited worker who identifies himself with the bosses and attacks his mates with words and attitudes borrowed from the boss.

Tanveer Khan

\* Facts about police harassment and partiality are

# BOURGEOIS JUSTICE FOR PAKISTANI WORKERS

*This is a slightly shortened version of a leaflet put out by the Pakistani Workers' Union and the Working People's Party of England. We are publishing it because it shows that attacks on Pakistanis had been going on for some time before the recent quite well-publicised attacks in East London, and also because it gives some information on the role played by the police, about which little has been said in the recent press reports.*

## MEMORANDUM CONCERNING ATTACKS ON PAKISTANI PEOPLE IN LONDON

Attacks on Pakistani people in the London area have been growing more common in the last few years. So far the Metropolitan Police have failed to take effective action to end this racist violence. On the contrary, they have seemed more intent on prosecuting those Pakistanis who have resorted to self-defence.

### Robbery With Violence in Euston Area

There are 800 to 1,000 Pakistani working people living in the Euston Goodge Street area of London, mainly restaurant and catering workers in the West End and railway workers at the North London terminals.

For years these people have been persecuted by small gangs of white thugs who attack lone Pakistani workers, beat them up and rob them of what money and valuables they have on them. These attacks have happened mainly at weekends and late at night or in the early hours of the morning.

Over thirty such cases involving over fifty Pakistani people were documented in detail by the Pakistani Workers Union (PWU), Working People's Party of England (WPPE), Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD) and other organisations during the summer months of 1967 and 1968.

### Appeals to the Authorities

Throughout 1967 and early 1968 appeals were made to the police, to local councillors, and MPs to get these attacks stopped. Nothing happened. No arrests were made and on one occasion the police asked the Pakistani victim of one attack, "Why didn't you catch them?"

Eventually in May 1968 the WPPE and PWU organised a public meeting at Student Movement House in Camden where Pakistani, West Indian and English people overwhelmingly declared that these attacks must be stopped and the streets of London made safe. Patrols were formed to provide self-defence for the people in the area.

The national and local press, present at this meeting, splashed stories of "black extremists" advocating the use of knives and dynamite.

A well-known reporter on a large circulation Sunday paper refused to touch the story when he heard that "white English" people would be patrolling with their black brothers. Apparently it would only be news if it were black against white, instead of the people against the thugs.

The BBC nibbled at the story but eventually failed to publicise the facts when they were refused permission to televise the actual patrols and individuals patrolling. It seemed that the BBC was out only to sensationalise rather than to help mobilise decent public opinion.

### An Arrest

On June 2nd 1968 a street patrol arrested two white thugs who had just attacked Mr. Nazir Uddin, beaten him and robbed him of £10 and his rent book and personal papers. One thug escaped but the other was handed over to police officers from Tottenham Court Road Police Station. Members of the public came forward as witnesses of the whole incident and about half a dozen such witnesses gave their names and addresses to the police.

The CID at Tottenham Court Road were "unable" to trace the other thug who had the money and rent book. In September the case against the arrested thug was dismissed at the Old Bailey "for lack of evidence". Although the police were "prosecuting", they had not bothered even to contact any of the witnesses, let alone call on them to give evidence.

This whole episode was a bitter but useful reminder about "justice" in our present society.

### A Turning Point

However, this arrest had proved a turning point and immediately thereafter the police from Tottenham Court Road and Albany Street Stations had massive patrols every weekend in the Euston area, arresting seven thugs themselves in the next two months. Before the arrest by the defence patrol the police had made no arrests in over three years of such attacks.

The June 2nd arrest by our own patrol also had a good effect on the morale of the Pakistani community. On June 9th, when an African school-teacher and a Pakistani worker were attacked near the Middlesex Hospital by a score of white hooligans chanting "Enoch! Enoch!", some local Pakistanis and an Englishman went to their assistance and helped drive the thugs off.

The police were fairly quickly on the scene and picked up nine of these young thugs but only charged three of them. Then they also arrested two Pakistani workers several streets away who had not even seen the fight, let alone taken part in it. These two men were then charged together with the three young thugs

weapons"—an offence which carries a prison sentence.

At first the two Pakistanis were refused legal aid, although the same magistrate granted the two young English thugs legal aid at once. The case was not heard at the Old Bailey until January 1969 and meantime one of the Pakistanis was unable to visit his sick wife in Pakistan while awaiting trial on bail.

### Police Defeat

After one day's hearing at the Old Bailey the judge called a private conference with counsel for the prosecution and defence and it was agreed that all five accused should plead guilty to possessing offensive weapons (one of the Pakistanis accused had a spoon in his hand with which he had been eating his dinner), the other charge against all five being dropped by the prosecution. The accused were then all bound over to be of good behaviour for two years and were then discharged.

The three misguided young Englishmen, on leaving the dock, apologised to and shook hands with the two Pakistanis. The whole episode was thus a partial defeat for the Metropolitan police in their attempt, on the one occasion when they had been compelled to act against a thug attack, to make it appear that Pakistanis were at least equally guilty with their attackers. This partial victory was achieved by a combination of vigorous self-reliant defence against the racist attacks and equally vigorous and persistent bringing of the police behaviour to public notice.

### Fire Bomb

Over the next twelve months there were only two or three sporadic incidents in the Euston area. The morale of the people improved accordingly. They had learned that it was better to stand up and fight against injustice and oppression than to suffer in silence.

However on Saturday 23rd August 1969 about 11.30 p.m. Mr. Ashur Miah was attacked by three white thugs near his home at 219 Gower Street North. He ran to his door, knocked, and was let in, one of his pursuers getting in just behind him. The door was then

closed against the other attackers who continued to knock and tried to burst the door making a large hole in the panelling. Someone in the street rang for the police, who on arrival took the three attackers away making no charge against them.

The next day (Sunday) the residents of 219 became anxious at seeing people hanging around around outside the house. They informed Albany Street Police Station, but no one came.

About 10 p.m. a petrol bomb was thrown at the house from a passing car. It fortunately hit the brickwork at the side of a window, leaving a large black burn on the brickwork. The petrol burned out outside the house. Fire brigade, police and an ambulance arrived quickly, but fortunately there were no injuries to people and not very serious injuries to the building.

Following this second attack the chairman of the PWU saw the chief superintendent at Albany Street Station, together with the police liaison officer for race relations for the district on the evening of Friday 29.8.69. He was informed by the police officers that they had secured the car from which a petrol bomb had been thrown and that they were considering charges against three Englishmen with regard to the incident, together with charges against two Pakistanis alleged to have "molested a white woman" and who were thus alleged to have "provoked" the attack. Mr. Ashur Miah, accused of this molestation, denies it absolutely. At the same time four Pakistanis living at 219 Gower Street North (the house attacked) were charged with "causing grievous bodily harm and possessing offensive weapons" because they had protected themselves against the thug who had burst into their house while pursuing Mr. Ashur Miah. It will be noted that when the police originally came to remove the attackers on the Saturday evening no charge had been made, and no arrest made of the Pakistanis involved.

There have been four attacks against this house in the past three years.

The following week on Bank Holiday 1.9.69, Mr. Kushid Alom was on his way from Caledonian Road to see a friend at Levita House, Chalton Street, N.W.1. As he entered

Chalton Street a group of a dozen youths asked him for cigarettes and money and then attacked him. He managed to reach his friend's flat. They both went out and asked bystanders outside the betting shop in Chalton Street if any of them had witnessed the assault. The answer they got was to be attacked by three men. Mr. Alom had his arm broken by a watchman's lamp used as a club. He spent several weeks in University College Hospital and underwent several operations. No arrest has been made to date.

### Attacks in Other Areas

Euston is of course not the only area where attacks on Pakistanis are frequent. In the Caledonian Road area of Islington there is a similar pattern of racist violence. Over sixteen recent incidents of unprovoked violence against Pakistani people have been documented by the PWU and in no case have the police taken effective action.

In East London too, in the Aldgate area where there is a large Pakistani population, scores of assaults have taken place; the PWU have been collecting details in over twenty cases. (The "World in Action" team of Granada Television presented a documentary on Monday 8.3.70 on this issue.)

One of the most recent documented incidents involved Mr. Tasmin Ali, the resident Imam of the Central Mosque in East London. Mr. Ali was outside his door at 448 Commercial Road, E.1 about 7 p.m. on 9.1.70 when six youths approached him. Mr. Ali fought back and took one captive, but another white man who had observed the incident came up and forced Mr. Ali to release the youth. The police then arrived and instead of charging the man who had interfered, claimed that he had saved Mr. Ali's life. Mr. Ali had to attend the London Hospital to have stitches in a head wound. No arrests were made. Two or three days later the same gang smashed the mosque windows. The police were duly informed with the usual result.

*Ishaque (Chairman Pakistani Workers' Union), Alex Hart (Chairman Working People's Party England).*

## OXFORD-REFORM OR REVOLUTION

The Oxford sit-in was the first important direct action following the revelations at Warwick and the distribution of the files. It ended on 2nd March having lasted a week, well before the national movement had fully developed. No important concessions were gained on the central issue of the action—from beginning to end the university authorities said "no inspection", "no inquiry". The action gave no example to students elsewhere of a successful struggle that could win its demands. Unable to sustain itself through extending the movement of direct action, the sit-in was eventually demobilised by an alliance of social democrats, CP students and other defeatist elements. The ending of the occupation of Clarendon without any gains represented a defeat which enabled the authorities to go on to the offensive and led to the prosecution of a handful of militants.

The defeat was of course by no means decisive. The authorities were able to inflict only minor penalties against the eleven students (although the verdict in one case has still to come). Furthermore, they were forced to postpone the promulgation of new disciplinary statutes, the effect of which would have been to place a permanent injunction on political activity aimed at challenging the university's power. The files issue emerged at the same time as the plan to implement these statutes was announced, and, as in other universities, the Warwick events catalysed local discontents over attempts and preparations for repression. And so even if the university could score a minor victory in containing the upsurge of February/March, the authorities were given notice for the future that student action threatens to expose the myth of Oxford as an autonomous academy within capitalist society by challenging the very institutional and ideological structure upon which British university education is founded. The university remains very conscious of the explosive situation that will be created by any attempt to force the statutes through. The Clarendon action showed for the first time in Oxford that large numbers of militant students can be effectively mobilised on issues within the university: while a hard core of perhaps 200 maintained the occupation, over 1,000 attended mass meetings and demonstrations. For the most part these were people with little previous political experience, though many are acutely aware of the class nature of the university, and were beginning to see the possibility of challenging it as the crisis in higher education develops. The attitude of the authorities, who continually refused to discuss or to examine the files question, reinforced this new-found

from all sections of the university, and beyond it: student leaders from local colleges, and even a group of young workers who manned the doors of the occupied room for one night.

On this occasion the potential of such a mobilisation was not realised. It suffered from all the restraints on mass action peculiar to Oxford: the collegiate system both fragments the students and enables timorous dons to cower behind the common-room line. Real power is not always easy to locate and attack because it lies in the hands of a few influential men operating through a network of informal contacts. It is easy to pass the buck about files within this system. There were tactical difficulties in this case, too: the diffusion of responsibility in the university is reflected in the absence of any central building which can easily be captured and held; the one room taken in the Clarendon could hold only 200 people at most, and the occupiers were subjected to the continual vigilance of the police. The student movement has no established base of its own from which to plan campaigns: the absence of a central student union and meeting-place reinforces the parochialism of college-based political life. To this must be added the absence, since the passing of ORSS, of even a socialist society around which the left could organise itself.

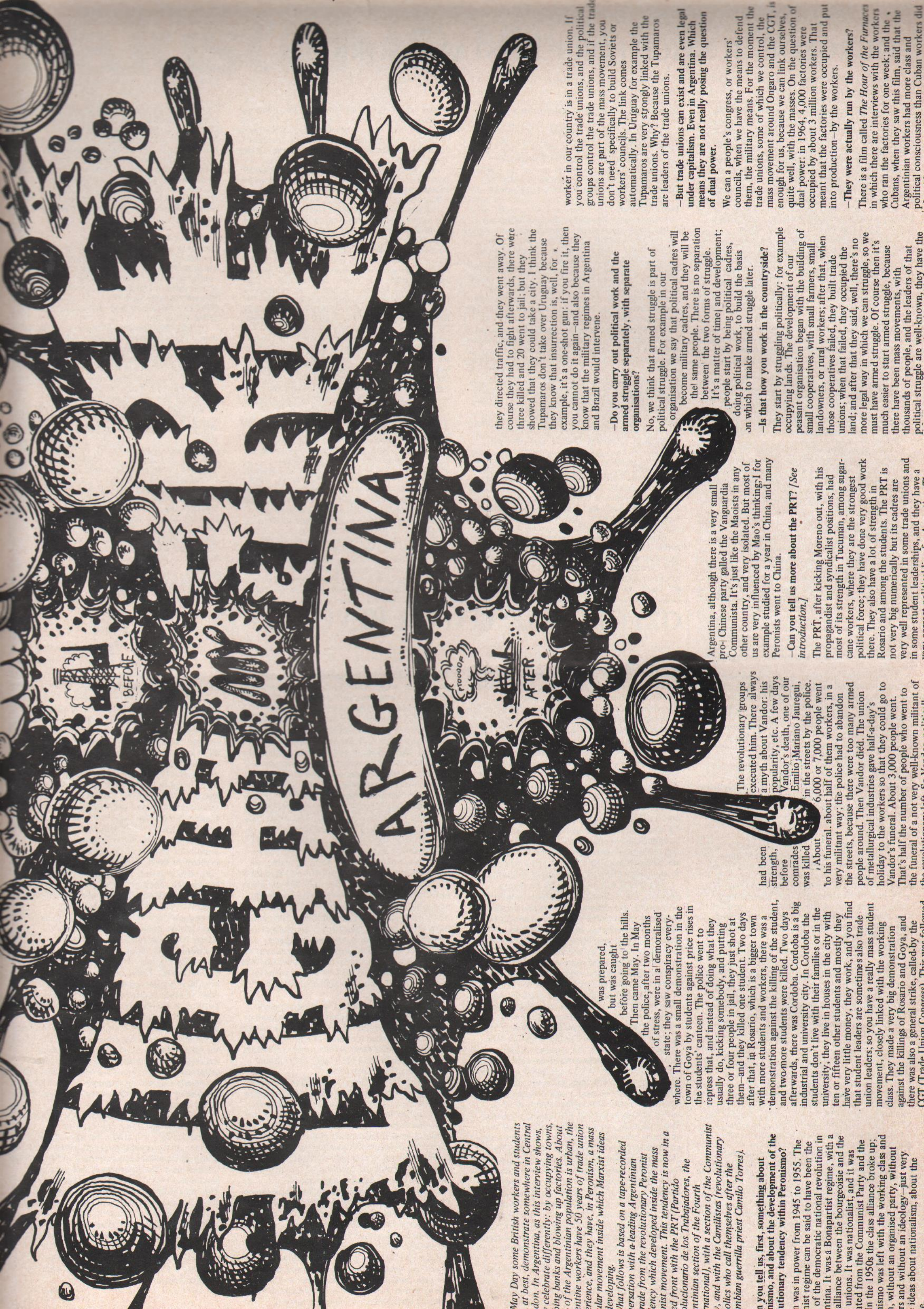
But the most important weaknesses were ones common to the student left as a whole: a lack of understanding of the meaning of student revolt and a consequent lack of strategy: no organisation of student revolutionary militants able to put forward a nationally coordinated strategy for the universities.

At Warwick the direct connection between the big industrial bosses and the administration showed the way in which the universities are being turned into centres of research for capitalist industry and institutions for the production of intellectually skilled labour crucial to neo-capitalist production. Such precise links are not so easy to detail in Oxford, where the ideological function of the university assumes a greater relative importance.

The students know anyway that there is not a ruling-class position waiting for each of the 10,000 of them. Here as elsewhere the revolt of the students reflects the increasing contradiction between the destiny of the increasing majority of them as skilled workers and the ideology the university attempts to impose on them. This permanent contradiction will inevitably sharpen as centralisation and specialisation accelerate and subjects such as industrial relations and sociology become

Those militants who grasped the potential of the situation were a tiny number in the left who exhausted themselves in day-to-day tactics to maintain the action. They never managed to develop a clear enough strategy to win the full leadership of the students, and after a bitter struggle were unable to prevent the CP and their allies from diverting the movement into reformist channels. Having arrived late in the action, the CP immediately took up the cry for withdrawal (a line to which a tendency in IS also allied themselves). On the day of the withdrawal they put out a leaflet "Towards a Clearer Perspective" which proclaimed negotiation as a "truly Leninist [sic] strategy" and warning of an "adventure that would cripple the growth of the movement". The first demand of these "Revolutionists" for "immediate action" was that the sit-in be abandoned. Their proposed alternative to direct action and the contestation of the university authority was "constant" leafletting, "incessant" lobbying of dons, and "in depth" organisation of the colleges. The only alternative to propaganda was "total confrontation". Thus they posed the problem just as the Stalinist Waldeck Rochet did in France in May 1968, that is, either we work for reform or we immediately struggle for power. With an ominous warning in bold letters at the bottom of the leaflet—"Comrades, We Must Beware" (of adventurism, of course)—the political methods of Stalinism and the politics of reformism came together to locate the CP at the far right of the Oxford Left. The CP's national aim to capture NUS positions was reflected here. They headed off the sit-in into the sterile negotiating channels of the SRC, the presidency of which they were busy capturing at the same time.

Such reformist elements, whether or not they masquerade under the name of "communists", will always be an obstacle to the advance of the revolutionary movement. What is important is that revolutionary militants learn the lessons of the February/March struggles, lessons not only for theory but for practice. That means breaking through the organisational chaos in the universities and creating a national movement of revolutionaries capable of analysing the political balance of forces, and organising to combat the centrally-organised Vice-Chancellors, and providing effective national leadership for the great number of students who will be radicalised through the coming struggles.



# ARGENTINA

BEFORE

AFTER

May Day some British workers and students at best, demonstrate somewhere in Central don. In Argentina, as this interview shows, celebrate differently: by occupying towns, closing banks and blowing up factories. About of the Argentinian population is urban, the nine workers have 50 years of trade union experience, and they have, in Peronism, a mass movement inside which Marxist ideas developing.

That follows is based on a tape-recorded conversation with a leading Argentinian trade from the revolutionary Peronist agency which developed inside the mass nist movement. This tendency is now in a d front with the PRT (Partido olucionario de los Trabajadores, the nitarian section of the Fourth national), with a section of the Communist , and with the Camilitas (revolutionary oles who call themselves after the mbian guerrilla priest Camilo Torres).

Can you tell us, first, something about nism, and about the development of the ationary tendency within Peronism? n was in power from 1945 to 1955. The nist regime can be said to have been the of the democratic national revolution in tina. It was a Bonapartist regime, with a alliance between the bourgeoisie and the unions. It was nationalist, and it was ated from the Communist Party and the in the 1950s the class alliance broke up: nism was left with the working class and s, without an organised party, without ideas about nationalism, about the

was prepared, but was caught before going to the hills. Then came May. In May the police, after two months of stress, were in a demoralised state; they saw conspiracy everywhere. There was a small demonstration in the town of Goya by students against price rises in the students' canteen. The police went to repress that, and instead of doing what they usually do, kicking somebody, and putting three or four people in jail, they just shot at them—and they killed one student. Two days after that, in Rosario, which is a bigger town with more students and workers, there was a demonstration against the killing of the student, and two more students were killed. Two days afterwards, there was Cordoba. Cordoba is a big industrial and university city. In Cordoba the students don't live with their families or in the university, they live in houses in the city with ten or fifteen other students and mostly they have very little money, they work, and you find that student leaders are sometimes also trade union leaders; so you have a really mass student movement, closely linked with the working class. They made a very big demonstration against the killings of Rosario and Goya, and there was also a general strike, called by the CGT (Trade Union Congress). This was followed

The revolutionary groups executed him. There always a myth about Vandor: his popularity, etc. A few days before Vandor's death, one of our comrades Emilio Mariano Jauregui, in the streets by the police. About 6,000 or 7,000 people went to his funeral, about half of them workers, in a very militant way; the police had to abandon the streets, because there were too many armed people around. Then Vandor died. The union of metallurgical industries gave half-a-day's holiday to the workers so that they could go to Vandor's funeral. About 3,000 people went. That's half the number of people who went to the funeral of a not very well-known militant of the revolution, but it was a very well-known militant of

Argentina, although there is a very small pro-Chinese party called the Vanguardia Communista. It's just like the Maoists in any other country, and very isolated. But most of us are very influenced by Mao's thinking; I for example studied for a year in China, and many Peronists went to China.

Can you tell us more about the PRT? (See introduction.) The PRT, after kicking Moreno out, with his propagandist and syndicalist positions, had most of its strength in Tucuman, among sugar-cane workers, where they are the strongest political force; they have done very good work there. They also have a lot of strength in Rosario and among the students. The PRT is not very big numerically but its cadres are very well represented in some trade unions and in some student leaderships, and they have a

they directed traffic, and they went away. Of course they had to fight afterwards, there were three killed and 20 went to jail; but they showed that they could take a city. I think the Tupamaros don't take over Uruguay because they know that insurrection is, well, for example, it's a one-shot gun: if you fire it, then you cannot do it again—and also because they know that the military regimes in Argentina and Brazil would intervene.

Do you carry out political work and the armed struggle separately, with separate organisations? No, we think that armed struggle is part of political struggle. For example in our organisation we say that political cadres will become military cadres, and they will be the same people. There is no separation between the two forms of struggle.

It's a matter of time and development; people start by being political cadres, doing political work, to build the basis on which to make armed struggle later.

Is that how you work in the countryside? They start by struggling politically: for example occupying lands. The development of our peasant organisation began with the building of small cooperatives, with small farmers, small landowners, or rural workers; after that, when those cooperatives failed, they built trade unions; when that failed, they occupied the land; and after that they said, well, there's no more legal way in which we can struggle, so we must have armed struggle. Of course then it's much easier to start armed struggle, because there have been mass movements, with thousands of people, and the leaders of that political struggle are well-known, they have the

worker in our country is in a trade union. If you control the trade unions, and the political groups control the trade unions, and if the trade unions are part of the mass movement, you don't need specifically to build Soviets or workers' councils. The link comes automatically. In Uruguay for example the Tupamaros are very strongly linked with the trade unions. Why? Because the Tupamaros are leaders of the trade unions.

But trade unions can exist and are even legal under capitalism. Even in Argentina. Which means they are not really posing the question of dual power. We can a people's congress, or workers' councils, when we have the means to defend them, the military means. For the moment the trade unions, some of which we control, the mass movement around Ongaro and the CGT, is enough for us, because we can link ourselves, quite well, with the masses. On the question of dual power: in 1964, 4,000 factories were occupied by about 3 million workers. That meant that the factories were occupied and put into production—by the workers. They were actually run by the workers? There is a film called *The Hour of the Furnace* in which there are interviews with the workers who ran the factories for one week; and the Cubans, when they saw this film, said that the Argentinian workers had more class and political consciousness than Cuban workers did

workers took over the city. Cordoba is a city of about 1 million inhabitants, and there were a lot of people in the streets. 5,000 policemen were not enough to control them; the police had to retreat. The students and the workers took over most of the city, and they started to burn. They didn't burn everything; it was a very selective burning. Not like the black uprisings in the United States where you hear that whole districts of the cities are burnt. In Cordoba only one private house was burnt; it was the house of a senior police officer. But a lot of shops were burnt, and cars were burnt; for example, about a hundred Citroen cars were taken out of a showroom and burnt in the street. Barricades were put up, and for about a day they held the city. Then, the army was sent, and the government imposed martial law. They received the army with sharpshooters and barricades; they blew up the electricity and left the city without lights; and they resisted about 18 hours. About 30 people were killed. But for the first time for quite a long time, of the 30 people killed, about 12 were army and police-men. So we don't call that a real massacre; there was trouble, but people were killed on both sides—and that's very important, because for everyone it was a victory. Sharpshooters had to be removed from the buildings with bazookas and mortars, and people found out their own strength.

It wasn't exactly a spontaneous thing, because the workers were organised, to some extent. The strike was a new kind of strike; it was called a 36-hour general strike. Usually in strikes the workers simply say, "Tomorrow we won't work," and they go home to their houses. In the new kind of strike, the workers decide that from midday they will stop working; so the workers, at midday, are in the factories, and when they go out, they go out in an organised way, into the streets. So instead of being a strike at home, at least the first part of the strike is a strike in the streets.

The political vanguard groups were not very strong in Cordoba at that time; the PRT was very small in Cordoba; the left-wing Peronistas were not so small, but they were not so well organised. So they acted as individuals inside those organising groups. They didn't have control of them; the uprising was directed by the mass movements, by the trade union leaders, by the student leaders. The military organisation was not very effective; the resistance to the army, for example by sharpshooters, was very individualistic.

That was May, in Cordoba. After May the revolutionary vanguards studied the situation, to develop their ideas about it, to understand it. Rockefeller's visit provided an opportunity to show they had succeeded. There were the usual demonstrations against him, but a new factor appeared: there was very systematic and well-organised military activity. For example, in the city of Buenos Aires 14 of the 20 big supermarkets of the Minimax company, which is a well-known Rockefeller family concern, were blown up, and then burnt and completely destroyed. There was about 15 or 16 million dollars' damage, which is quite a lot, even for the Rockefeller family. And there were many bomb attacks. The CGT called a general strike, to repudiate Rockefeller's visit. Vandor was against that, and he issued a communique saying that he was not participating in the general strike, although some of the reformist trade unions did. At that precise moment Vandor was executed, that is about six hours after he issued his communique saying he was not against Rockefeller's visit, and about two hours before he was due to be received by Rockefeller.

—Who was he executed by?

After that, in July, there was some more of the same sort of thing. Then in September there was the second uprising. That was Rosario. There was a general strike, they occupied the city, the army came—and this time, there were only three civilians killed—accidentally, not in demonstrations; and there were several soldiers, officers and policemen killed. 80% of the public transport of the city was burnt. Two trains were burnt. The city was held for 14 hours, with sharpshooters. Afterwards people retired, and let the army come in; there was no resistance to the army. So the second partial uprising was really an organised uprising, with the political vanguards working side by side with the mass of the students and the trade unions.

The process is continuing; it hasn't stopped. Cordoba, Rosario, and Rockefeller's visit were the three points of high escalation. But without interruption, since March 1969, to today, there have been constant vanguard actions, and they have been progressively bigger. Cordoba, which was not very organised, now has two or three very big organisations. Seven or eight small towns have been captured: in the middle of the night small groups, six or seven commandos, enter a town of 2,000-3,000 inhabitants; they capture the police barracks, and take the arms; they go to the manager of the local bank, take him out of his house, open the bank, get the money out, and go away. In November, on the "Day of Sovereignty", there were a lot of attacks against American and British firms, about 20 or 30, with the usual procedure of completely razing the places—not just bombs, but burning as well, so that the factory is completely destroyed. There have also been attacks on regiments; there was a very successful attack in the middle of December, in the city of La Plata; a regiment was attacked and about half of the weapons were captured.

—What was the attitude of the Communist Party during the events of last year?

It called for a new government of broad coalition that would call for elections to renew the constitution. That was when you had the general strike, the masses in the street, and cities occupied. Even the Union Civica Radical, which is perhaps a little to the right of the Labour Party here, said the struggle for national liberation had begun, we must join it, and so on.

—Is the CP small? What is its membership?

Not so small; about 60,000 or 70,000 members. It's very rich, very well organised, with a very big bureaucracy; there are about 9,000 paid members inside the party.

—Where does it get its money from?

From factories, cinemas, banks; they managed very well; it's a big firm really, a commercial firm. It's very rich—a bad example of how you can build a party. It has no future. We say it's not a party; it's a society for friendship with the Soviet Union.

—What about the future of the struggle in Argentina?

The crisis goes on. One very positive thing is that most of the left vanguard and the Peronist vanguard are now in a united front; it is politically and legally a united front; and it is also semi-clandestine.

—Which are the other groups in the united front?

There is the PCR (Revolutionary Communist Party), which is a split from the Communist Party. And there are the Camilistas, that's the left Catholics who call themselves after Camilo Torres.

—Can you tell us more about your general political and strategic ideas?

We believe that in Argentina there is going to be a long protracted people's war, based both in the city and in the countryside. About 70% of the population of Argentina is urban. Buenos Aires has about 8 million inhabitants, about the same as Cuba for example. That is about 700 miles from the nearest suitable place for developing guerrilla war; 700 miles of plain without forests, populated by quite rich small farmers, many of whom have cars, tractors, etc., so there is little or no popular support there. So it won't be possible for our liberation army to build itself in the hills and then go up to Buenos Aires; it can't be done. So—this is not only a cold military view, it's a political view—you must make war where the masses are, and you must sacrifice good terrain for people's support. So we believe that armed struggle will be both in the cities and in the countryside. We are against the foco conception, Debray's conception; we respect his theory, but we think it doesn't work, it's a petit-bourgeois conception. We think that the struggle is with the masses, the war is first politics, and afterwards shooting. Shooting is a way of making politics, but we believe in mass organisations; a small group, which is isolated, can't make a people's war; we don't want guerrillas to be parachuted somewhere. For example in our peasant struggles, we don't send cadres to the countryside; we have a peasant organisation which is built there. If at some time that develops into a guerrilla struggle, we will probably send some military and technical cadres. But we think that guerrilla must grow, and not be artificially planted. We think that the foco isolates itself from the masses. So we believe in a very broad people's war, protracted, and in which the struggle will be in the cities and in the countryside.

—After the experience of the Tupamaros in Uruguay it has been shown that Debray's thesis that you can't do guerrillas in the cities is wrong. The Tupamaros have been doing that for about five years. Some comrades have died, about 100 are in jail, but they're still fighting, and they're going to take power some time. We sometimes say, in fact we're quite sure, that Uruguay will be the second socialist country in Latin America, after Cuba; and we sometimes say that it might be the first communist country in Latin America—that's a kind of joke with the Cuban comrades.

—You have said that the Tupamaros are in a very strong position, perhaps even in a position to take power now?

I think it would be very adventurous to say the Tupamaros could take power now. Last year in October, on Che Guevara's day, they showed how they could occupy a city, with 30,000 or 40,000 inhabitants, in five minutes; they occupied the city, the police headquarters, army barracks, fire stations, banks, electricity works. They took about 2 million dollars from the banks, they made meetings in the streets,

not going to lead the revolution. That's our idea: we don't have professional military leaders in our organisations, we keep telling our cadres who are in military work that they must always be political cadres, because politics always comes first. We say that war will never be won by destroying, by killing the enemy militarily, but by destroying it politically. Batista wasn't thrown out because he was militarily destroyed; in fact after the battle of Santa Clara, 80% of Batista's army wasn't touched, and it just collapsed. So we think politics always comes first—even for some people like me who have been doing military activities for 14 years.

—You have said that the left Peronist groups have developed Marxist ideas. Would you say that all the groups in the united front had a clear Marxist orientation?

Yes. For example when the movement split in January 1969 in the congress of all revolutionary organisations, it was on that issue. The centre groups said that they were fighting for a Peronist state, we said that we were fighting for a socialist state. We still call ourselves Peronistas because we have the full right to call ourselves Peronistas; we say that Peronismo is the historical mark of our revolution; its way is the armed struggle, its end is socialism, and its ideology is Marxist-Leninist.

—Do you think that workers' councils or soviets will play a part, or have they already played a part in the struggles of Argentina?

If you ask me if there have been workers' councils exactly similar to those that they had in Russia, I can say no. But a kind of double power does develop in the struggle, and especially when you have strikes which are not only against the bosses, but are also strikes against the trade unions. We don't have a strongly disciplined single political organisation, or a single mass organisation. Of course we say that's a kind of negative situation, but in another way it's very positive, because there's an ample democracy in the bases. There's no bureaucracy in the struggle at the moment. In our organisation our discipline is not very strong, because in some ways we exaggerate democratic tendencies inside us; we are very afraid of militarism and bureaucracy. For us internal democracy in the organisations is very important.

—Do you have a formal Leninist party organisation?

No, we don't, we haven't been able to build that yet, because we have a kind of federated organisation; we have an intellectuals' front, we have a rural workers' front, we have the students, we have the workers, and we have the military organisation. It's very loose, not very strong. We also have a kind of central committee, very small, very practical, about seven or nine comrades, who deal with a whole lot of things. The Peronista tradition is a bit anarchic; we have never had a very strong organisation; but the trend is to build it. The PRT is a Leninist party, very well organised.

—I can see that you can have a guerrilla struggle which is linked to a political struggle; Debray was wrong in saying that it was not possible; but has it yet been shown that it can really be linked to the masses? Surely only an organisation like the Soviets would make it possible. The armed groups you describe are the armed groups of parties; whereas the armed groups in Russia were not linked to the Bolshevik party, but to the Soviets.

How many years of trade union experience did they have in Russia before the 1917 revolution? In Argentina we've had 50 years. We've had 10 years of experience of power for the trade unions, in the experience of Peronism. Every

—What did they do with what they produced? They just had to store it; there were no markets. It was very interesting and educative, because it showed the masses the limits of reformism, the limits of the trade union struggle. You can occupy a factory, yes; you can put a factory into production, yes; you can run the factory; but you can't sell what you produce; and if 30 policemen come they can kick you out, nothing to that. So you need an army. You need to build an army, you need to organise the workers militarily so that they can defend the factories.

—Do you think there is a chance of a united party developing out of the united front?

No, we think a united army may come out of the united front. The party will be built in the process, as the army will be built in the process.

—That sounds like Debray to me.

When you say The Party, with big black letters, no. We are developing the parties, with an 's' at the end and small letters. Because we have got our own party organisation, the PRT has its party organisation, and some other groups are building theirs. We are building our own army, with small letters, and the PRT is building its own army, with small letters. And we expect, all of us, to build the big Party and the big Army. That isn't Debray.

(Interviewed by Robin Blackburn and Teresa Hayter).

**Bonapartism:** the classic definition of Bonapartism, an expression derived from the rule of Napoleon III, is a form of government in which the classes, the working class and the bourgeoisie, are fairly evenly balanced and therefore the state assumes a certain independence, in the sense that it is not directly accountable to any particular group of the bourgeoisie while maintaining bourgeois rule in general; this usually involves a collapse of the representative organs of the bourgeoisie such as Parliament and their replacement by executive or dictatorial power.

**syndicalist:** concentrated exclusively on trade union work. Theory that the revolution can be made by industrial work without building an independent political organisation.

**propagandist:** engaged in propaganda and comment as opposed to direct revolutionary action, for example the armed struggle.

**foco, focismo:** theory elaborated in Debray's book *Revolution in the Revolution*. The theory is supposed to be based on the experience of the Cuban revolution, and claims that, in the pre-revolutionary situation which exists in Latin America, the revolution can be made by a small group of guerrillas operating in rural areas, who will gradually build up their strength through successful actions against the army and recruitment, mainly among peasants, until they are able to defeat the army and take power. This theory denies the necessity for a political party and for political work among the rural and especially the urban masses.

**Tupamaros:** revolutionary group of urban guerrillas in Uruguay which began operating early in the '60s independently of any political party and independently of Cuba; has a revolutionary socialist position.

**dual power:** situation in which the working class has set up organisations of its own which have power independently of the institutions of bourgeois rule.

# Kidnap



**Kidnapping and the Bourgeois Press**  
Now that the comrades in Latin America have started capturing diplomats, we have had some headlines about them in the bourgeois press. In fact the executing of the German ambassador has given us a whole page of quite interesting material on Guatemalan history and politics from the *Sunday Times* Insight team, which was actually sent to Guatemala. But kidnapping, usually for financial ransom, has been a tactic used for some time in Latin America. The Guatemalans are the most experienced, and have been practising the art since 1966. In Cali, a provincial town in Columbia, it is said that \$600,000 were raised through ransom money in a period of three months last year, resulting, among other things, in a noticeable decline in night-club life. One of the earliest Latin American kidnappings was magnificently international although unfortunately it was unsuccessful: the Venezuelan FALN (Fuerzas armadas de liberacion nacional) kidnapped the US military attache in order to save the life of Nguyen Van Troi, the South Vietnamese guerrilla leader. They were forced by extreme police measures to release him; the day after they did so, Van Troi was killed. The Uruguayan Tupamaros have captured a prominent local banker and newspaper owner and sentenced him to one year's imprisonment. The Argentinian FAL (Frente armado de liberacion) released the Paraguayan consul without their demands being met; and the Guatemalan FAR (Fuerzas armadas rebeldes) have, as everybody knows, executed the German ambassador.

**Useful Tactic**  
In spite of some failures, the tactic is definitely useful. First, valuable comrades are released. Some 60 or 70 political prisoners have been let out in exchange for diplomats and others; they can be, and are, got out by other methods, for example by direct attacks on prisons or while they are being transferred for medical treatment, but these methods may be even more dangerous than kidnapping diplomats. The importance of individual leaders and comrades is very great; they may have military training, guerrilla experience, or long experience of clandestine work; often the number of revolutionaries with such experience is quite small; and, as the Argentinian interview in this issue shows, mass movements can sometimes be sparked off by armed actions by a few: barracks, gun shops, banks, even towns, are attacked and sometimes occupied by "seven or eight commandos". Each individual loss is a disaster.

**Humiliation of Puppets**  
Second, the kidnappings expose and humiliate the Latin American regimes. They are shown to be powerless to ensure security in the cities or to catch the kidnapers. Their subservience to US imperialism is re-emphasised; they must, on the demand of the State Department, release say 19 political prisoners in exchange for one US military official. Hordes of US security officers are now said to be descending on Latin America, importing hatred and tension. And the world is made aware of the existence of large numbers of political prisoners in Latin America, and even, sometimes, of the fact that they are being tortured.

**Victory for Revolutionists**  
Third, it is a victory for the revolutionaries: a sign that they can attack safely in the heart of the cities, carry off their hostages, and get their comrades released. That it may lead to further repression by the regimes shows that these regimes are demoralised and weakened; repression is bound to increase until the final victory of the revolution, and revolutionaries cannot be deterred from *successful* action by the fear of reprisals. Commenting on the Brazilian dictatorship's redoubled repression after the release of the 15 prisoners, a declaration by the Partido Operario Comunista of Brazil stated: "This is the way it is after every individual action of the vanguard. But it is these actions, apparently checkmated by the reaction, which awaken, teach, and mobilise ever broader masses, who resume the struggle on ever ascending levels."

**Their Morals and Ours**  
The bourgeois press of course makes lavish use of words like "immoral", "reprehensible". It thus demonstrates, yet again, its amazingly distorted set of values. Count von Sprei's family life is minutely and harrowingly described, and he gets an obituary in the *London Times*. But nothing is said of the heroism and sacrifice of the revolutionaries, and usually little is said of the nature of the regimes from which they are struggling to liberate their people. Nothing, or very little, is said of the death and torture of these revolutionaries and those who support them. Is it immoral to detain the Japanese Consul-General in Sao Paolo in order to obtain the release of five prisoners, including a Mother Superior whose torturers had been excommunicated by the Brazilian religious authorities? "The jailing of the 15 political prisoners," says the statement of the Partido Operario Comunista, "as well as several thousand others held in the dungeons of a regime that has no program but repression and exploitation, is not (according to the Brazilian press) immoral."

"The jailing of 20 metal workers in Rio de Janeiro who put up an opposition list in their trade union elections is not immoral."

"The imprisoning of hundreds of students for maintaining their own organisations is not immoral."

"The jailing of two workers who organised last year's strikes in Minas Gerais and Sao Paolo is not immoral."

"Torturing Sergeant Lucas to the point of death is not immoral, nor the murder of Father Henrique..."

And what of the callousness of the regimes which decide that diplomats—not yet diplomats of the United States, nor local figures such as the Guatemalan Foreign Minister—are expendable? Mr. Quintin Hogg, MP, tub-thumping moralist Hogg, pronounced in the *Sunday Express* that there were lessons we needed to learn: "The first thing is that blackmail is something to which it is morally wrong to submit, even if one thereby saves one's own skin... One can only thank one's stars that the Guatemalan authorities appear to have seen the light over the kidnapped German diplomat. If the US authorities had only stiffened the backs of other South American countries when American diplomats were held to ransom one might be quite sure that the unfortunate German diplomat would not now be in peril." Well, Hogg got his way; the Guatemalan authorities, appealing to their "constitution", ignored the German government's offer to pay the ransom and pleas that the prisoners should be released; and the guerrillas kept their promise to execute von Sprei if their demands were not met. This happened after the Argentinian dictatorship had got away with not releasing the prisoners demanded in exchange for the Paraguayan consul, which, according to Hogg, should have meant no more kidnapping.

More blatant still was the callousness of the Argentinian and Paraguayan dictatorships. Generals Ongania and Stroessner (the latter was visiting Argentina at the time) apparently discussed the matter of the kidnapping of the Paraguayan consul, who had travelled to Buenos Aires to greet his President, and decided that he was expendable, after which Stroessner went fishing. Eventually the FAL decided to release their prisoner; they issued a statement saying their decision had been based on humanitarian considerations, since the authorities had made it plain that they were not interested in the survival of their wretched employee. The Argentinian Foreign Minister sent a telegram to the Paraguayan government, thanking it for its "understanding".

## A Minor Official's Exchange Value=Nil

The Argentinian comrades had a difficult decision to make. Obviously their operation had failed; the Paraguayan consul, representative though he was of a "bloody dictatorship serving US imperialism", was a minor official and not a big enough catch. Moreover, of the two prisoners demanded in exchange for him, one had been tortured to the point where he signed a declaration saying he didn't want to be released, and the other had probably been

politics, where individual violence is less of an everyday affair than in Central America and where there was a danger of popular outrage if the execution took place, the decision not to execute the prisoner was probably correct. At any rate, the Argentinian comrades were able to expose very clearly the callousness of the authorities, and to make what seems to have been some effective propaganda inside Argentina. But from an international point of view the decision could have been disastrous, in the sense that the kidnapping tactic could have lost its credibility.

## Use-Values

The situation was made worse by the fumbling, lack of political clarity and partial capitulation of the Japanese Red Army hi-jackers. It was retrieved by the Guatemalan guerrillas. True, as the *Sunday Times* put it, the guerrilla leaders overestimated "the going price of ambassadors"; Colonel Arana, President-elect of Guatemala, the *Sunday Times* said, "thought the guerrillas' price was too high". "We would have considered, say, six guerrillas a fair exchange," said one of (Arana's) officers fair-mindedly. "But twenty-five! It was robbery!" One might establish a sort of international price list: US ambassadors=15 political prisoners; US military attaches=19; Japanese consuls-general=5; Paraguayan consuls=0; German ambassadors=76. But the Guatemalan guerrillas, having made their mistake, retrieved it by an operation apparently smoothly carried out: the German ambassador was found in the place where the guerrillas had said he would be, with one bullet-wound in his head and his belongings around him. In the escalating terror and counter-terror of Guatemala, which has taken firm root since the US organised the overthrowing of Arbenz for attempting to take over, with compensation, Guatemala's land from the United Fruit Company, the execution of the German ambassador was not very startling, although internationally, of course, it hit the headlines; certainly nothing compared to the razing of villages undertaken by the President-elect, or to the brutality of some of the operations of the right-wing terrorist group MANO, manned apparently by police and army. The Guatemalan authorities are threatening to kill one political prisoner for every half-hour any future captive is detained; if they do so, it can be expected that the guerrillas will respond in kind—just as the Algerian liberation-fighters eventually retaliated against mass killings of villagers by planting bombs in places frequented by French settlers and their families. Such is the situation to which Guatemala, and other Central

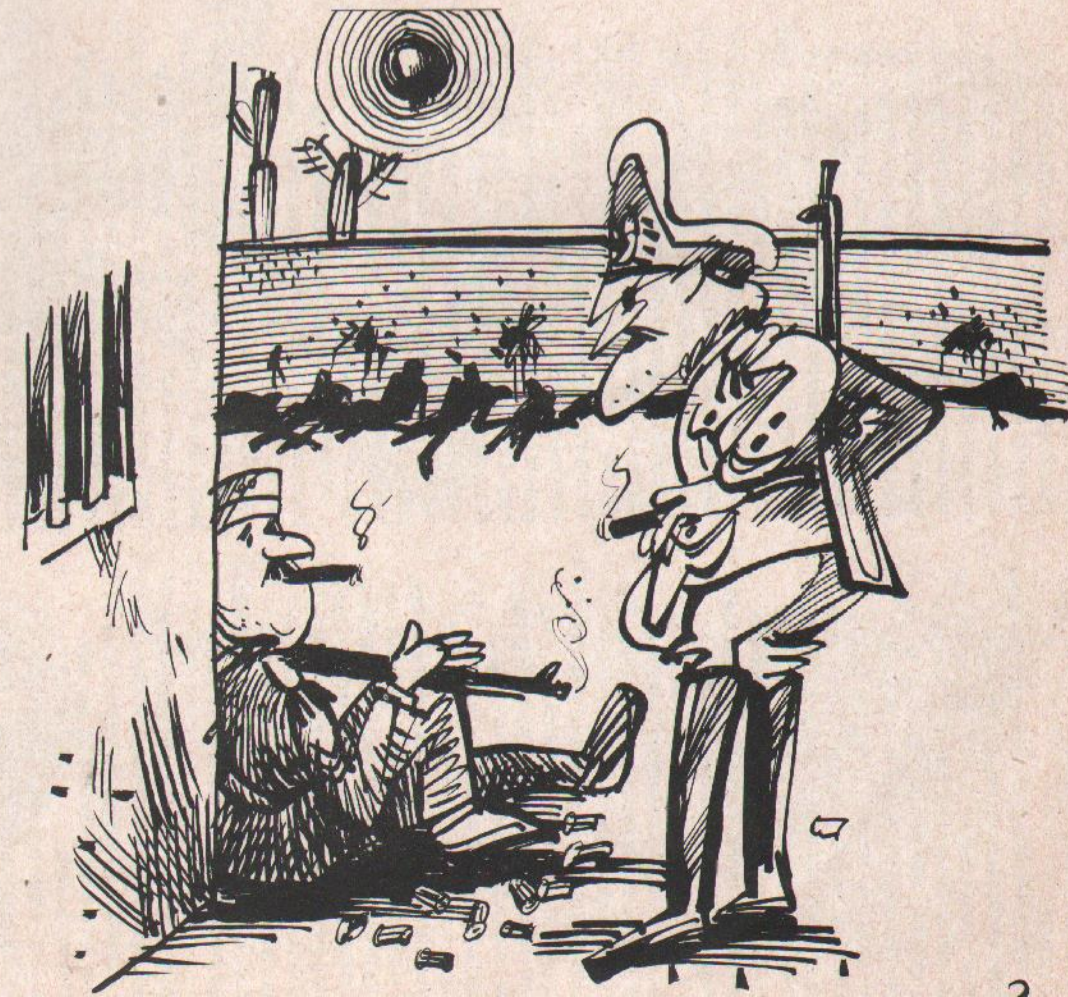
American Republics, have been brought by years of tyranny and oppression.

## Lenin

Lenin, in his article on guerrilla warfare and terrorism which we reproduced in the Lenin centenary issue of *The Red Mole*, spoke of the alleged danger of "demoralisation" for the revolutionary forces in such forms of action, and said: "It is not guerrilla warfare which demoralises, but *unorganised*, irregular, non-party guerrilla acts." The Guatemalans are an organised, political group, with revolutionary and socialist objectives; we should, of course, fully support their actions in Guatemala. The lessons of Latin American experience seem to be that the tactic of kidnapping in order to obtain the release of valuable political prisoners is a very useful one, so long as the diplomats or others taken are important enough to the authorities for them to need to pay the amount demanded for their release, which probably means concentrating on US diplomats; they must also be persons whom, in the political context of the country concerned, one is prepared to execute. This obviously limits the usefulness of the tactic. And in Western Europe the relative efficiency of the security forces and inexperience of the revolutionary groups would make the operation difficult; one essential measure would be, for example, that communication with the authorities should take place through an agent in some safe place like Algeria, since most kidnapers have been traced and caught through such communication. But it is not inconceivable that the tactic might be practised with success in European countries—for instance, as the *Guardian* suggested, the next kidnapping "could easily be the American ambassador in London, seized...in order to extract concessions from the British government over Belfast." Or the Greek ambassador (an army General), who could be kidnapped to demand the release of some of the hundreds of prisoners who are being tortured in the concentration camps of the junta?

## Attila

P.S. *Humanite*, organ of the French CP, apparently thought it necessary to denounce the Guatemalan revolutionaries for using imperialist pillage as a pretext for "preaching the armed struggle to the exclusion of all other considerations", for "the assassination of a diplomat does not appear to us to be a method worthy of a legitimate struggle." (*Humanite*, 7.4.70). Such is the new morality of the Stalinists—whose own hands are not exactly pure.







Get hold of a Boeing in full flight with the help of swords and dynamite. Imprison 106 passengers and the entire crew. Make the suspense last for more than 60 hours...

All this in order to leave a country where leftists are gaoled and to get to a country where fingers are pointed at "Trotskyists"... Such is the exploit of the Japanese students of the "Red Army" in their attempt to get to North Korea. What were they going to do there? What were they fleeing from? What would they struggle for in North Korea?

The anti-aircraft guns of Pong-Yang and the trickery of the South Korean authorities obliged the students to make a major change in their plans, and to transform their aeroplane into a sort of rearguard camp stuffed with hostages. This put them, very much in spite of themselves, into the headlines. The distorting mirrors of the press and TV then gave them very much the same image as the four bandits who, at Villefranche-sur-Mer, kept three hostages in a hotel bedroom.

The anxious metaphysical question posed by the journalists, "Will they or will they not blow the whole thing up?", is without importance. Revolutionary violence, since there was revolutionary violence at stake, cannot be notched up like a base-ball score. It must be

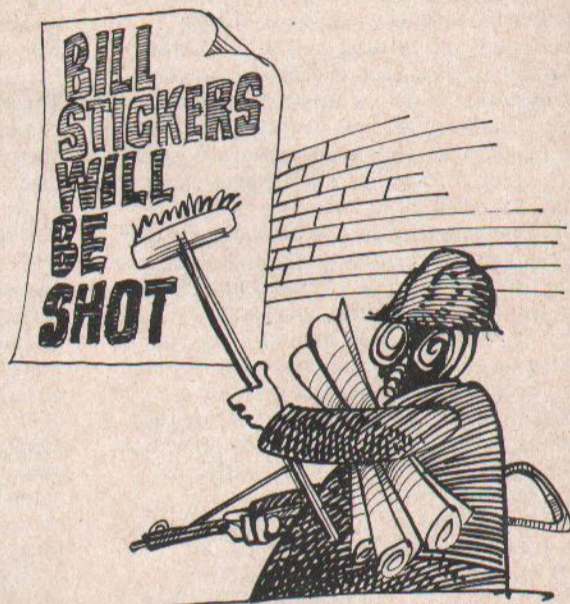
politically judged on its results: does it make the revolutionary movement advance? does it raise the consciousness of the exploited masses? As far as the Boeing exploit of Seoul is concerned, the answer to both questions is "No". This kind of action, which after all could be carried out by any isolated group, though they might have the best intentions in the world, succeeds only in giving credibility in public opinion to the thesis that leftists are merely wreckers.

We are neither against violence, nor against destruction. And we think that it is, to say the least, grotesque to accuse the Japanese students of having wanted to kill "innocent people", when the thousands of "innocent people" who die every day in Vietnam, in Africa or in Latin America leave the press unmoved.

But we think that revolutionaries, Japanese and others, have other things to do besides taking refuge in North Korea and organising prolonged picnics in aeroplanes. The example of Guatemala, the same week, was there to show that the class struggle is something other than a sort of carnival with ministers, heart attacks, samurai swords and sandwiches.

(Translated from *Rouge*, 13.4.70, newspaper of the Ligue Communiste, French section of the Fourth International).

# FRENCH REPRESSION TERROR



## GOVERNMENT MAKES NEW MOVES

Two recent events: the release of three soldiers charged with political activity in the army, and the charging of three persons for pasting up posters as part of a campaign for soldiers' rights illustrate the current situation in France.

At the same time that the working class is becoming more and more combative and increasing numbers of people are joining movements such as the soldiers' campaign and turning to revolutionary socialism, the bourgeoisie in its fear is turning towards escalating measures of repression.

This repression, directed mainly against the revolutionary vanguard, takes numerous forms varying from harassment of newspaper sellers to the attempted banning of revolutionary organisations, and is being met by an increasingly broad movement of defence.

The case of the three French soldiers in Landau, Germany, reflects this situation. The three, whose names are Banet, Divet and Fauthoux, were charged with activities which would lead to inciting acts contrary to duty or discipline. The brass were unable even to formulate a reasonable-sounding accusation; the soldiers' activities were limited to political discussion with other soldiers, using an essay written by Divet.

Fauthoux's case was dismissed March 3. The trial of the two others, held in secret March 13 in Landau, resulted in sentences of 18 months for Banet and 14 months for Divet, both with probation. Taking place just five weeks after the Rennes trial, which sentenced three soldiers charged similarly to a year, eight months and four months respectively, the semi-victory at Landau is significant.

The April 6 issue of *Rouge* (weekly paper of the Ligue Communiste, French section of the Fourth International) commented that "As to the 18 and 14 months, it was the movement of May which was judged... the probation, on the other hand, is the embarrassment in which the tribunal found itself, faced with the growth of the campaign for the release of the imprisoned soldiers."

## TRADE-UNIONISTS ARRESTED

In close connection with the soldiers' campaign and the just-released news of the Landau verdict is the case of three trade unionists charged on April 3 with pasting up posters of the campaign on January 28 at St. Marcel, in the north of France. A citation has ordered the three to appear April 30 at the Correctional Tribunal at Evreux.

They are: Jack Houdet, 45, former secretary of his local of the CGT (Confederation Generale de Travail, largest union federation in France); Dominique Rousseau, 19, and Florial Ordonez-Aurioles, 19. They are all machinists at the L.R.B.A., a factory of atomic research under the responsibility of the Minister of Defence.

The parents of Rousseau and Ordonez-Aurioles were also ordered to appear. All the defendants are from Vernon, in Normandy.

The enormous significance of this case, which is by no means merely a normal harassment of political postering, can be seen in the charges. While such harassment is usually disguised under "non-political" charges, the indictment this time is overtly political.

The three are charged with "the offence of a provocation directed at soldiers with the aim of turning them away from their military duty and obedience..." The citation quotes repeatedly from the posters, which describe the case of the "Rennes 3" and the fact that they were being tried for protesting against the useless regimentation and harassment of the bourgeoisie, strike-breaking army.

Thus it is plain that this case is not an ordinary incident but one with the most far-reaching implications. It is felt that the government in Paris may very well have planned this case as a test to see if it can get away with banning posters of the army campaign as such.

If people can be imprisoned just for putting up a poster defending soldiers' rights, there is no reason why those in positions of responsibility in the campaign (such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Alain Krivine of the Ligue Communiste, and Michel Rocard of the Parti Socialiste Unifie) might not be put on trial. By narrowing down the issue to that of the content of the posters, the government is challenging the very right to wage a campaign for the soldiers.

Thus it is important that individuals and groups in Britain, especially trade unionists, defend these three CGT members. Statements of support should be sent to: Dr. Marcel-Francois Kahn, 15 rue Cler, Paris 7e, France.

## BANNING OF LEFT GROUPS?

There are other examples of the government's campaign of repression of political rights. A prime aim of the Pompidou regime is to illegalise a number of revolutionary groups on the pretext of "reconstituting leagues" banned following the May-June events of 1968.

"Investigations" have already been launched against the Ligue Communiste, the A.J.S. (Alliance des Jeunes pour la Socialisme, the French Healyite group) and the Communist Party of France (Marxist-Leninist), a Maoist tendency. Minister of the Interior Marcellin, generally known as France's top cop, has also requested that the State Security Court investigate the Ligue Communiste for attempting to demoralise the army. The Ligue Communiste has been the main political group supporting the soldiers' campaign.

## MAO-SPONTEX

In addition, about ten members of the Gauche Proletarienne (Proletarian Left, another Maoist

group) have been arrested, including Dantec, editor of their paper *Cause du Peuple*.

Some Maoist-Spontaneist groups, notably Gauche Proletarienne, have unwittingly aided the repression by praising various individual acts of terrorist violence which have been used by the regime as one pretext for the repression. This attitude of the "Mao-Spontex" groups, similar to that of the U.S. Weathermen, has been coupled with a refusal to join with other tendencies in a united defence effort.

Vendors of socialist newspapers have been systematically approached and taken to the police stations for questioning, in the last few months. To dramatise this completely illegal form of repression, Alain Krivine and Michel Rocard sold their respective papers *Rouge* and *Tribune Socialiste* in the public market on March 22, and were taken for questioning. They were quickly released when their identity was learnt.

## CENSORSHIP

Various books and magazines have been banned outright, notably *Tricontinental*, published in Havana; the left-wing review *Le Point*; and a book written by the Brazilian revolutionary Carlos Marighela, who was assassinated by the military regime there.

Some victories have been scored against the French regime's repression, victories always based on mass action against the threat to democratic rights. The Landau verdict has already been mentioned. The Nanterre meeting of March 6, with 5,000 present, was also such a victory. Marcellin himself had to permit the meeting, and the same day withdrew the police that had occupied the Nanterre campus despite the physical resistance of the mass of students. In addition, the fascists, who have played a complementary role to that of the police on many campuses, were unable to hold a provocative mass meeting on February 26 because of protests and the mobilisation of thousands of anti-fascists in Paris. Here the bourgeoisie showed that the character of its repression is not fascist, that fascism is not on the agenda: the fascists' meeting was itself banned by the state, of course only under mass pressure.

As part of the soldiers' campaign, many mass meetings and demonstrations have been held. The bourgeoisie has been unable to ban these nor the large demonstrations in Rouen during February in defence of seven militants politically charged with various offences. And although the government banned a public meeting of the Committee for the Release of the Imprisoned Soldiers to have been held on March 17, a mass meeting on March 18 in defence of the right of expression was successful.

The respectable Paris daily *Le Monde* has begun protesting. The April 1 issue pointed out

that 886 persons have been taken for questioning in Paris between November 1969 and March 1970, for selling papers, putting up posters, leafletting, etc. This is double the number in a comparable period a year earlier.

In a front-page editorial the same day, J.-M. Mercier criticised these moves against liberty of expression, but made it clear that his criticism was on the basis that the measures give the "law" and its enforcers a bad name. In addition the bourgeois commentator tried to dole out the responsibility to victim and criminal equally. Mercier stated, "The violence that has occurred between the antagonists is the result of a complete misunderstanding."

In actuality the regime understands very well that the extreme left groups are a constant and immediate danger to it in the present turbulent period, and that repressing them can be a step towards a repression of the workers' mass organisations as well.

## WORKERS' STRUGGLE CONTINUES

The workers' struggle in France has not yet been noticeably affected, however, by the regime's moves at repression of political groups. Strikes have recently occurred at Renault and the SNCF (the nationalised railway system), to mention only two of the most important. There will soon be national strike weeks in the postal service (April 15-18) and among high school and technical school teachers (April 20-25). Workers across France strike on almost any issue, and whether or not a contract has expired. Furthermore, artisans and tradesmen have recently shown their combativity against the government by blocking roadways across France in support of their demands.

The political struggle for democratic rights remains a central one for the vanguard organisations, as *Rouge* has repeatedly pointed out. The most important struggles in this area have been related in one way or another to the soldiers' rights campaign of the Committee for the Release of the Imprisoned Soldiers. This is a broad united front-type group which intends to continue its fight and will soon publish a "White Paper" on conditions in barracks and in army stockades. The extreme sensitivity of the ruling class to any democratic threat to its authoritarian military system is shown by the reaction of the regime to the soldiers' campaign. Here the regime is demonstrating its big weakness. But the repression will undoubtedly continue, although it has had its limits already revealed. It can be safely said that it will not succeed in stamping out either the soldiers' campaign or the revolutionary left organisations, nor its ultimate targets, the workers' struggle and their class organisation.

# KIBBUTZ PUZZLE

# SDS DEATH

## Socialist Ideal/Military Settlement

The nature of the Middle-East conflict in general, and the peculiar character of the Zionist colonisatory enterprise in particular, are only gradually beginning properly to be grasped by wide circles of the international Left. In this respect, the kibbutz is one of a number of puzzles which the international Left has found most elusive. Zionist propaganda portrays the kibbutz as the purest ever realisation of the socialist ideal: a self-managing commune constituting a free association of politically conscious individuals on the basis of high technological and cultural level; exploitation of man by man has been abolished together with alienation of man from production and society. Crude anti-Zionist propaganda, on the other hand, often depicts the kibbutz as a mere fraud, essentially a military settlement of no interest to socialists.

Of these two versions it is probably the first that tends to be accepted by many thousands of young people (not all of whom are Jewish) who come from many countries on a sort of pilgrimage to spend a few months living and working on a kibbutz—although even they are often disappointed by the fact that the kibbutzim comprise only a small fraction (not more than 4%) of Israel's population, as well as by the rather parochial and chauvinistic atmosphere that permeates them.

But where does the truth lie? As usual, it does not lie between the two conflicting accounts, as the bourgeois philistine always claims in such cases, but is simply richer than both propaganda versions, which merely present two of its many aspects, distorting it beyond recognition.

I cannot of course even attempt to present here a complete analysis—or even a detailed factual account—of the kibbutz. Here I only want to suggest the social and political context in which and in relation to which the kibbutz must be evaluated, for to judge it out of such context is the worst and most fallacious mystification.

## Settlers' Society

The kibbutz is part and parcel of the Zionist colonisatory enterprise; it was one of the structures consciously created by the Zionist Yishuv (Jewish settlers' community before 1948) and today it forms one of the specific structures of the Zionist state of Israel, which is a settlers' state. It is important to stress this for two main reasons. First, as a caution against a hastily enthusiastic value judgement: the kibbutz surely cannot be more progressive than the Zionist colonisatory project as a whole, which has been accomplished at the expense of the indigenous Arab population and under the protection and sponsorship of imperialism. Second, it provides a clue to understanding the apparently progressive aspects of the kibbutz (as well as of other Zionist structures). For, paradoxical as it may seem, settlers' societies very often display democratic, populist and even egalitarian characteristics. This is generally the case where (as in Zionism) the settlers aim not at exploiting the labour of the indigenous people, but at setting up a purely settlers' society, from which the natives are totally excluded—even as an exploited class—and which therefore tries to displace the natives, exterminate them or expel them from their own country. This was the case in Australia and even in the Boer colonisation of South Africa (later on the capitalist development in South Africa created an enormous demand for African labour and finally converted the pattern from the exclusivist to the exploitative type; but it took even South Africa a long time to overcome the older democratic and populist tradition of the Boer pioneers). The best known example is perhaps that of the Frontier days of the United States—The Wild West.

It is not difficult to understand this phenomenon. The settlers have to live on the labour of their own hands, in difficult material and geographical conditions, far from what they regard as Civilisation, surrounded by the hostility of the dispossessed native people. These circumstances naturally favour the development, in the settlers' community, of mutual aid and cooperation as well as of democratic grass-root social institutions based on the participation of the entire membership of the community.

## Ideological Compromise

All these factors certainly operated in the case of Zionist colonisation. Added to them was the specific ideological make-up of a large proportion of the settlers who came from East Europe. In pre-war East Europe (as, to some extent, in the West today) the young Jew was faced with a choice between two—and only two—competing ideas and political roads: socialism or Zionism. The choice was rather difficult to make (given the alienated social psychology that resulted from the circumstances of Jewish history) and many people tried to compromise. Thus, many of those who opted for Zionism also clung to some socialist ideas. This element of subjective consciousness, in combination with the objective factors sketched above, was the stuff of which the kibbutz was made.

## Excluding the Arabs

Of course, the democratic, populist and egalitarian aspects of the kibbutz—and of the settlers' society as a whole, both in Palestine and elsewhere—pertain *exclusively* to the settlers, and the indigenous people are excluded as strictly as slaves were excluded from Athenian democracy. An Arab cannot join a kibbutz, even if—as happened in some actual, though very rare, cases—he is married to a kibbutz daughter. Kibbutzniks do not see any contradiction between the socialist principles they claim to uphold and their greed for land of Arab peasants. Once the context of the kibbutz is understood, it is easy to realise that in this context it is perfectly natural—and, indeed, inherent in the very logic of the situation—that whole Arab villages should be dispossessed and their land taken to make room for a "specialist" kibbutz. (A particularly blatant, but by no means exceptional, case was that of the *Mapam* kibbutz *Bar'am* set up in 1949 on lands taken—for this very purpose—by the State from the Arabs of Qafir Bir'im, using the most cynical methods of legal robbery.)

## Harmless Experiment

"Left" Zionists often claim that the kibbutz is not only socialist in itself, but is actually a socialist factor in society as a whole. According to *Mapam* ideology, the kibbutzim are the vanguard of the proletariat; it is also claimed that that socialism will come about through proliferation of kibbutzim. This is obviously an extremely anti-revolutionary and false ideology. In fact the kibbutz is embedded in a capitalist system and is no threat to it. Zionist capitalists rightly regard the kibbutz as an interesting and quite harmless social experiment. (It is therefore not surprising that in several African countries where American imperialism uses the so-called "third country technique" employing Israeli "technical aid" as a cover for its own neo-colonialist penetration, the kibbutz and similar Zionist structures are recommended as an alternative to "other", more dangerous, forms of socialism.) Moreover, not only have most kibbutzim undergone capitalist development themselves, so that they now rely to some extent on exploitation of labour hired from the outside, but the kibbutzniks as a social stratum play in Israeli society a peculiar elitist role, similar to a certain extent to that of the British landed gentry in the heyday of the Empire.

## Laboratory Model

Having said all this, I think it is important to stress that in my opinion it would be very wrong for socialists to dismiss the kibbutz as having no positive interest for them. Whatever our verdict on the kibbutz in its actual socio-political context, it is legitimate to abstract from this context while studying its inner working as a self-governing community of producers. True, the kibbutz is not socialism—even if ignore the political context, it is still only a small unit of a few hundred people, embedded in a capitalist economy. But to some extent it can be regarded as a sort of small-scale laboratory model which—bearing in mind the limitations of such models and avoiding the fallacy of confusing it with "the real thing"—can indicate several kinds of problems of a socialist society as well as the possible ways of solving them.

M. Machover  
(Reprinted from "Middle East for Revolutionary

The inevitable happened: on Saturday, March 21, the national headquarters of the West German SDS (Socialistischer Deutscher Studentbund—German socialist students union) gave a statement to the press, which eagerly lapped it up, and informed in that way the numerous SDS chapters in Germany of the dissolution of the SDS. This act was high-handed and bureaucratically arrogant and led to widespread protests inside the different SDS chapters. It nevertheless only established finally and officially a fact which had already been reality for over a year: for at least 15 months a nationally-organised SDS had not existed any longer in West Germany.

This revolutionary student organisation, which after the split with the German Social Democratic Party started with some 500 members, grew until spring 1968 to several thousand members, and was undoubtedly in the European forefront of ideological analysis on the university field and in theoretical Marxist studies. It started with its "long march through the institutions"—as Rudi Dutschke called it—on transitional demands at university level, and culminated in spring 1968, after the attempt on Rudi Dutschke's life, in a mass movement of several tens of thousands of students and young workers in the streets all over West Germany.

Until this point, the SDS had been able to draw into the movement more and more activists; it had also been able to stay on a semi-spontaneist basis. After the upsurge of Easter 1968, the influence of the revolutionary May events in France which followed closely, the German economic recession and first signs of unrest among workers which resulted from it, this basis was no longer sufficient for revolutionary activists, and the SDS started to progressively disintegrate into tendencies: it started on a process of "groupusculation". The SDS leaders of 1967-68 who had been so proud of keeping this movement together—mostly through avoiding all political and especially international questions which could divide it—while in other countries the groupuscules were at their peak, and who were totally unprepared for this process, started to withdraw from direct intervention, leaving the field wide open to the rising Maoist forces within the SDS to assemble more and more young comrades on a neo-Stalinist line as a

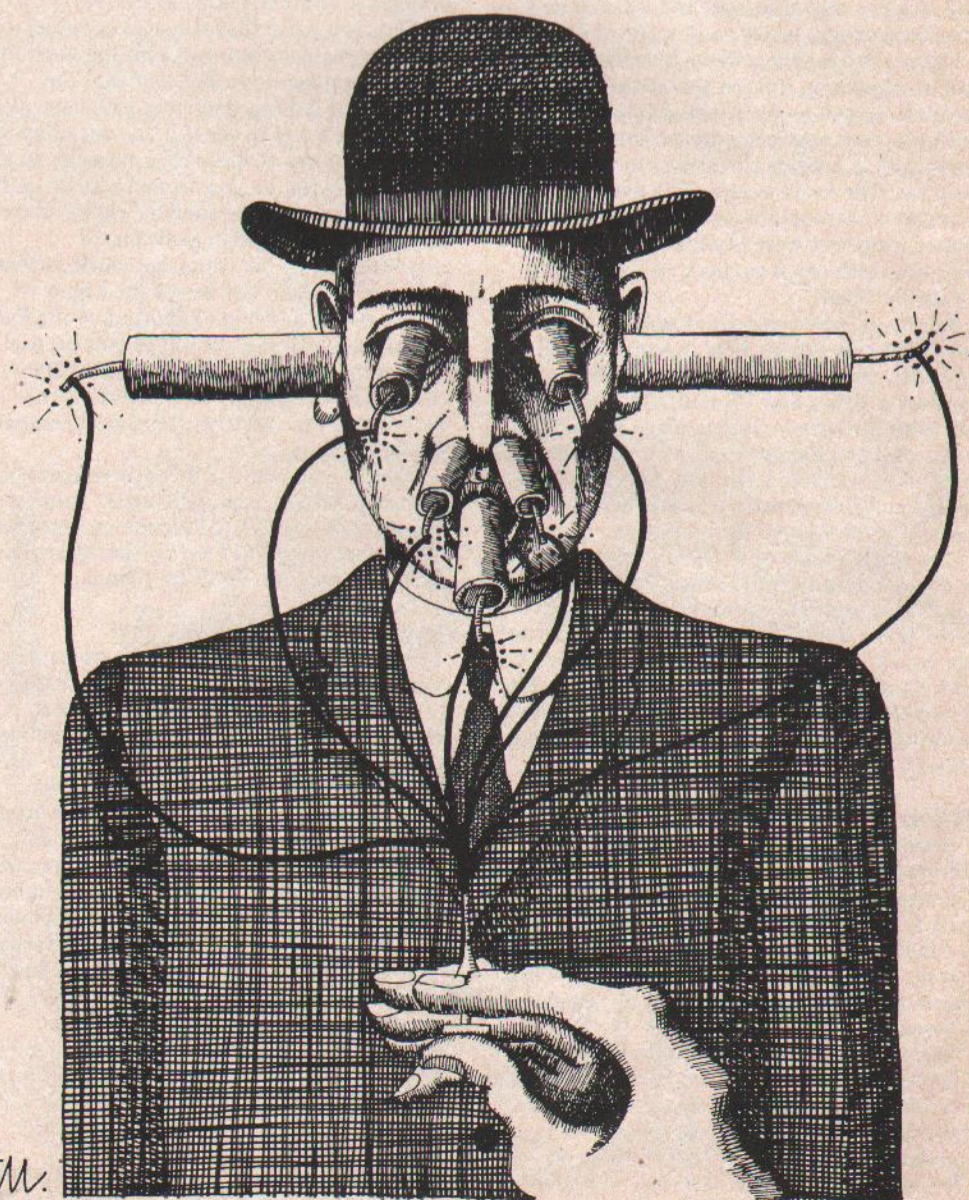
reaction to the former spontaneist one. Since these older and experienced comrades and cadres either refused to determine their standpoint on a high level, or started to discuss it when it was too late, these Maoist tendencies grew rapidly on a very primitive level, taking over what was left of the organisational framework, especially in the former strongholds of the SDS, Berlin and Frankfurt.

This then led to the disintegration of the SDS on a national scale and to the final official dissolution of the organisation as such.

The bourgeois press, however, which sees in the statement of the SDS national office the withering away of the revolutionary left in general in West Germany is very much mistaken. The revolutionary movement in West Germany is still there and very much alive. Certainly, for the time being, several so-called "Communist Parties", all Maoist influenced, are gaining through this process. Certainly, had the former leaders of the SDS understood that, after experiences in mass struggles in the streets and first contacts with workers in unrest, a purely student organisation was insufficient for revolutionary activists—if they had understood this and turned towards the constitution of a revolutionary organisation, a broad "united front" student movement—because that's what the SDS was in the past two years—would have had its place beside such a revolutionary organisation. Since this was either not understood, or understood too late, the present situation had to come about, but it will certainly not last. The movement in West Germany has too high a level to tolerate such disintegration and the strengthening of primitive Maoist groups for a longer period. The discussion with Mao-Stalinist revisionism will be carried out with the same strength as the dispute which took place and is finished amongst the revolutionary left with Kruschev-Stalinist revisionism.

One can already observe the first signs of the serious wish of revolutionary Marxist forces to assemble themselves anew. After the experiences they have been through in the last five years, the best of these forces will assemble themselves in the university and outside to build the nucleus of the future revolutionary party.

Gisela Mandel



# FILMS: LETS DO IT IN THE STREET

Talking about films is a way of talking about the problems we find in our society today, and making films is a way of resolving some of the conflicts in an active way. Film criticism confines itself to talking, but it should always be seen as a step towards the activist role, not a substitute for it.

Film criticism should take individual films and attempt to relate them to a general theory of the cinema as a medium of consciousness-changing potential. Most films negate this potential, either deliberately (the commercial films doing the rounds of the ABC-Odeon circuits, etc.) or because of the confusion of the film-maker in relation to his audience and his materials. The heritage of film criticism we have been blessed with can safely be rejected en bloc. All those debates around Hollywood movies and their auteurs were productive in their time—they shook a few people up—but they act only as mystifications now. The primary concern of film-makers like Straub, Rocha, Garrel, Robert Kramer, and more importantly, the group efforts like Newsreel, Cinema Action, even Tattooist, is to fuck the system up while living off it. And that's how their films should be talked about. New problems then, that require new solutions.

## Film/Art/Individual Expression

The cinema began as a weapon of the people—the early 1900s in the U.S. saw the birth of a socialist cinema, that depicted working class life as it really was. But this cinema was quickly subverted by the entertainment industry, and was snubbed by the bourgeoisie for fifty years before Fellini, Bergman, Antonioni, etc. could be hailed as "artists"—i.e. propagators of sophisticated bourgeois ideals through sophisticated technique. This art cinema was the ultimate repository of bourgeois individualism—one man's fantasy to be lived by millions. But by the revolutionary tactic of smashing big crews and big budgets, a real cinema of personal expression has emerged, one that can relate directly to the consciousness of both film-maker and spectator.

Calling the cinema an *art* is only another bourgeois mystification wrapped around the essentially simple operation of pointing a camera at something and pushing the button. Further mystifications are audience alienation, participation and involvement. For just as the image is the direct representation of reality, so our perception of the image is direct and

complementary to our experience.

The question we must always be asking is: what is a revolutionary film? Of course the question can't be answered in an article, but only in the praxis of making films within a revolutionary context (e.g. new forms, new materials, new situations). Obviously a revolutionary film is not one where its politics are readily identifiable, where its ideology is rigidified. Its first task would be to jolt the spectator onto a new level of political consciousness, to promote a greater awareness of the causal relationships acting in society. If it's to jolt it can't be dull, and to promote awareness it can't be clouded in obscurity and mystifications. That's about as far as you can take rules, and even that far is dubious. Because it is also true that a film can only have political impact on an audience if it has political impact on the film-maker—and the impersonal products we call feature films do not qualify.

## Film/Language

If the cinema is a language it communicates through the cultural connotations of the image. This image is really a mosaic of coded information, and our perception is a process of decoding this information. The code is socially determined, and so is our perception. Thus it becomes meaningless to talk about films in the traditional terms of plot, story-line, characterisation—these are entities imposed by an individual on a social milieu, and as such are external to the message carried by the social code of the film. The world of the western is one of values; so too is the world of the gangster movie—both sets of values are false, in that they represent the class interest of the artists and technicians who formulated them. And our comprehension of the western or gangster movie is contained within the framework of these values—whether the hero gets killed or comes out winning.

Thinking of the cinema in terms of language is very fruitful because it makes us question all the assumptions that go into our everyday communication. It makes us aware for example of the heavy political overtones of a Hollywood film—through the simple technique of universalising the motivations of a fictional character, we are compelled to accept a contrived plot as "destiny". Which is the same as accepting a historically-determined class situation as something rigid, or absolute. This has always been the ideological role of the

cinema—the pacification of mass revolt. And we can no longer put up with such crude repression of our potentialities.

## Cinema/Politics

The general perspective of what is a revolutionary film needs to be put in dual perspective. The art we have been brought up on is bourgeois art, and the only revolutionary art we have been told about is some dreary, censor-ridden "socialist realism". We don't need either. It was easy enough to formulate this doctrine of socialist realism after the Russian revolution, but because this "art" carried over into the revolutionary regime so many bourgeois connotations, the contradictions fast become untenable. The emphasis shifted from the role of art to that of the artist—should he be free, or repressed. But the myth of bourgeois art as an agent of social change (surrealism, etc.) has been exposed by the middle-class phenomenon of the alternative life-style. If artists have always been thought of as creative people, then the artists today are the builders of this life-style—the yuppies, diggers, squatters. And the so-called "artists" are the parasites on this creative source—rock musicians turn pot into gold, and film-makers, novelists, poets, journalists, scramble for the pickings. They all contribute to a massive counter-culture, one whose promotion and profits are safely in the hands of a few entrepreneurs and pop celebrities.

Bourgeois art is now in the last stages of being incorporated by the media. They are instant, available to everyone, and operate on the lowest cultural denominator. Who reads novels now anyway?

We go on talking about social reality but in fact the "reality" we mean is what comes to us through the media. By excluding feed-back, this mediated version of events imposes its own interpretation on them. Of course objective analysis is supposed to be the staple of the media, but in fact it is the subjective analysis of a camera, tape recorder or reporter—these are all as much involved in the events they portray as the participants themselves. Ignoring this central fact leads to such great critical fallacies as "cinema verite".

This transition from individual "artistic" expression to corporate media expression is only a product of our fucked-up view of things. There is no transition at all, in reality, because the artist's position of "creator" has always

been one of *observer*—he indirectly reproduces his environment, while the camera, tape recorder, etc. "directly" reproduce it. And this "direct reproduction" is yet another myth, for the media's interpretation of events is as much a distortion of reality as the artist's vision. The camera is an ideological apparatus, the screen an ideological front.

## Audience/Politics

An audience is a collection of people mystified by events in which they have no participation. The relationship between members of the audience is as dehumanised and aggressive as that between citizens of the wider industrial society, and their collective relationship to the screen is one of passivity and numbness. A feature film, like any work of art, is enclosed within itself—it manufactures conflicts and resolves them artificially. In this way drama-fiction has come to act as a substitute for life itself—the vicarious realisation of goals impossible to attain in reality.

The most basic question we can ask here is: what would an audience be doing if not watching a film? On the face of it, drama must always act as a fantasy escape from action in the streets, since people spend most of their leisure time watching a screen. The function of a revolutionary cinema then is to drive people away from this screen, onto the streets, where perhaps their relationship to each other will improve. And this means infiltrating the media that reach most people—commercial cinema and television.

It is important to realise how drama contains action within its own terms, for this is the fundamental danger of films like *Praise Marx...* Guerrilla street theatre is not a containment of action, because it forces bystanders to participate, to come into *real* contact with other members of the audience.

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This is the briefest possible resume of some of the problems involved in looking at films. A critic can only point them out, and perhaps illuminate them—it is up to the film-makers themselves to resolve them.

John Matthews

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# GREEN ORANGE AND BLACK

*Divided Ulster: Liam de Paor. 208 pages. Penguin Special, 5/-.*

## Blacks with White Skins

Liam de Paor doesn't seek to give a complete history of Ulster but "a view of the problems of the divisions of Ulster as these appear in its history". This is a useful approach for English revolutionists. There is a shortage of good material on Ireland, as is not altogether surprising in the oppressor country. This little book is a valuable contribution towards alleviating that shortage and helping revolutionaries clarify themselves on the complex contradictions that exist in Northern Ireland. Quite correctly he begins by stressing that the problems of Northern Ireland are those of a colonial country where "Catholics are blacks who happen to have white skins". This is, of course, as he admits, an oversimplification but a much more useful one than the pseudo-theological division into Catholics and Protestants. The colonisation of the North took place a long time ago in the seventeenth century. There have, however, always been strong forces preventing the integration of settler and native. This wasn't always the case with the English in Ireland, however. It was a running complaint of Elizabethan administrators that the original settlers of the English Pale (in the middle rather than the north of Ireland) tended to lose their identity in the surrounding Gaelic countryside. The administrators practised a primitive apartheid by forbidding the use of the Irish language, customs or dress within the Pale, particularly by born English. The native Irish were left to go their own way, according to Irish law, literally beyond the pale.

## The Settlement

The book begins with a very outline description of pre-settlement Ireland. It

William of Orange's forces in 1690/1. De Paor adopts a materialist approach and reveals the actual social forces at work behind the ideological manifestations of the struggle well. Within the framework of the colony, the early settlers are in a position similar to that of the English in America. They regard themselves as pockets of civilisation in a sea of barbaric Gaelic Irish. The Scottish Presbyterians who settled intensively East of the Bann in the seventeenth century turned what had been pastoral land into croplands. They constructed towns and, protected by long lease and recognition of improvements, became prosperous. Ulster at one time had been the most backward area of Ireland; now it became the most advanced. The Scots settlers were able to build up some small industries, tanning, weaving and linen-making. Their position was not secure until the final defeat of the Catholic landowning class. After the original settlement, a revolt on the part of the natives was long expected and finally came in 1641. A Roman Catholic Parliament was convened to meet at Kilkenny late in 1642. The Protestant settlers were dispossessed in large numbers and many murdered. These murders were exaggerated in the Protestant consciousness, and made more bloody the eventual suppression of the revolt by Cromwell's troops in 1649. This defeat did not lead to more settlement but to the confiscation of a lot more land throughout Ireland. English Protestant landlords were given the land in the South to extract rent from the Irish settlers. The remaining Catholic landlords were displaced to smaller holdings in the west. Restoration brought the English Irish a little but returned nothing to the Gaelic Irish. The power of the Irish was finally broken in 1691. James II had replaced Protestants with Catholics in the Army and administration in Ireland. His Lord

James II's army at the siege of Derry and Enniskillen, which contributed to William of Orange's victory a year later in 1690. "By the end of the century almost all the land of Ireland was in the hands of new owners and the old land-owning class, the Old English and native Irish gentry and aristocracy were dispossessed." References are made to the Irish tribal system but this section, useful as it is in many ways, would have been improved by a more amplified description of the types of land tenure of the Irish before the confiscations. Clearly marked, however, is the significance of this period as the establishment of Protestant ascendancy throughout the island and the destruction of the remnants of the leaders of Gaelic culture. The Irish were now leaderless and open to the exploitation by English landlords and settlers. The settlers felt rightly that they had won a victory.

## The Sectarian Division

The next century presented a complicated picture of increased tension between Protestant landlord and tenant, between Settlers and the Home Country, between Catholic tenant and Catholic landlord, and last but not least between Catholic tenant and Protestant tenant. Both Protestants and Catholics organised agrarian secret societies, the Peep O'Day Boys and the Defenders. These organisations were used both to cow landlords and by the two groups of the population against one another. In 1791 Wolfe Tone founded a radical middle-class organisation in Belfast, The Society of United Irishmen, dedicated to religious equality and the rights of man and much influenced by the French Revolution. The combination of United Irishmen in the towns and Defenders in the country began to worry the authorities. They began to look to their salvation in the Orange Boys, first

American republican model began to fade before the ruthless suppression of the rebellion. "The year of misery and terror answered among others the question whether the Protestant lower orders in Ulster would combine with the Catholics against landlords and rulers, or would combine with landlords and rulers against Catholics. The Dublin administration divided Ulster and ruled it." To the conflict between Catholic tenant and Protestant to be added that of Catholic and Protestant worker in Belfast's growing industries. The Protestant workers began to feel insecure as they saw unemployed Catholics flooding in from the rural areas. So the fatal base for the division of the masses in Ireland was laid.

## Independence & Socialism

The latter half of the book bringing the narrative up to date is necessarily more discursive than analytical. The book devotes relatively little space to an analysis of political developments and possibilities for revolution in Ireland now, which is a little disappointing. If it is more history than on-going politics, the book remains thoroughly worth reading, however. It does not pretend to be a major work of revolutionary theory, but as a short introduction to the divisions of Ulster goes well beyond the limitations of Green Tory nationalism. It ends with a classic quote from Connolly, which can't be bad: "If you remove the English Army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin castle, unless you set about the organisation of the socialist republic, your efforts would be in vain."

"England would still rule you. She would rule you through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole array of commercialist and individualist institutions she has planted in this country and watered with the tears of our mothers and the blood of our martyrs."

